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eye
THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE
Murshidabad to Seoul
How small towns and villages in India are trying to live their K-pop dream
FOUR-PAGE PULLOUT

LOK SABHA POLLING IN 7 PHASES, from April 19 to June 1 | **MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT** kicks in with immediate effect | **ASSEMBLY POLLS IN 4 STATES** Andhra, Odisha, Arunachal, Sikkim | **ONE IN FIVE VOTERS UNDER 30,** 21.54 cr of 96.8 cr voters are 18-29 yrs

Dates are in: Voting from April 19, Verdict June 4

Won't tolerate code violations; time to go beyond advisories and take concrete action: CEC

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

KICKING OFF THE world's largest election exercise, the Election Commission of India Saturday announced that the 18th Lok Sabha elections would be held in seven phases from April 19 to June 1, with counting of votes on June 4.

Close to a billion electors will be eligible to cast their votes in the exercise that will stretch well into the peak of summer, with over 10 million polling and security personnel being deployed for the job. This time, the complete polling process — from

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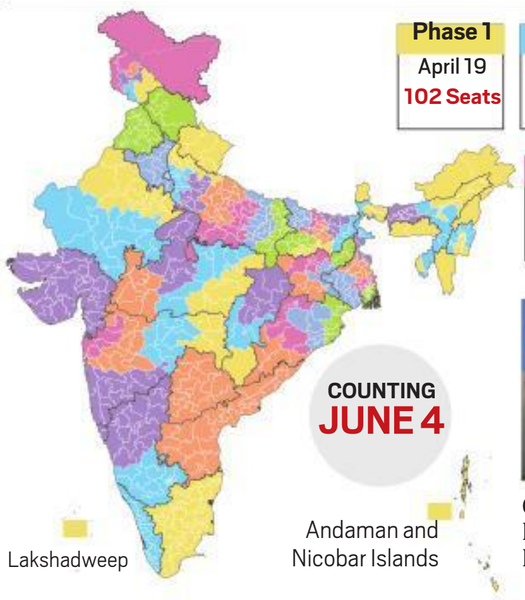
FOR 18th LOK SABHA: 543 SEATS, 7 PHASES, 44 DAYS



Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
April 19	April 26	May 7	May 13
102 Seats	89 Seats	94 Seats	96 Seats

Phase 5	Phase 6	Phase 7
May 20	May 25	June 1
49 Seats	57 Seats	57 Seats

COUNTING JUNE 4

CEC Rajiv Kumar with ECs Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu in New Delhi on Saturday. *Amit Mehra*

		Male	Female	Transgender	First Time Voters
OVERALL VOTERS	2019: 91 cr	47.33 cr	43.85 cr	39,000	2019: 1.5 cr
	2024: 96.8 cr	49.7 cr	47.1 cr	48,000	2024: 1.8 cr

BUSINESS AS USUAL
BY UNNY

FULL COVERAGE, P 6

44 DAYS, SECOND-LONGEST SINCE 1951

Delay over EC quitting, festivals: Why LS polls will extend into June

Verdict in June first time since 1991

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE 2024 Lok Sabha elections, extending into the peak summer month of June for only the second time in the country's electoral history, marks a 44-day election period the second-longest after the first Parliamentary election in 1951-52.

This protracted process has been necessitated by a combination of factors.

The first general election to Lok Sabha was held over 68 phases from October 25, 1951, to February 21, 1952. More than 70 years later, the 2024 Parliamentary elections with a record number of 96.8 crore voters is set to be the longest.

That apart, the only other time general elections were held in June was the 1991 Lok Sabha polls, but that was because the Chandra Shekhar government was dissolved 16 months after it was sworn in.

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Manipur: Two phases for two seats, voting in relief camps

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, MARCH 16

VOTING IN conflict-rocked Manipur will take place over two phases with preparations underway to enable people displaced within the state to vote at or close to their relief camps.

According to sources, informal preliminary assessments place the number of displaced voters within the state at 23,000-25,000. The total number of voters in Manipur is 20.26 lakh.

In the wake of the ethnic clashes that broke out in the state on May 3 last year, hard lines have been drawn between areas where the Kuki-Zomi and

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PM: Going to people with track record, Opp is rudderless, issueless

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

WELCOMING THE announcement of dates for the Lok Sabha elections, the "biggest festival of democracy", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday that the BJP-led NDA was "going to the people on the basis of our track record of good governance and service delivery across sectors".

He attacked the Opposition as "rudderless and issueless" and said its "attempts of dividing

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PTI

PM Modi in Telangana's Nagarkurnool on Saturday

Kharge: Last chance to save democracy; Cong pledges Right to Health

MANOJ C G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

SOON AFTER the announcement of the schedule for the Lok Sabha polls, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said this election is going to be "perhaps the last chance" to save India's democracy and Constitution.

In a post on X Saturday, Kharge said, "2024 Lok Sabha

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Cong chief Mallikarjun Kharge with Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and Dy CM D K Shivakumar in Bengaluru on Saturday. *ANI*

INSIDE

KAVITHA SENT TO E.D. CUSTODY UNTIL MARCH 23 P 3
SKIPPING SUMMONS: DELHI COURT GRANTS BAIL TO KEJRIWAL P 3
AZAM CONVICTED IN 2016 DEMOLITION CASE P 8

ED, I-T, regulator heat: 11 infra firms bought Rs 506-cr bonds

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK & AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

CONSTRUCTION AND infrastructure companies were among the biggest purchasers of electoral bonds, with at least 11 companies having bought bonds worth over Rs 506 crore — directly or through lesser known subsidiaries — close on the heels of regulatory or investigative action by agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the antitrust watchdog.

While there are a number of big construction companies that feature in the list of donors, data released by the Election Commission also shows that a string of small to medium sized infrastructure companies, those in the ancillary business, and those that offer loans to infra projects, also made significant donations.

Take for instance, Chennai Green Woods and Madhya Pradesh Waste Management — linked to Hyderabad-based Ramky Group whose chairman is the YSRCP MP Ayodhya Rami Reddy — collectively purchased electoral bonds worth more than Rs 111 crore between May 2019 and October 2023.

Chennai Green Woods, a construction company, had purchased bonds worth Rs 40 crore in January 2022. In July 2021, the I-T Department had conducted

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Behind cheating video: Schools with low passing rate, high dropouts, staff crunch

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

AISWARYA RAJ
NUH, MARCH 16

IT WAS a frame that captured an intractable problem — mass cheating in examinations. The 37-second video of March 5 showed people using ropes suspended from windows to scale the walls of a school in Haryana's Nuh district and passing on chits to students inside appearing for the Class 10 Board exams.

In the last Class 10 exam, the Government Senior Secondary School in Raheri had a pass percentage of 15%. *Abhinav Saha*

The private Chandrawati Senior Secondary School is one of 63 examination centres in the district for the ongoing Class 10 Board examination, with students of three schools — two government ones (in Raheri and Padheni villages) and the other private (in Noorpur) — appearing for their exams here.

Nuh District Education Officer Paramjeet Chahal said an inquiry was conducted into the incident at Chandrawati school. No FIR has been registered yet.

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• Opp is rudderless & issueless: PM

society are not being accepted". The next five years, he said, will be about establishing a "roadmap that will guide our trajectory as a nation for the next thousand years".

In a series of posts on X, Modi said, "We, the BJP-NDA, are fully prepared for elections. We are going to the people on the basis of our track record of good governance and service delivery across sectors." He tagged the BJP slogan of "#PhirEkBaarModiSarkar".

He said 10 years ago, "before we assumed office, the people of India were feeling betrayed and disillusioned thanks to INDI Alliance's pathetic governance".

"No sector was left untouched from scams and policy paralysis. The world had given up on India. From there, it's been a glorious turnaround," he said.

"Powered by 140 crore Indians, our nation is creating new records of development. We have become the fifth largest economy and crores of people have been freed from poverty. Our schemes have reached all parts of India and the emphasis of saturation has yielded great results," he said.

The people of the country, Modi said, are witnessing what "a determined, focused and result-oriented government can do. And, they want more of it. That is why from every corner of India, cutting across all sections of society, the people are saying in one voice – Ab Ki Baar, 400 Paar!"

"Our Opposition is rudderless and issueless. All they can do is abuse us and practice vote bank politics. Their dynastic approach and attempts of dividing society are not being accepted. Equally hurting them is their corruption track record. People don't want such leadership," he said.

"In our third term, there's much work to be done. The last decade was about filling gaps created by those who ruled for seventy years. It was also about instilling a spirit of self-confidence that yes, India can become prosperous and self-reliant. We will build on this spirit," he said.

The war against poverty and corruption, he said, will go on at an even faster pace and emphasis on social justice will be strong. "We are going to work towards making India the third largest global economy. We will further cement our effort for fulfilling the dreams of the youth," he said.

"I can clearly see that the coming five years will be about our collective resolve of establishing the roadmap that will guide our trajectory as a nation for the next thousand years and make India the embodiment of prosperity, all-round growth and global leadership."

Modi said he derives "great strength from people's blessings, especially the poor, our farmers, Yuva and Nari Shakti."

"When they say 'Mai hoon Modi ka parivar', it fills me with joy and makes me work harder to build a Viksit Bharat. This is the era to make it happen and together we will! Yahi samay hai, sahi samay hai! (This is the time, the right time)," he said.

• Why process will go on till June

In the last four election cycles held since 2004, voting has traditionally taken place in April and May, with new members of Parliament being elected by the end of May. For instance, in 2019, the last date of polling was May 19, and results were announced May 23. However, this year, even as the number of phases remains the same, seven, the last date of polling is June 1 and the results will be announced on June 4.

The spill over into June, sources said, is primarily due to two reasons: a six-day delay in announcing the polls compared to 2019 and consecutive festivals such as Holi, Tamil new year, Bihu and Baisakhi in March and April.

The Commission had to ensure that important dates such as the last date of withdrawal or polling days did not coincide with these festivals.

The delay in the poll announcement was partly circumstantial, as Election Commissioner Arun Goel abruptly quit, citing personal reasons, just days before the notification thereby reducing the poll panel to a single-member body.

At the time of Goel's resignation, the third Election Commissioner, Anup Chandra Pandey, had already retired on February 14.

"It was preferred that we have the full Commission in place going into an election as crucial as the Lok Sabha elections. Although legally only the Chief Election Commissioner can conduct the elections, it would have seemed odd in terms of propriety and optics. So we chose to wait," a senior officer said.

The government appointed two new Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, on March 14; they took charge March 15 and polls were announced a day later.

Apart from the initial six-day delay in the announcement, a further delay of a few days, which forced voting to stretch into June, occurred because the Commission had to navigate around several festivals and holidays.

"There are many factors that contribute to drafting an election schedule. For instance, security forces require at least six days for inter-state movement and redeployment between two election phases. If there's a festival in between, we must ensure that crucial days such as nomination, the last date of withdrawal, or even polling day do not coincide with it, as it could disrupt the entire process," another official said.

FROM PAGE ONE
FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Voting starts April 19, verdict on June 4

announcement of dates to counting — will take 81 days, compared to 75 days in 2019. The actual voting will happen over 44 days.

Addressing a press conference here, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, flanked by newly-appointed Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, appealed to electors to come out and vote, saying "elections belong to you".

With the announcement, the Model Code of Conduct came into force, bringing announcements of new schemes by the government and use of government machinery for electioneering by ministers to a halt.

The EC also announced the schedule for the Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim Assembly elections, where polling would be held on the same day as the Lok Sabha polling. The EC also announced bye-elections to 26 Assembly seats across states.

A total of 96.8 crore voters, of which 49.7 crore are male and 47.1 crore are female, including 88.4 lakh persons with disabilities, 48,000 transgender voters and 19.1 lakh service electors, will be eligible to cast their votes.

There are 1.8 crore first-time voters who are 18 to 19 years old, and 19.74 crore in the age group 20-29 years. Those under 30 make up a fifth of the total voters. Rajiv Kumar said young voters and women voters, who outnumber men in 12 states, were well represented in the electoral roll.

"We will take democracy to every corner of the country," said Rajiv Kumar.

The number of polling stations increased to 10.48 lakh, up from 10.35 lakh in 2019. Kumar said the polling exercise would involve 1.5 crore polling and security officials, 55 lakh EVMs and 4 lakh vehicles.

Starting with April 19, 21 states across the country, including Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal, will have polls in a total of 102 seats. Phase two of polls will be on April 26 in 13 states in 89 seats; phase three will be on May 7 in 12 states in 94 seats; phase four will be on May 13 in 10 states in 96 seats; phase five will be on May 20 and cover 49 seats across eight states; phase six will be on May 25 in 57 seats in seven states; and phase seven on June 1 in eight states, across 57 seats.

Like in the 2019 polls, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar would have elections throughout the seven phases. Polls would be held on five days in Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir; over four phases in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand; three days in Chhattisgarh and Assam and two phases in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tripura and Manipur. The remaining 22 states and UTs would have a single-phase poll.

While J&K elections would be held in five phases, each of the five seats would be completed in a single phase. The CEC said while all political parties in J&K asked for the Assembly elections to be held simultaneously with Lok Sabha, it was not possible due to administrative reasons. Owing to the security concerns in J&K, each candidate would have to be provided with security, he said.

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, which were in the first phase of polling in 2019, have been moved to phase four this time.

Asked why the elections spread across seven phases, as was the case in 2019 as well, Kumar highlighted the "historical and geographic" situation of the country, and said everything from the weather, festivals and examinations, had to be kept in mind. "Think of the movement of security forces also. They'll be moving like, within the three to four days gap between phases, they will walk the length and breadth of the country," he said.

Rajiv Kumar said the EC had four challenges - "4Ms - muscle, money, misinformation and MCC violations". He said the EC was establishing 24/7 integrated control rooms in districts and webcasting in sensitive booths and a minimum of 50 per cent of all polling stations. On some international borders, there will be drone-based checking too, he said.

Addressing parties, he said the EC would not tolerate MCC violations and would have a "calibrated approach". He said EC had issued an advisory to parties this month, putting them "on notice" and asking them to circulate the same with all their star campaigners. "Now, the time is during this election, to go beyond advisories and take concrete action," the CEC said.

• Amid ED, I-T, CCI action, 11 infra firms bought Rs 506-crore bonds

a search operation on the Ramky Group and seized allegedly incriminating documents indicating unaccounted transactions.

A similar proximity in electoral bond purchases and investigative action was seen for Dhariwal Infrastructure, part of the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group. Between July 2021 and October 2023, Dhariwal Infrastructure, purchased bonds worth Rs 115 crore, four-fifth of which (Rs 95 crore) were bought starting October 2022.

This was just months after July 2022, when the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had registered an FIR against a number of entities including the CESC Ltd (a subsidiary of the RP-SG Group, of which Dhariwal is a subsidiary) over alleged irregularities in a 27-year-old allocation process of the Sarisatolli, Tara and Deocha Pachami blocks in West Bengal from 1993 to 1995. Haldia Energy, also an RPSG company and among the top donors was purchasing bonds starting from 2019 -- this company had donated Rs 377 crore until 2024.

Between April 2023 and October 2023, Kalpataru Projects International Limited bought Rs 25.5 crore worth of electoral bonds. Kalpataru, engaged in power transmission and distribution, buildings and factories, water supply and irrigation, railways, oil and gas pipelines, urban mobility, highways, and airports, bagged several key projects including one for underground metro tunnelling in December 2023.

Around the time the company bought bonds, in August 2023, the I-T Department had conducted searches at various premises linked to Mumbai-based Kalpataru Builders over alleged tax evasion. Various entities under Kalpataru Group of Companies, including the listed entity Kalpataru Projects International Limited, are under the department's scrutiny for alleged financial irregularities.

My Home Infrastructures Private Limited, part of the Telangana-based My Home Group of companies purchased bonds worth Rs 24.5 crore between July and November 2023. But this was not just the only company in the group that bought bonds. Its other related entities such as Tellapur Technocity bought bonds worth Rs 20 crore, and Aqua Space Developers, purchased bonds worth Rs 15 crore, all in July 2023 – bringing the group's total purchases to close to Rs 60 crore.

While it could not be ascertained if the bonds purchased by these companies were donated to a specific political party, the purchases were close to the elections held in Karnataka (May 2023) and Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh (November 2023).

The Telangana-based MyHome Group had earlier faced action from the tax department. In 2019, the I-T Department raided the house and office of Rameshwar Rao Jupally, the founder and chairman of the MyHome Group over alleged tax evasion suspicions. The My Home Group is also related to the Associated Broadcasting Company which owns the TV9 media group. Incidentally, Megha Engineering (which is the second largest purchaser of the electoral bonds) also owns a stake in the group.

Speaking at the India Today Conclave on Friday, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had rejected any link between functioning of the investigative agencies, including ED, to the electoral funding of the ruling party, saying these charges were just assumptions. "I think you have based yourself on huge assumptions – that the money was given after the ED raid happened. For all you know, the money was given earlier and in spite of that we went knocking at their doors. Am I making sense? No? What if the companies gave money and after that we still went knocking on their doors through ED. Is that a probability or not?" she said.

Cement major UltraTech Cement, which is a part of the Aditya Birla Group, purchased electoral bonds worth Rs 35 crore -- Rs 5 crore in October 2019, Rs 10 crore each in October 2020 and January 2022, with the most recent purchase recorded in November 2023 for Rs 10 crore. The first donation by the cement behemoth had come two months before December 2020, when UltraTech along with other top cement manufacturing companies had faced raids by the antitrust watchdog, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), over allegations of price coordination and collaborating levels of cement supply.

The company also got entangled later in disputes over tax demands raised by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) authorities. In November 2023 as well as January 2024, the company disclosed in regulatory filings that it got demand orders worth Rs 1.14 lakh and Rs 72 lakh, respectively.

Similarly, between October 2021 and November 2023, Rashmi Cement and Rashmi Metaliks, subsidiaries of the same company, bought electoral bonds worth almost Rs 91 crore. Incidentally, in July 2022, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said it had frozen bank deposits with about Rs 95 crore after it raided multiple premises of the West Bengal-based Rashmi group of companies – which owns Rashmi Cement and Rashmi Metaliks. The action was related to an alleged loss of Rs 73.4 crore to the exchequer by what the ED called "deliberate mis-declaring (of) facts and misutilisation of dual freight policy of the Indian Railways to avail the wrongful benefits of lower tariff of freight for transportation of iron ore".

Of the total Rs 91 crore, the two companies bought a majority of the bonds – worth Rs 53 crore – after the ED's action. It is worth noting, though, that in August 2022, the Calcutta High Court gave Rashmi Metaliks a clean chit in the money laundering case.

Authum Investment and Infrastructure Ltd, a non banking financial firm purchased bonds worth Rs 25 crore between April 2022 and January 2023. In October 2022, Authum had completed the acquisition of debt-ridden Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Capital, and offered loans for various purposes including infrastructure projects.

In December 2023, Authum had alerted the stock exchange that a search and seizure operation was conducted at its corporate office and related residential premises over two days between December 14 and 16.

While Kolkata-based Keventer Food Park Infra, MKJ Enterprises (a manufacturer of stainless steel) and Madanlal Ltd. – which are linked entities – collectively donated Rs 572.5 crore, a fourth less known related company Sasmal Infrastructure Ltd., donated Rs 44 crore. MK Jalan, the managing director of MKJ Enterprises, is also a director at Sasmal Infra.

In 2017, the West Bengal government had approved the sale of its entire stake of 47 per cent in Metro Dairy to Keventer, owned by the Jalan group of Kolkata, at a consideration of Rs 84.5 crore. In February 2021, the ED conducted raids at Keventers' office as part of its probe in the money-laundering aspect of Metro Dairy's share transfer to a private firm.

It is difficult to ascertain a 'quid pro quo' in these cases since the State Bank of India has so far not shared the matching number of the electoral bonds to link the purchaser with the political party. Also, in some cases, companies had faced investigative action much before the electoral bond scheme was rolled out.

• Kharge: Last chance for democracy; Cong promises Right to Health

elections will open the 'Door of NYAY' for India. This would be perhaps the last chance to save Democracy and our Constitution from Dictatorship. 'We the people of India' will together fight against hatred, loot, unemployment, price rise and atrocities. Haath Badlega Halaat."

Earlier in the day, before the Model Code of Conduct set in, the Congress announced another set of manifesto promises, this time focusing on workers.

It promised that if voted to power, it will bring in a Right to Health law, an employment guarantee Act for urban areas, and increase the national minimum wage to Rs 400 per day.

In Bengaluru, Kharge, while promising Shramik Nyay and Hissedari Nyay, reiterated the party's resolve to pass a Constitutional amendment to raise the 50 per cent cap on reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs, and conduct a comprehensive social, economic and caste census.

The party has already announced a raft of promises for the youth, women, SCs and STs and farmers, centering around the broad theme of Nyay, hoping to strike a chord with these sections.

The centrepiece of the announcements Saturday were promises to enact a "Right to Health law that will provide universal healthcare, including free essential diagnostics, medicines, treatment, surgery, and rehabilitative and palliative care" and "bring an employment guarantee Act for urban areas, with a focus on building public infrastructure, making cities resilient to climate change, and bridging gaps in social services".

The party also promised to increase the national minimum wage to Rs 400 per day which, it said, will also be the minimum for all MGNREGS workers across the nation. The current floor wage stands at Rs 176 per day, last revised in 2017. The other promise was to put in place an architecture for providing comprehensive social security for all unorganised workers, including life insurance and accident insurance.

The Congress said there will be a "comprehensive review of the anti-worker labour codes passed by the Modi Government, and to make suitable amendments to strengthen the rights of labour".

Kharge said, "The Congress will stop contractualisation of employment in core Government functions. Contract labour will be the employment of last resort only, requiring clear justification and protection for the rights of workers. Contract employment in the private sector will be required to meet minimum standards of social security."

The party has signalled that livelihood issues like unemployment and rise in cost of living will be the centrepiece of its campaign. The 25 promises that the party has announced so far are tailored to address the issues and appeal to the youth, women, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and farmers.

• Manipur: Two-phase polling for two seats, voting from relief camps

Meitei communities, respectively, are in majority. While Meiteis who lived in Kuki-dominated areas have moved to Meitei-dominated areas in the state's valley districts, the reverse movement has been the case for Kuki-Zomis in Meitei-majority areas.

The Election Commission (EC) has tried to account for this mass displacement through the scheme to enable internally displaced people to vote in relief camps, for which special polling stations will be set up outside the territorial limits of their constituencies. The EC is looking at displaced voters at relief camps in 10 districts — Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Kakching, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Tengnoupal, Jiribam and Ukhrul.

For the scheme, assistant returning officers have been appointed to each district exclusively for the displaced voters.

Pradeep Kumar Jha, Manipur's chief electoral officer, told The Indian Express: "In the 10 districts where there are relief camps, the exercise of notification of polling stations is currently going on. Once we notify the polling stations, ID forms will be distributed to the displaced through which they can specify whether they want to vote at their original polling station or at the special polling station."

In accordance with the submissions through the forms, voters will be assigned to different polling stations, with each special polling station not to have more than 1,200 voters. Apart from those in relief camps, displaced people living with their relatives or friends can also opt to vote at any of the special polling stations by submitting applications through the ID forms.

Jha said the scheme is limited to enabling displaced people to vote from their current location, not changing their constituency. "To vote in a particular constituency, a person has to qualify to be an ordinary resident there. Those staying in relief camps are not ordinary residents, they are temporary residents. However, if a person has permanently transferred themselves lock, stock and barrel, then they can update their constituency during summary revision or continuous revision of the electoral rolls," he said.

According to the schedule released by the EC on Saturday, the most volatile parts of the state – Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Kakching, Bishnupur, Kangpokpi, Churachandpur and Chandel — will vote in Phase 1 on April 19. Jiribam, Pherzawl, Tamenglong, Noney, Senapati, Ukhrul, Kamjong and Tengnoupal will vote on April 26.

Manipur has two Lok Sabha constituencies — the Inner Manipur constituency, which largely covers the Meitei-majority valley areas, and the Outer Manipur constituency, which is reserved for Scheduled Tribes and has alternated between Naga and Kuki-Zomi representatives.

• Behind cheating video: Schools with low passing rate, high dropouts, staff crunch

The Indian Express visited the three schools, all part of the district's Tauru sub-division, and found that behind the scenes that played out in the March 5 video lay larger problems — from shortage of staff to dropouts and high failure rates.

Government Senior Secondary School, Raheri

The school in Raheri village, established in 1952, has a pressing worry: In the last Class 10 Board exam, the school had a pass percentage of 15%. Nuh district, which has consistently struggled on education indicators, itself fared the worst in Haryana with a pass percentage of 51%.

Education department officials said schools with poor percentages were asked for an explanation regarding their performance.

V P Yadav, Chairman of the Board of School Education, Haryana, said, "Students rely on cheating to pass… It's a completely different picture here compared to the rest of Haryana. We have controlled it to a great extent, but Nuh has been a challenge."

Headmistress of the Raheri school, Neeti, 46, who has been teaching in Nuh for 11 years, says the pass percentage is linked to attendance. "Attendance is a big challenge. If children don't come to school, how will they do well in exams? When the harvest season starts, hardly any students come. They are all in the fields helping their parents," says Neeti, adding that they conduct door-to-door surveys to keep track of dropouts, take remedial classes for those lagging behind and hold extra classes on holidays.

"We do what we do, but what use is it if the children don't come?" she adds.

With 1,100 students and 20 teachers, the school is far short of the 35:1 student-teacher ratio that's mandated for upper primary schools under the Right to Education Act. "In Class 10, we have teachers for Maths, English and Hindi. The remaining subjects are taught by primary teachers," she says.

Since the high school has no science teachers, primary teacher Sunil Kumar, 36, teaches Class 10 students. "Some years ago, there was just one teacher for classes 6 to 8. Seven teachers in the primary section had to step in then," Kumar says, adding that the situation improved somewhat in 2020 when the school was upgraded to a higher secondary school and a few teachers were appointed.

Kumar insists it's not all bleak, though. One of his students, Lokesh Kumar, was recently selected to be part of a national team that will visit NASA for its Human Exploration Rover Challenge 2024, a project that will see students from across the world design, develop, build and test human-powered rovers.

"Our schools are struggling, but then there are children who thrive even in such circumstances. Our job as teachers is to try and identify them and create the right environment for them," he says.

Government Senior Secondary School, Padheni

With over 900 students and 20 teachers, including two on deputation, the Padheni school, with classes from 1 to 12, has one teacher for every 44 students — short of the mandated student-teacher ratio of 35:1.

There are other challenges: despite offering a science stream for Class 12 students, the school has no teachers for Biology and Chemistry. Besides, the 65 students of Class 10 have no teachers for Social Science and Science, forcing Class 12 teachers to put in extra hours. Headmistress Mukesh Devi, 52, fills in to teach Hindi in Class 10, while the school has a sole English teacher — on deputation — for classes 9-12. For three years now, classes 1 to 5 have had no teacher.

Devi says she divides the 154 children of these five classes in two classrooms and assigns teachers from other classes to teach them.

"Cheating is quite common in Nuh and because of that, many children don't make an effort to learn," says Devi, who has been working in the district for 20 years.

In a district with one of the highest dropouts in the state, Devi says her biggest challenge is to ensure children stay in the school system. According to 2021-22 Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) data for Nuh, 16% children drop out in Classes 9 and 10 – a rate that's higher than the national average (12.6%) and far above Haryana's 5.9%.

"Many children stay absent for days on end. We then go to their homes and try to persuade them to return. Sometimes, they do, but the average attendance is always around 50%," says Devi, talking of a student who topped the Class 10 exams but her family decided she wouldn't study any further.

"I tracked her down to her grandparents' house and found her working in the fields. After a lot of persuasion, the family finally agreed to send her back to school," adds Devi.

Even when she gets children to continue, it usually doesn't amount to much. "Since we don't have teachers for all subjects and the quality isn't very good, Class 12 students have to go for coaching classes. But families of girls don't encourage that," she says.

On the high dropouts in Nuh, Board chairman Yadav said, "The education of girls was never much of a priority in these parts, though it's changing. The lack of amenities, such as transportation to take students to schools, could also be a factor."

The Padheni school faces a space crunch too, forcing children to sit in the corridor. "A few classrooms were set aside for smart classrooms, an IT lab, a library and a lab for a beauty course. So now we don't have enough rooms for classes," she says.

Tabssum Senior Secondary School, Noorpur

With over 500 students and 15 teachers from classes nursery to 12, the Tabssum school runs out of a building by the road in Noorpur village.

On Tuesday, the school was closed as principal Jaan Mohammad, 48, had taken the students to their exam centres.

In her red and blue uniform, Khaifa, 13, a Class 8 student, is out in the mustard fields, helping her mother. "The principal is not in school today, so we were asked not to come. Yesterday, only 10 of 24 children in my class turned up. So classes were called off yesterday too," she says.

A first-generation learner in her family of nine, Khaifa's studies got disrupted for two years after her sister got married.

Khaifa says she has the same teacher for English and Maths, while Social Sciences and Hindi are handled by another teacher. Though the building has 20 rooms to accommodate the 500-odd students, Khaifa says they have no labs or a library.

Though Tabssum claims to be an English medium school, Khaifa says she can barely speak the language and that most subjects were taught in Hindi.

Speaking on the phone, principal Mohammad maintains the school is well-equipped but admits that dropouts and attendance are a problem.

On cheating, Mohammad says his students can't be singled out since the centre had children from other schools too. "It is a failure of the law enforcement if they cannot prevent such incidents," he says.

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DELHI EXCISE POLICY PROBE

CM in court, gets bail in ED summons case

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

A DELHI court on Saturday granted bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal after he appeared before it following the Enforcement Directorate's (ED's) complaints that he was not complying with its summonses in the liquor policy case.

Noting that the offence allegedly committed by Kejriwal is a bailable one, the Rouse Avenue Court granted him regular bail, directing him to furnish bail bonds worth Rs 15,000 and a surety of like amount. On Friday, a Sessions Court had refused to stay the summons issued against Kejriwal by the Court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra.

Kejriwal had argued that he did not miss the ED summons intentionally, but was unable to do so due to his "hectic schedule as a CM". Senior advocate Ramesh Gupta, appearing for the CM, had submitted: "I (Kejriwal) have been summoned with the intention to be arrested. Just a few hours after it was announced that I will go to Goa for election campaigning, they summoned me… There is a reason I said I could not go as I remain busy in public functions, as a CM. And the magistrate has not considered this."

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal arrives at Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi on Saturday. *Amit Mehra*

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju for the ED, however, said that the CM cannot ask the magisterial court to conduct a "mini trial" now, and added: "If his disobedience was intentional or not is a matter of trial. The defence cannot be looked at at this stage."

Kejriwal had been summoned to appear before the court on March 16 after the ED, for the second time, moved Rouse Avenue Court and filed a complaint against him for allegedly not complying with its summonses. The ED has issued eight summons against Kejriwal so far in the case.

On February 3, after Kejriwal skipped its summons for the fifth time, the ED had filed its first complaint in the court under CrPC sections 190 and 200 for not complying with the agency's summons issued under Section 50 of the PMLA and not joining the investigation.

The court had then told Kejriwal to appear before it on February 17. Kejriwal had appeared before the court on the said date via video-conferencing, saying he could not appear physically due to the confidence motion and Budget session in the Assembly. He had assured the court he would physically appear before it on March 16.

BRS leader Kavitha sent to ED custody till March 23

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

BHARAT RASHTRA Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha, accused of paying Rs 100 crore to AAP leaders in return for liquor licences in Delhi, was on Saturday sent to the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) custody till March 23.

Kavitha, a member of the Telangana Legislative Council and daughter of former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao, was produced before the Special Judge for ED cases, M K Nagpal, a day after the ED took her into custody from Hyderabad. The anti-money laundering agency sought her custody for 10 days but got it for a week.

"It is evident that Ms K Kavitha is involved in the acts of payment of kickbacks to Govt functionaries to gain illegal benefits in the Excise Policy 2021-22 formulation and implementation... Ms K Kavitha is actually involved in the transfer of PoC [proceeds of crime] of Rs. 100 Cr... which was paid to AAP leaders," the agency said in its submission to the Rouse Avenue Court.

Her remand came on a day a metropolitan court granted bail to Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in connection with two ED complaints for skipping its summons in the liquor policy case. His senior party colleagues — Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh — are in jail for their alleged involvement in formulating and implementing the excise policy which raised the profit margins of liquor wholesalers and retailers. The ED has claimed Delhi's ruling dispensation extended them the favour in return for money. Senior advocate Vikram Chaudhary, for Kavitha, said the ED had flouted Supreme Court directions while arresting her. The top court is expected to hear her case on March 19.

BRS leader K Kavitha at the Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi on Saturday. *Gajendra Yadav*

"The arrest is a blatant abuse of power. They have violated the SC's orders... It is a black day in the administration of justice where the SC proceedings are violated... They said in front of the court that they will not summon the accused till the next date of hearing. Following this, they sought adjournments. The moment the senior judge (S K Kaul) retired, they started issuing summons to the accused," said Chaudhary, alleging that Kavitha was arrested after sunset, which is a violation to the law. Special Judge Nagpal asked the agency why it couldn't wait till March 19, when the matter is likely to be heard in the SC.

Special Counsel Zoheb Hossain, representing the ED, submitted the arrest was important as she could destroy proof.

"...This court is of the opinion that provisions of PMLA Section 19, related to the applicant's arrest, have been substantially complied with, and keeping in view the nature of allegations levelled against the accused..., there is a need to remand her to ED custody...," said the Court.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Man kills live-in partner for refusing to cook

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, MARCH 16

DAYS AFTER a woman (32) was found dead at a house under construction in Gurgaon, police have arrested her live-in partner for allegedly murdering her as she didn't cook food for him.

Police said the woman had been living with the accused for about six months. On March 13, police were informed that a woman's body was found in an under-construction building in Choma village. She had injuries on her face, said ACP (Palam Vihar) Naveen Sharma. The woman was identified as Anjali, native of UP, after questioning labourers.

"We collected all details regarding the woman and her past, which led us to the accused... He was arrested on Saturday from Sarai Kale Khan," said Sharma.

The accused, Lallan Yadav (35), from Orahi in Bihar's Madhepura, moved to Delhi, and met Anjali 6-7 months ago. "On the intervening night of March 12-13, he had asked Anjali to cook egg curry. When she refused, he allegedly beat her with an iron rod and belt, and strangled her, resulting in her death...," said Sharma.

JNU STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

HC appoints former SC judge as observer

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE DELHI High Court on Friday appointed Justice V Ramasubramanian, former Supreme Court judge, as an observer to exercise oversight over the activities to be discharged by the election committee (EC) constituted for the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) polls for 2023-24.

A single-judge bench of Justice Sachin Datta, in its March 15, order said: "Respective counsel for the parties are also in agreement that in the meantime, for the purpose of the ongoing poll process, a retired judge of the SC be appointed by this Court, as the observer to exercise oversight over the activities/ functions to be discharged by the EC. For this, Mr Justice V Ramasubramanian, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India, is appointed the observer."

The HC said that the observer shall be entitled to charge appropriate remuneration from the varsity, while disposing of a plea by Sakshi, a student who had challenged the procedure adopted for constituting the EC for electing the JNUSU members, office bearers.

2 apprehended over clip of BJP leader: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, MARCH 16

TWO INDIVIDUALS were apprehended by the Gurgaon Police on Saturday over an alleged objectionable video of a BJP leader and a woman.

DCP (South) Sidhant Jain said: "Two persons have been apprehended today in connection with a case registered in the matter of the contested video doing the rounds... at PS Cyber East; it is under investigation."

The FIR was lodged on a complaint by the BJP IT Cell; they alleged the video was circulated in a bid to defame the politician.

The FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Act, said police.

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NOTICE FOR EMPANELMENT OF MANUFACTURERS/ SUPPLIERS/ PRINTERS/VENDORS/SERVICE PROVIDERS/CONTRACTORS

Life Insurance Corporation of India, Northern Zonal office, New Delhi intends to empanel manufacturers/ suppliers/printers/vendors/service providers/contractors for various items and services for the Zonal Office. The last date of submission of application for the same has been extended till 27.03.2024, 03.00 P.M. For more details and application form please log on to **www.licindia.in** or contact Office Services Department at the above mentioned address. **Zonal Manager**

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act 1993 read with rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rule, 1993) in the matter of
OA NO 441/2021 — **DATE: 11.03.2024**
PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK ...APPLICANT
VERSUS
NIKHIL ARYA & ORS. ...RESPONDENT
To, DEFENDANT
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Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 56,99,682.86/- (RUPEES FIFTY SIX LAKH NINETY NINE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED EIGHTY TWO AND EIGHTY SIX PAISE ONLY)** against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **06.05.2024 At 10.30 A.M.**
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.
All the matters will be taken up through video Conferencing and for that purpose:-
(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the **"Cisco Webex"** application/software: **(ii) "Meeting ID"** and **Password** for the date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar shall be displayed in the daily cause list itself at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in **(iii)** In any exigency qua that the Advocate/Litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No. 23748478.**
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Students in the robotics lab at the SoSE in Rohini. *Tashi Tobgyal*

Capital's 'exclusive' schools

1.44 lakh applications for 6,000 seats — the 38 Schools of Specialised Excellence have seen an uptick in students keen to take admission to its five streams for the upcoming academic session. Three years after Delhi began experimenting with this new system, **ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND** hits the ground to see how these schools are faring

IS THIS a board exam, wondered an autorickshaw driver, as anxious parents, some with school bags slung over their shoulders, and children, crowded around the gate of Delhi government's School of Specialised Excellence (SoSE) in Kalkaji one morning in the middle of February.

The school's security guard allowed students in one by one for what was not a board exam, but a group discussion — which forms the second round of testing for admission to the humanities course for classes 9 and 11 at Delhi's SoSEs.

Sitting in a classroom with four other students for the discussion that day, on "whether social media is destroying creativity", Doli spoke about the problem of cyberbullying and loneliness from excessive social media use. She was studying at a private school in Sangam Vihar that offered classes only till Grade 8, prompting her to apply to the SoSE for Class 9. "... With the financial position at home, one of my teachers said I could apply to one of these government schools that are good," said Doli, whose father is a driver and mother a housewife. She intends to take the UPSC exam eventually.

> **High-End 21st Century Skills struck me as something different. It was difficult to adapt in the beginning... but I was able to explore graphic design... the course teaches you to use design tools,"**
>
> **KHUSHI CHAUDHRY,** A CLASS 11 STUDENT AT THE SoSE IN ROHINI SECTOR 11

Also part of the discussion was Darshana Sakla; her take was that social media could be useful, entertaining, and "increase the capability to think". She too was in a private school in Tigri Extension that offered classes only till Grade 8. "The first admission round, a test, went well...," said Darshana, whose father is associated with scrap recycling.

The two girls are among 1,44,200 applicants seeking admission to the 38 SoSEs — the government's showpiece schools, rich in facilities and with small class sizes — for the upcoming academic year. This is 24 times the number of seats — around 6,000 — likely to be up for grabs in these schools.

There are five streams on offer, from STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and humanities to 'High-End 21st Century Skills' (HE-21) which teaches robotics, graphic design and coding. There is also a specific stream to prepare one to get into the NDA, taught at the Armed Forces Preparatory School. The fifth is Performing and Visual Arts.

In AAP-ruled Punjab too, where the party had pitched the 'Delhi model' of education during the 2022 Assembly polls in the state, similar specialised schools, called 'Schools of Eminence', are being set up.

The Indian Express visited two schools in Delhi, at Kalkaji and Rohini, and spoke to students and teachers to understand how they are faring.

What's on offer

Since they were set up three years ago in 2021-22, the number of students applying to SoSEs has been on the rise. This year for Class 9, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) has received the most number of applications — at 37,960 — while Humanities is the second most popular. In Class 11, the highest number of applications this time was for STEM — 28,135. *(see box).*

The application influx for STEM in Class 11 could have to do with the assistance provided for crucial entrance exams like NEET and JEE: SoSEs offering this stream have Vidyamandir Classes as a knowledge partner, while sessions and time-bound papers are offered for competitive exam preparation.

Class 11 student Aashray Kumar, who moved to the Kalkaji SoSE — which offers STEM and humanities — from a private school, said, "I enjoy math and science. The fees in my old school were high... I learnt about the SoSE during the pandemic. Here, coaching and school go together..." Kumar lives in Govindpuri and hopes to pursue a BTech programme. His father is a home tutor.

Ayushi, also a Class 11 student who moved to the SoSE from another government school, said: "This school is better... there are more and better labs. There are workshops too; we had one recently on intellectual property rights." Her father is an auto driver.

For some students, it isn't just about the infrastructure, but also the specialisations themselves.

AT THE 38 CAMPUSES

The Rohini school offers 'High-End 21st Century Skills'. The stream has six specialised courses: digital media design, robotics, coding, fashion, finance and accounting, and electromechanical production. *Tashi Tobgyal*

OVER THE YEARS

YEAR	APPLICATIONS
2021-22	18,330
2022-23	42,048
2023-24	92,309
2024-25	1,44,200

BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR SoSEs

2023-24*	₹100 cr
2024-25	₹42 cr

**modified revised outlay of ₹55 cr*

APPLICATIONS FOR EACH SPECIALISATION FOR UPCOMING SESSION

CLASS 9	
STEM	37,960
Humanities	21,584
High-End 21st Century Skills	16,398
Armed Forces Preparatory School	11,135
Performing and Visual Arts	8,968
Class 11	
STEM	28,135
Humanities	11,737
Armed Forces Preparatory School	8,283

TALKING NUMBERS

- Delhi began with 20 SoSEs in 2021-22. The schools have been created by converting Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas (22 CBSE-govt schools that had access to good facilities & infrastructure, admissions to which were done through an entrance test for class VI and XI) and 6 Schools of Excellence. The total no. of SoSEs are now 38
- Unlike RPVVs where only students from govt schools could apply, any student from a recognised Delhi school can apply to the SoSE. However, a minimum of 50% of students are to be from govt or govt-aided schools
- In the 2021-22 budget, the Delhi govt announced that 100 SoSEs would be set up. The govt has said that in 2024-25, specialisations would be added to 14 buildings, including three new school buildings

Khushi Chaudhry, a Class 11 student at the SoSE in Rohini Sector 11, which offers the HE-21 stream, moved here from a private one with this particular specialisation in mind. "During Covid, we would have online classes and take exams. It was like being trapped. Then I came across branding and graphic designing and heard about SoSEs. Science would have been a safer option, but HE-21 struck me as something different. It was difficult to adapt in the beginning... but I was able to explore graphic design... the course teaches you how to use design tools," she said.

Chaudhry is learning digital media design, one of six specialised courses offered in the stream. The others are robotics, coding, fashion, finance and accounting, and electromechanical production. While students get to try all six in classes 9 and 10, they choose one for classes 11 and 12.

Of the 82 students in Class 11 in the school, 20 chose coding, while 10 picked robotics. The finance and accounting course, which includes aspects of investing, was the most popular, with 27 students.

The Rohini school also offers several facilities: Chromebooks, iPads, and Mac desktops for students; six labs and smart classrooms. The robotics and electromechanical production ones in particular are equipped with sensors, micro-controllers, electrical circuits, and equipment for soldering and welding.

For Md Shaan Serwal, a Class 11 student who picked robotics, the lab is of great help since equipment is difficult to come by elsewhere. "I might still be able to figure out coding online. (But for robotics)... we get components and hardware (in school)... I will need both robotics and coding for game development, which I want to do later," said Serwal, who moved to the SoSE from a government school.

Aman Khushwaha, a class 9 student working with a group to put a small car together in one of the labs, said he wanted to join a Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya after his sister had done well at one such school, but admissions had stopped. He picked the SoSE instead, hoping to study coding and robotics.

The new system, meanwhile, saw its share of apprehensions.

Class 11 student Harshita Gupta, specialising in digital media design at the Rohini SoSE, moved from a private school. "What fascinated me was the specialised subjects. I didn't want to do humanities or science... Some of my relatives said this whole system was an experiment and we were going to be guinea pigs... my mother too didn't want me to join here since the idea is that private schools are better. But we decided to apply anyway," said the 16-year-old, whose father is a tuition teacher.

Said school principal Vipin Kumar, "This is all new... HE-21 was new to us too when it was introduced in 2021. Even parents are becoming more aware, slowly."

He added that of the 288 students in his school — 178 boys and 110 girls — around 40% are likely to be from private schools.

Incidentally, only a small fraction of students in Delhi have access to such sought-after facilities — 8,107 students were enrolled in SoSEs in 2023-24, when the total number of students in 1,039 Delhi government schools was 17.85 lakh in 2022-23

> **The idea is to offer skill-based education... DBSE provides for a continuous assessment system. This can make sure exam fever is limited,"**
>
> **VIPIN KUMAR,** PRINCIPAL OF ROHINI SoSE

Flexible curriculum

SoSEs are affiliated to the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE), introduced in 2021 with a focus on "understanding and learning rather than score marks by rote learning". It has partnered with the International Baccalaureate (IB), a private international education board, to implement its programmes, including assessment and teaching methods.

"The idea is to offer skill-based education. Not everybody might want to pursue higher education after Class 12... CBSE in RPVVs had a purely academic focus... DBSE provides for a continuous assessment system. This can make sure exam fever is limited," Principal Kumar said.

The curriculum can also be flexible, he added: "Teachers participate in deciding course content and there are co-creation workshops. DBSE has a curriculum team, and knowledge partners are also involved. Before each unit, teachers can decide on additions and rectifications in the unit. So, the curriculum may change as per need."

While it offers more options to students, DBSE has been different for teachers as well, said Vineeta Mathur, PGT (postgraduate teacher) computer science, who teaches coding at the Rohini school.

Preeti Sharma, who teaches English, said, "The curriculum is different, and we need to prepare for it. Students, for example, are learning to hold interviews; curriculum is based on application more than just theory."

Foundational subjects like English and Mathematics are taught at the SoSEs, depending on the stream.

According to Suman Taneja, Principal at the Kalkaji SoSE, which has 528 students, with a maximum of 30 in one section, the assessment is not percentage-based: "In classes 9 and 10, there are descriptors and grade points... Pen-and-paper tests happen at the end of the term. After each unit plan, there is a unit end assessment."

She added: "Parents are usually confused that there is no percentage, no ranking. We have an orientation for them in Class 9."

On study material, Taneja explained that unit plans are prepared for teachers and student companions — workbooks and notebooks — and shared with students. "These are prepared in consultation with teachers from different schools... NCERT textbooks and other resources like those for NEET and JEE and refresher books for science and social studies are used for reference. Teachers also refer to MYP (Middle Years Programme of IB) resources for the foundational courses. For the advanced courses, knowledge partners have their material that is shared with students," she said.

Explaining how teachers are hired, she said that apart from the resource persons engaged by the knowledge partners, teachers in SoSEs are government school teachers already in the system.

"An announcement is made through a circular asking teachers who wish to join SoSEs to come forward for an interface. A panel is created for each subject to interact with these teachers to know how well they can adapt to the new pedagogy. If they are found suitable, they are transferred to the SoSE. Once they join, they go through co-creation and orientation sessions like other teachers, which happens every two months," Taneja added.

LS POLL DATES OUT; DELHI VOTES ON MAY 25

Cong's Delhi dilemma: Balancing gender and caste in picking faces

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

WITH DATES for the Lok Sabha polls declared on Saturday, the Congress is scheduled to take a call on candidates for the three seats it is contesting in Delhi on Tuesday, said sources. The Capital will vote on May 25. AAP, the Congress' INDIA bloc ally, has already declared its picks for four seats. The BJP too has declared candidates for all 7 seats.

Party sources said around half a dozen former Delhi ministers and MPs are in the running for tickets from Northeast and Northwest Delhi and Chandni Chowk. The party, sources said, faces a significant conundrum given AAP's picks — Kuldeep Kumar from East, Mahabal Mishra from West, Sahi Ram from South and Somnath Bharti from New Delhi — with regard to the gender ratio of the alliance's joint front against the BJP; the latter has fielded Kamaljeet Sehrawat from West and Bansuri Swaraj from New Delhi.

"Gender ratio of candidates is as significant, if not more, as the caste and community equation of any political panel. Since AAP has fielded four men, the onus of introducing balance is now on the Congress... We also have to factor in the representation of Baniya, Muslim and Jat communities — on a very limited number of seats," said a senior leader.

According to party sources, front-runners for a ticket included Krishna Tirath, Alka Lamba, Bhisham Sharma, Raj Kumar Chauhan, Jai Prakash Aggarwal, Mateen Ahmed, Kanhaiya Kumar and Sandeep Dikshit.

Another issue before the party is to ensure symmetry between the prevalent caste-community equation of a particular LS seat and a potential pick's "winnability". "AAP has fielded two Poorvanchalis... the Congress... is unlikely to field them to avoid over-representation," a party source said.

"Similarly, while the party has over one potential choice from the Brahmin community, they don't seem to be a fit for Chandni Chowk and NE Delhi. If this combination is not successfully chalked out, we may ask for a review of the joint panel of candidates, including AAP's picks, by both AAP and Congress leadership going forward," the source added.

PM cavalcade causing traffic snarls, Adhir to Modi

Congress leader seeks Modi's intervention to address issue, stresses that PM's security is of paramount importance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

LEADER OF the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has flagged to Prime Minister Narendra Modi the issue of traffic snarls in the national capital due to the movement of his cavalcade.

In a letter to the PM, written on Friday, Chowdhury said that while his security was of paramount concern, he was seeking intervention to avoid hardship to people. He wrote that while there can be no compromise on the PM's security, people had missed flights or trains due to traffic diversions.

"Nevertheless, it is a fact that the commuters on the public roads, who are from varied sections of the society and may include daily wagers, patients, office-goers, school and college going children, are often put to immense hardship owing to blocking/ diversion of traffic, which is often for long durations, due to VVIP movement," he wrote.

Traffic restrictions were seen in the city on Thursday and Friday due to VVIP movement, as per sources in Delhi traffic police.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury; Prime Minister Narendra Modi

"I have heard and am also told of instances of people missing their flights, trains, examinations, as also delays in getting critically needed medical care owing to traffic blocks. The effect on the commuters that your movement on Delhi's roads has been having may not be in your notice and knowledge in complete and objective terms," Chowdhury wrote.

He added that the authorities concerned, "including experts on traffic management" needed to work out plans to implement appropriate plans to minimise the hardship that the public was being put through "owing to VVIP movement on the roads of the capital city".

"I would once again like to reiterate here that your safety and security are of paramount concern on which there can never ever be any let up or compromise. At the same time, it will be just and proper to ensure that the general public is not put to any avoidable hardship due to the disruption caused to the traffic movement on the roads of New Delhi," Chowdhury said.

A senior traffic officer, requesting anonymity, said, "There was heavy VIP movement in the New Delhi and Central Delhi area on Friday... traffic police officers were accordingly briefed as there were two PM routes for an event... specific diversions were made in a bid to prevent any grievance to commuters".

The officer said that while no advisory was given out as VIP movement is generally not disclosed, it led to delays for regular commuters.

On Thursday, when the Prime Minister attended an event at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, an advisory was issued, which said that traffic would be slow on several parts of central and south Delhi.

L-G nod to key urban development projects

UPASIKA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR V K Saxena on Saturday made a slew of announcements on the heels of the Lok Sabha poll dates being declared.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) allotted 1,396 flats out of 1,675 constructed at Jailorwala Bagh in North Delhi's Ashok Vihar, under the 'Jahan Jhuggi, Wahin Makan' scheme. The flats have been allotted to the residents of three JJ clusters — 1,078 flats to residents of Jailorwala Bagh JJ cluster, and 318 to nearby Golden Park Rampura JJ cluster and JJ clusters opposite Mata Jai Kaur Public School. The beneficiaries have to "contribute" Rs 1.41 lakh, with the construction cost being Rs 25 lakh for each flat.

On Saturday, the L-G directed officials concerned to "expedite the allotment process". He also approved the conversion of leasehold industrial plots to freehold. This may directly impact around 22,000 industrial units that were relocated by the DSIIDC between 2000 and 2001.

ADVERTORIAL

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Breaking Barriers, Building Health: Empowering Women Worldwide

*"The empowered woman is powerful beyond measure and beautiful beyond description." - **Steve Maraboli***

WE ARE aware that International women's day is being celebrated on 8 March. The theme for this year's campaign is "INSPIRE INCLUSION," with the slogan "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." This emphasizes the significance of gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and their rights to lead healthier lives.

International Women's Day is a poignant reminder of the progress made in women's rights and the challenges that remain. One vital aspect of this progress is the improvement in women's health, yet disparities persist across the world. Today I will shed light on key women's health issues, from reproductive health to mental well-being, and the importance of access to healthcare and education in achieving gender equality and a healthy society.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Women's reproductive health is a vital aspect of their overall well-being. Access to contraception empowers women to make informed decisions about their reproductive options, benefiting both themselves and their families. Maternal healthcare is also essential, as it helps reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates, ensures safe childbirth, and provides necessary postpartum care.

In addition to these, cancer screening is another critical aspect of women's reproductive health. Regular screenings, such as mammograms for breast cancer and Pap smears for cervical cancer, are essential for early detection and treatment. These screenings can significantly reduce the mortality and morbidity rates associated with these types of cancer, highlighting the importance of accessible and comprehensive healthcare for women.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Gynaecological screenings are essential for women's health and include various tests and exams to detect potential issues early.

- **Pap Smear:** A test to screen for cervical cancer by collecting cells from the cervix. It is recommended every 3 years for women aged 21-35yearsand thereafter every year .
- **HPV Test:** This test checks for the presence of human papillomavirus (HPV), which can cause cervical cancer. It is often done in conjunction with a Pap smear.
- **Breast Exam:** Clinical breast exams are recommended periodically to check for lumps or other changes in the breasts.
- **Mammogram:** A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast tissue used to screen for breast cancer. Women aged 40 and older should have regular mammograms.
- **Bone Density Test:** this test measures bone density and is recommended for postmenopausal women or those at risk for osteoporosis.
- **STD Testing:** Screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is important for sexually active women to detect and treat infections early.

HPV SCREENING

HPV screening is a crucial part of women's health care. HPV (human papillomavirus) is a common sexually transmitted infection that can lead to cervical cancer if left untreated. WHO aims at eliminating cervical cancer by the year 2030.

DR. BANDANA SODHI
MD, DNB (Obstetrics & Gynaecology)
Advanced Gyn Laparoscopic and Hysteroscopic Surgeon
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Former Faculty with AFMC, Pune and Army Hospital (Research & Referral) New Delhi

- **HPV Test:** The HPV test looks for the presence of high-risk HPV types in cervical cells. It is often done in conjunction with a Pap smear (co-testing)
- **Follow-up:** If HPV is detected, further testing or follow-up may be needed, such as a colposcopy or biopsy, to determine if there are any abnormal cells that require treatment.
- **Vaccination:** HPV prevention vaccination is recommended for girls starting at age 9 and can be given till age of 45 years , as it can prevent the most common types of HPV that cause cancer and genital warts.
- **Importance:** HPV screening is crucial because it can detect the virus early, before it leads to cervical cancer. Early detection and treatment of abnormal cells can prevent the development of cervical cancer.

MENTAL HEATH

Mental health is another area where women face unique challenges. The stigma and cultural norms often prevent them from seeking help. Integrating mental health services into primary care and promoting mental health awareness are crucial steps

REGULAR HEALTH CHECK UPS

Building women's strength and resilience medically involves a holistic approach that addresses physical, mental, and emotional well-being. By implementing these strategies, we can help women lead healthier and more fulfilling lives

- **Regular Health Check-ups:** Encouraging women to undergo regular health check-ups can help detect and address health issues early.
- **Nutrition and Exercise:** Promoting a healthy lifestyle through balanced nutrition and regular physical activity can enhance overall health and resilience.
- **Mental Health Support:** Providing access to mental health services and support can help women manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.
- **Education and Awareness:** Educating women about their bodies, health risks, and preventive measures empowers them to make informed decisions about their health.
- **Support Networks:** Building strong support networks can provide women with the emotional and social support they need to cope with challenges.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Ensuring access to affordable and quality healthcare services is crucial for maintaining women's health and resilience.
- **Empowerment:** Empowering women to advocate for their health needs and rights can help them navigate the healthcare system more effectively.
- **Preventive Care:** Encouraging women to undergo screenings and vaccinations can prevent diseases and promote overall health and well-being.

ACCESIBILITY TO HEALTH CARE

Accessing healthcare is a significant challenge for many women, particularly those in rural areas. To improve access, it is essential to invest in healthcare infrastructure, offer training for healthcare providers, and implement policies that prioritize women's health needs.

CONCLUSION

In summary, women's health is a matter that extends beyond individual well-being; it is a societal concern that demands collective effort . Meeting the varied health needs of women, spanning from reproductive health to mental well-being. By giving precedence to women's health, enhancing healthcare infrastructure, and enabling women to make informed choices about their health, we can cultivate a healthier, fairer future for everyone. Let us pledge and unite in advocating for women's health and striving towards a world where every woman can flourish.

"A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture, and transform."

Issued in public interest by Women's Clinic, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi

BALLOTIN

- In 1951-52, for the first Lok Sabha elections, there were 17.3 crore voters among a total population of 36.1 crore. Now there are 96.8 crore voters in a population of about 140 crore.
- Since the first election, the electorate has grown nearly six-fold while the overall population has risen four-fold.
- Voter turnout, too, has risen consistently — from 45.7% in 1951-52 to a record 67.4% in 2019.
- Centenarians will account for 2.18 lakh voters in 2024.
- In 1951, just 1.96 lakh polling booths were enough. Now, the general election will require 10.5 lakh booths, the highest ever.
- The first Lok Sabha elections to use Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) across the country was in 2004. Then, 10.75 lakh EVMs were deployed for polling. This year, about 55 lakh EVMs will be used.
- In the 1957 polls, there were 20 phases of voting, the highest ever. In the past two polls, voting was completed across 7 phases.

MODI HAS INFUSED IDEOLOGICAL RATIONALE INTO 370-SEAT TARGET

Modi as mascot, BJP rides on vikas, Hindutva; INDIA totters

BJP has turned into a carrier of PM's messages — and the chief beneficiary of his popularity

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the Lok Sabha poll schedule by the Election Commission has set the stage for a grand battle between an upbeat BJP led by two-term Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is looking for a third consecutive win, and the fragmented Opposition INDIA alliance, which has yet to find its act together.

The BJP is looking to capitalise on not just PM Modi's popularity and his "personal guarantees" but also on the fervour created by the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya less than two months ago.

Unlike the past Lok Sabha elections, the incumbent BJP appears confident about clinching the upcoming polls, even as the Opposition bloc has been struggling to come up with issues, ideas and narrative to counter Modi.

While the BJP has managed to balance its pulls and pressures to project a united face rallied behind Modi, the parties of the INDIA alliance are still working at cross-purposes and going after each other, with the Congress and a few major Opposition players failing to reach the seat-sharing agreements in some key states.

The BJP has balanced its pulls and pressures to project a united face behind Modi. *File*

Setting a target of 370 seats for the BJP and 400 seats for the NDA, PM Modi has put the past behind for the larger cause of a triumph, roping in even partners who had earlier targeted him personally. In the last few months, the NDA, which already had over 30 smaller allies, has expanded its fold to induct new partners – the JD(S), JD(U), TDP and Jana Sena Party (JSP).

The BJP's alliance with the JJP in Haryana has however collapsed recently, even as its negotiations to bring back its erstwhile ally SAD have not progressed much while alliance talks with Odisha's ruling BJD still remains inconclusive.

Despite being in pole position, the BJP has not left any stones unturned to see that its election machinery is well-oiled. While stitching up alliances with various regional and smaller parties in the regions where its prospects are relatively weaker, the party has already released two lists — with 195 and 72 candidates, fielding almost 25 per cent fresh faces, that too without any hiccups or public outbursts from the dropped MPs so far.

Modi has infused an ideological rationale into the 370-seat target for the BJP rank and file, asserting that it will be a tribute to the party's key ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee

While sounding optimistic about its target, some BJP leaders admit that there could be several factors which could be bumps in its way. While its existing seats in a number of its bastions — Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — are already at the maximum level, the southern states, except Karnataka, still remain out of bounds for the BJP despite its unrelenting efforts.

A significant difference between 2019 and 2024 would be the changes which have occurred in the BJP itself. Although the party remains a formidable organisation, it has now been overshadowed by Modi, essentially turning into a carrier of the PM's messages — and becoming the chief beneficiary of his popularity.

The outcome of the recent Assembly elections in north India has also indicated that the Opposition's welfare politics or OBC push may not be getting much traction. In contrast, Modi's "social engineering", his "guarantees" and his pitch for "vikas" (development) worked for the BJP again.

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DAUGHTER IN TOUGH CONTEST, SHARAD PAWAR TAPS FRIENDS AND RIVALS TO CLEAR HER WAY

The INDIA bloc has struggled to sustain its momentum. *File*

Cong hopes for repeat of 2004, faces challenge in the heartland

Cong has been struggling to build a narrative that BJP can be defeated

MANOJ C G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

RAHUL GANDHI has walked the extra mile, while his party Congress has swallowed pride and joined a band of disparate Opposition parties to stop the Narendra Modi juggernaut and announced, perhaps for the first time, a raft of poll promises even before the election schedule was announced.

Despite these unprecedented political moves, the Congress is entering the Lok Sabha battlefield with just a flicker of hope of a repeat of the 2004 verdict. Its grand plan to ensure that there is one Opposition candidate against the BJP in 400 plus Lok Sabha seats has not fully materialised — there will still be Opposition coalitions in several states — and the INDIA alliance has struggled to sustain its momentum after its much-hyped launch in Patna last year largely because of internal divisions and bickerings besides some high-profile exits.

The Congress is also entering the Lok Sabha campaign perhaps with a sense of deja vu.

In 2019, its campaign had two broad themes — the "*chowkidar chor hai*" line of attack against Prime Minister Modi over the Rafale fighter jet deal, and the ambitious promise of a minimum income guarantee to the poor, or NYAY as it was called. And now, with the party having revived NYAY, revelations about the nature of anonymous contributions to political parties through electoral bonds will form the dual core of its attack.

The grand old party has added one more layer — a relentless pitch for a caste census and the talk of representation for the OBCs, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

But the main Opposition party appears has been struggling to build a political discourse and narrative that the BJP can be defeated and that the INDIA bloc can be its credible alternative. The faltering alliance is yet to come up with a common programme, or articulate a clear governance agenda. Not even once have the alliance partners managed to bring all its top leaders together on one single public platform. The best case scenario, for many in the Congress, is a repeat of a 2004-like verdict, when the BJP's "India Shining" campaign had come a cropper.

The Congress hopes Rahul's Yatras — the second one centered around the theme of "Nyay" — have struck a chord with the people. The promises it has announced so far are tailored for and focused on the unemployed youth, women, tribals, Dalits, the working class and the farmers, and dovetail into the larger theme of justice — social, economic and political.

North India, however, remains the Achilles heel. The Congress was decimated in the Hindi heartland both in 2014 and 2019, resulting in the party plunging to its all time low tally of 44 in 2014 and 52 in the last Lok Sabha elections.

The big question is whether the Congress would be able to make a comeback in the Hindi speaking states, where the BJP hopes the consecration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya will have a huge appeal.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS UP BY 6%

The big numbers: 96.8 cr voters, nearly half women, 2% 1st-timers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

WITH THE Election Commission (EC) on Saturday announcing the schedule of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, 96.8 crore electors are set to vote across seven phases. Polling will be held between April 19 and June 1, followed by results on June 4.

India's electorate has grown manifold since its first Lok Sabha election in 1951-52, when there were just 17.32 crore voters. Compared to 2019, the number of registered voters is up by 6% from 91.2 crore. Since the beginning of 2023 alone, the EC has added 2.63 crore new voters.

Of the additional 5.6 crore voters since 2019, 1.8 crore are first-time voters, the EC said, or about 1.9% of the total. Compared to 2019, when there were 1.5 crore first-time voters, enrollment of those aged 18-19 is up by about 20% this year, significant when several issues related to youths, such as unemployment, educational opportunities, are big concerns among voters. Ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, first-time voters accounted for a marginally lower share of the electorate at 1.64%. This time, there are also 19.7 crore young voters aged 20 to 29.

There has been an upward trend in the registration of women voters too, with the gender ratio up from 928 in 2019 to 948 now, with men accounting for 49.7 crore voters compared to 47.1 crore women. In 2019, 46.5 crore men and 43.1 crore women formed the electorate. This year, there are 12 states with a gender ratio more than 1,000 compared to 8 states in 2019. Women also account for 85.3 lakh first-time voters. The number of transgender voters has risen from 39,683 to over 48,000 over the past five years.

The gender ratio is up from 928 in 2019 to 948 now. *File*

In 2019, too, the elections were held across seven phases. This year, the first phase will be the most expansive, covering 21 states and 102 constituencies. Last time, too, the first phase saw the most states go to polls at 20 but it was only in the third phase that the most seats, at 115, voted together.

The number of polling booths is up from 10.35 lakh in 2019 to 10.5 lakh now. The EC is deputing more than 1.5 crore officials and security personnel to oversee voting. In 2019, allegations by the Opposition CPI(M) of voter suppression and threat to its supporters had led to the EC cancelling elections in the Tripura East seat.

The EC also noted the influence of money on polls, highlighting the seizures made during recent state elections. In 11 state Assembly elections in 2022-23, about Rs 3,400 crore in contraband was seized, up by 835% from five years prior.

In Lok Sabha polls, too, seizures spiked from 2014 to 2019, from a total of approximately Rs 1,200 crore to Rs 3,476 crore. In 2014, drugs alone accounted for Rs 804 crore of the total seizures; by 2019, they accounted for Rs 1,280 crore.

In 2019, Tamil Nadu saw the highest value of seizures at Rs 952 crore, followed by Gujarat at Rs 554 crore and Delhi at Rs 430 crore. Notably, polling was cancelled in Tamil Nadu's Vellore seat after Rs 12 crore in cash was allegedly seized from a DMK leader's associate.

How the poll code took shape

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE MODEL Code of Conduct (MCC) is coming into force following the announcement of the Lok Sabha poll schedule by the Election Commission (EC) Saturday. The MCC forbids ministers from using official machinery for poll work and from combining official visits with electioneering. Advertisements extolling the work of the incumbent government using public money are to be avoided. The government cannot announce any financial grants, promise construction facilities, and make any ad hoc appointments during the time the Code is in force.

Kerala was the first state to adopt a code of conduct for elections. In 1960, ahead of the Assembly elections in the state, the administration prepared a draft code that covered important aspects of electioneering such as processions, political rallies, and speeches.

It was only in 1974, just before the mid-term general elections, that the ECI released a formal MCC. It also set up bureaucratic bodies at the district level to oversee its implementation. This Code was also circulated during parliamentary elections of 1977. Until this time, the MCC was meant to guide the conduct of political parties and candidates only.

However, on September 12, 1979, at a meeting of all political parties, the Commission was apprised of the misuse of official machinery by parties in power. The Commission was told that ruling parties monopolised public spaces, making it difficult for others to hold meetings. There were also examples of the party in power publishing advertisements at the cost of the public exchequer.

The EC, just before the 1979 elections, released a revised code with seven parts, with one part devoted to the party in power and what it could and could not do once polls were announced. The MCC has now evolved as a key part of conducting fair and free elections.

A political billboard is pulled down in Lucknow after the Model Code of Conduct came into effect following the announcement of Lok Sabha election dates, Saturday. *Vishal Srivastav*

KEY ISSUES

The 10 regions – and issues – to watch out for in the LS polls

VIKAS PATHAK & MANOJ C G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

WHILE THERE are several issues which are expected to play out in the coming Lok Sabha polls, it may boil down to a fight between 'Modi Ki Guarantee' vs Congress's 'Nyay' guarantees.

Apart from the guarantee vs guarantee narrative, the issues likely to come up in the campaign are unemployment and price rise; abrogation of Article 370, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the start of the process towards a Uniform Civil Code; the Ram Mandir consecration; electoral bonds data; and farm issues.

Against these issues, these will be the 10 things to watch out for in the polls, region-wise:

1 BJP's southern expansion

Of the 129 Lok Sabha seats in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and the Union territory of Puducherry, the BJP currently holds only 29. In the run-up to the elections, the BJP has focused on the South, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the push. The party realises that it needs to make gains in this region, having saturated its performance in the Hindi belt, if it wants to come close to its target of 370 for the BJP alone.

2 Hindi heartland, and will Cong drought end

The Congress was decimated in the Hindi heartland both in 2014 and 2019, resulting in the party plunging to its all-time low tally of 44 in 2014 and 52 in the last Lok Sabha elections. The Congress hopes to do well in the South. However, this will not be enough if the party wants to make a dent in the coming polls.

3 UP, and impact of Ram Temple

The BJP won 71 of 80 seats in UP in 2014 (73, counting the NDA), and 62 (64 for the NDA) in 2019. The SP, BSP and RLD had allied in 2019, helping them dent the BJP dominance. This time, the RLD is with the NDA, the SP is with the Congress, and BSP is alone. That apart, the inauguration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya, plus gains for the Hindu side at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple-Gyanvapi Masjid complex, are expected to boost the BJP.

The opening of Ram Temple is expected to boost the BJP. *File*

4 Will it be 2019 again in Bihar?

With Nitish Kumar-led JD(U)'s re-entry, the NDA is back to its formidable combination in Bihar which had helped it to 39 out of 40 seats. With Chirag Paswan's LJP (R), this alliance brings together the upper castes, the non-Yadav OBCs, the EBCs and Dalit Dusadhs. On the other side are the RJD, Congress and Left, with a largely Muslim-Yadav base, plus some EBC influence. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has been drawing crowds with jobs as an agenda, beyond caste politics.

5 CAA, and how it plays out in Bengal, Assam

The BJP has been gaining ground in Bengal, but is still nowhere close to dislodging the Trinamool Congress. This time, it is hoping that the Sandeshkhali episode and its fulfilled promise of easing citizenship for refugees under the CAA will give it the kickoff it needs in Bengal. At the same time, the BJP's opponents are hoping it will face blowback from the CAA in Assam.

6 The Punjab puzzle

While the Congress was a force in Punjab till the last Lok Sabha elections, the Aam Aadmi Party dealt it a blow in the 2022 Assembly polls. The Congress has not been able to get its house in order still. What might help the two parties is that the BJP remains relatively weak in the state.

7 Maharashtra matters

Maharashtra has been in an endless churn over the last few years, with both Shiv Sena and NCP undergoing vertical splits. Will the parties matter, or the leaders, could well decide how Maharashtra goes this time.

8 Reading Haryana changes

Haryana has also seen quite some churn in recent months. The BJP has tried to recalibrate its calculations with a government reshuffle, making an OBC the CM, and cutting off ties with Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party, whose Jat base might stay on now with him.

9 The Andhra experiment

The BJP has tied up with Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and JanaSena Party of Pawan Kalyan, and will contest 6 Lok Sabha seats in a state where it drew a blank in 2019. It has bet on anti-incumbency against the YSRCP government of Jagan Mohan Reddy, with the Assembly polls being held simultaneously.

10 Karnataka, and can Congress repeat 2023

The Congress made a strong comeback in the Assembly polls held in 2023.It has two heavyweights in Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar, who are capable of thwarting BJP challenges.

Parties wanted joint polls, admin said it won't be possible: CEC on J&K elections

DAMINI NATH & ARUN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly could not be held along with Lok Sabha polls for lack of additional security that would be required for each Assembly candidate, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said Saturday.

While announcing the schedule for the Lok Sabha, four state Assembly and 26 Assembly by-polls, the CEC did not announce the polls to the J&K Assembly that are also due. Asked why this was, Kumar said that while political parties in J&K had all asked for the polls to be held simultaneously, the administration had said it would not be possible.

"The entire administrative machinery said in one voice that they can't do it simultaneously," he said.

During the Commission's visit to J&K earlier this week, Kumar interacted with the parties as well as government, police and other agencies. According to him, the administration said each of the 90 Assembly seats would have 10-12 candidates and each of the roughly 1,000 candidates would need to be provided security due to the circumstances in J&K.

This, he said, would lead to an additional requirement of 400 to 500 companies of security personnel, which was not possible while the Lok Sabha elections were on across the country. He said that immediately after the Lok Sabha elections are complete, the security forces would be available. "We stand committed. The Assembly elections will be held soon," he said.

He said the Jammu and Reorganisation Act, 2019 and the Delimitation Act were not in sync and this was only fixed by an amendment to the reorganisation Act passed by Parliament in December 2023. "There was no occasion for the commission to conduct elections till that… Our meter started in December 2023," he said.

The last Assembly elections in J&K were in 2014, before the 2019 reorganisation changed the status of the state and converted it into two Union Territories – J&K (with Assembly) and Ladakh (without an Assembly).

The Indian Express had reported on January 10 that the Assembly elections were likely to be held after the Lok Sabha polls. Upholding the abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the State, the Supreme Court had in December 2023 ordered the EC to hold the Assembly elections by September 30.

Following the CEC's comments, former CM and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah wrote on X, "So much for 'One Nation One Election'. The EC is unable to conduct assembly polls in J&K with the general election even when they acknowledge that elections are due."

People's Democratic Party leader Naeem Akhtar and Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader M Y Tarigami also expressed disappointment and concern over the EC's decision, saying it has left the people of J&K feeling excluded from the democratic process.

Rajya Sabha MP from Shiv Sena UBT Priyanka Chaturvedi wrote on X, "No state election schedule for Jammu and Kashmir? Could have been held simultaneously considering even Hon SC had asked for elections to be held as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, the Director General of J&K Police, R R Swain, and the Nagrota-based 16 Corps Commander Lt General Navin Sachdeva jointly presided over a high-level meeting to review the security of Jammu region.

The officers attending the meeting discussed in detail a wide range of security challenges facing the region and "keeping in view the different strengths and expertise of different agencies and forces, coordination modules and action plans were drawn for execution", said an official statement issued by J&K police.

As per the schedule announced by the Election Commission, the Udhampur parliamentary constituency will go to polls on April 19 during the first phase, while polling in the Jammu parliamentary constituency will be held on April 26 during the second phase.

The Anantnag parliamentary constituency, which is spread across the Pir Panjal range and includes areas of border Rajouri and Poonch districts, will go to polls on May 7 during the third phase, followed by Srinagar on May 13 during the fourth phase and Baramulla on May 20 in the fifth phase.

Following delimitation, the areas of Beerwah and Budgam have been taken out of Srinagar parliamentary constituency and added to Baramulla. In their place, Pulwama and Shopian, which earlier formed part of Anantnag constituency, have now been added to Srinagar.

CEC Rajiv Kumar in New Delhi, Saturday. *Amit Mehra*

Must respect personal reasons: Kumar on Arun Goel's resignation

New Delhi: A week after Election Commissioner Arun Goel's unexpected resignation on March 9, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar Saturday declined to answer why Goel made the decision, but added that his personal reasons should be respected.

Addressing a press conference to announce the Lok Sabha election schedule, Kumar, upon being asked to comment on Goel's resignation, said, "About my friend, you asked, Mr Arun was a very very distinguished member of our team and I thoroughly enjoyed working with him all the time. But in every institution, somebody will have to be given the personal space... One should not be insensitive to ask personal questions. If he had personal reasons, its fine, you must respect it."

He added that the Election Commission had a tradition where dissent was encouraged as conducting polls was a complicated exercise. "Three minds are always better than one, we discuss, we sleep over issues, we take time, we assimilate," he said. **ENS**

Modi in Kharge's turf: 'Let me be firewall against Cong loot'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, MARCH 16

LAUNCHING A scathing attack on ruling Congress in Karnataka from the bastion of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in Kalaburagi on the day Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the poll schedule Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged voters to make BJP candidates victorious across 28 Parliamentary constituencies to help him firewall the state against alleged corruption of the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah-led state government.

Modi spoke about the alleged deterioration of the state's law and order situation, and accused the government of indulging in "loot", while emphasising only he can prevent the Congress from doing it.

Within 10 months of coming to power, Modi said that the Congress government has "fallen into disfavour with the people". "If the state is working like this and if it is looting you then it is very important that your voices should reach the Parliament. To save Karnataka from loot you have let me be a firewall so that there is constant watch on them and there is regular flow of information to Delhi and so that I can stop the looting of the people of Karnataka," Modi said.

"The anger you have towards Congress in Karnataka, I can understand. Congress is a party that despite changing their costume number of times, their misdeeds don't change. That's the reason people of Karnataka are awake and are angry towards it," Modi said.

"When a large number of BJP MPs are elected from Karnataka then the corrupt government of the Congress will have to be in fear. They will have to think several times that information is reaching Modi. The BJP MPs will expose the dark deeds of the Congress. Even if they try, the Congress attempts at corruption will not be hidden. So we need maximum seats for BJP from Karnataka. I pray to you as your servant," he said.

BJP's second list of candidates, announced on March 13, included 20 names from Karnataka, where the party has tied up with JDS for the LS polls, headed by party supremo and former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, which will fight from three seats in the Old Mysore region — Hassan, Mandya and Kolar.

Pointing out that he had given multiple guarantees to the people of the country, he would like one guarantee in return from the people of Karnataka: that the Congress will not open its account this time in Karnataka in the Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress does not like democracy "and they go around the world and berate us and they make fun of our tradition, democracy and legacy of Basavana", he said.

On the law and order situation, he said anti-social elements are getting protection openly and fear is being instilled into the minds of the people. Corruption cannot be separated from the Congress, Modi said and added, "For these parivarwadis (dyansts), corruption is their oxygen. Without corruption these people cannot even breathe in politics."

Making big promises ahead of elections and filling their pockets after polls is the Congress's job, Modi alleged, adding that the Congress was making Karnataka "family ATM".

– WITH PTI INPUTS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kalaburagi, Karnataka, Saturday. Former CM B S Yediyurappa is also seen. *PTI*

Odisha state polls in 4 phases, over 3 crore to cast vote

SUJIT BISOYI
BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 16

ELECTIONS TO the Odisha Assembly and 21 Lok Sabha seats will be held in four of the total seven phases, Election Commission of India (ECI) announced Saturday.

Four Lok Sabha seats in southern and western parts—Kalahandi, Koraput, Nabarangpur and Berhampur—and 28 assembly seats under these Parliamentary segments will vote on May 13, the fourth phase, while in the next phase on May 20, five LS seats in western and interior pockets—Bargarh, Sundargarh, Balangir, Kandhamal and Aska—and 35 assembly constituencies will go into voting.

Six each Lok Sabha seats and 42 assembly seats falling under them will vote in the sixth and seventh phases on May 25 and June 1, respectively. The parliamentary segments which will go for vote on the sixth phase include Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Puri and Bhubaneswar, mostly western, central and coastal regions while Lok Sabha constituencies in northern and coastal pockets like Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada and Jagatsinghpur will vote on the last phase.

A total of 3.34 crore voters in Odisha include 1.69 crore male, 1.65 crore female, 3,438 third gender, and 7.99 lakh first-time electors, according to latest figures provided by the chief electoral officer (CEO), N B Dhal. A total 2.70 lakh polling personnel are being trained to be deployed in polling stations across the state, Dhal said.

Of the total 37,809 polling stations, including 33,469 in rural areas, the EC has planned webcasting in 22,685 booths. About 300 booths will be managed by persons with disabilities while 4,000 booths will be managed by women only, said sources in the CEO's office.

In 2019, the state's voter turnout was estimated at 73.29%, when polling was held in four phases as well. With voter turnout in 59 Assembly constituencies below the state average, officials said steps are being taken to increase it in these constituencies.

Amid speculations of an alliance with the BJP, BJD president and CM Naveen Patnaik has already held meeting with observers of various districts to review poll preparedness. The BJP's state unit election committee held meeting Saturday to finalise candidates tickets while Congress said it has already sent a list of probable names for high command approval.

CM Naveen Patnaik held a meeting with district observers. *File*

Anti-incumbency: Jagan drops 60% MPs, 25% MLAs

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

JUST BEFORE the Election Commission's (EC's) announcement Saturday of the simultaneous Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh, scheduled for May 13, the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP declared its candidates for all 175 Assembly seats and 24 out of 25 LS constituencies in the state.

The YSRCP announced the list of its candidates at the "samadhi" (grave) of former Andhra Pradesh CM Y S Rajasekhar Reddy at Idupulupaya in Kadapa district, in the presence of party supremo and CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Bapatla MP Nandigam Suresh read out LS candidates' names while state Revenue Minister D Prasada Rao did so for Assembly polls. Jagan's nephew and Kadapa MP Y S Avinash Reddy, embroiled in the murder case of their uncle Y S Vivekananda Reddy, has been renominated.

Jagan dropped 14 of 22 sitting YSRCP MPs or over 60% of incumbent MPs to counter anti-incumbency. Notable among them are Vishakhapatnam MP MVV Satyanaryana, Gorantla Madhav (Hindupur), Chinta Anuradha (Amalapuram), Araku MP Godeti Madhavi, Maragani Bharat Ram from Rajamahendravaram, Talari Rangaiah from Anantapur, and Magunta Srinivasulu from Ongole.

RS MP V Vijay Sai Reddy, Jagan's confidant, will contest from Nellore. Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana's wife Botsa Jhani Laxmi will contest from Visakhapatnam and former minister Poluboina Anil Kumar Yadav from Narasaraopet.

There are 11 BC (Backward Classes), 1 STs, 4 SCs, and 9 upper caste candidates for LS polls, with Anakapalli candidate yet to be announced. For Assembly polls, Jagan dropped 25% of sitting MLAs. Sitting MPs MVV Satyanarayana and Margani Bharat will contest from Visakhapatnam East and Rajamahendravam City Assembly seats. Jagan will again contest from Pulivendula. A Ramakrishna Reddy, who resigned from YSRCP, has been replaced with M Lavanya, though he rejoined. YSRCP sources said 50% of total LS and Assembly poll tickets have gone to candidates from BC/SC/ST and minority communities.

Andhra CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy pays tribute to former CM Y S Rajasekhar Reddy on Saturday. *ANI*

Rally in Mumbai today, INDIA bloc to begin campaign for LS

ENS & PTI
MUMBAI, MARCH 16

A DAY after the announcement of the schedule for the general elections, the opposition INDIA bloc will kickstart its poll campaign from Mumbai's iconic Shivaji Park on Sunday

The rally, at the end of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, will be a show of strength for the INDIA bloc, with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin, Jharkhand CM Champai Soren, former Bihar Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav, former Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj, CPI general secretary Dipankar Bhattarchaya, National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah and former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren, among others, are scheduled to take part. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge too will attend the rally.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said an invitation has also been extended to Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi leader Prakash Ambedkar.

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi in Mumbai's Dharavi area, Saturday. *Sankhadeep Banerjee*

Rahul, whose Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra concluded at Chaityabhoomi, the memorial of Dr B R Ambedkar in Dadar, Saturday, will undertake a 'Nyay Sankalp Padyatra' from Mani Bhavan to August Kranti Maidan Sunday.

Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar's office said eminent personalities from cultural and social fields will join Rahul in the padyatra. After that, he will interact with participants at Tejpal Hall. Rahul concluded his 63-day Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra by paying tributes to Dr B R Ambedkar at his memorial Chaityabhoomi and reading the Preamble of the Constitution. He was accompanied by party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Earlier, in Dharavi area, he reiterated Congress' promise of caste census and asserted poor women would get Rs 1 lakh every year in bank accounts if his party wins. "Dharavi is yours and should remain yours. This place should become country's manufacturing hub," he said, referring to redevelopment project concerning the slum sprawl awarded to the Adani Group.

Shiv Sena MP switches days after being named candidate by BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SURAT, MARCH 16

DAYS AFTER she was declared BJP Lok Sabha candidate from UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Shiv Sena MP Kalaben Delkar formally joined the ruling party Saturday along with her son Abhinav Delkar. Dipesh Tandel, the BJP chief of the UT welcomed them along with other leaders at Atal Bhavan at Silvassa.

The mother-son duo marched with supporters from their house in Sayli village to the local BJP headquarters. They urged supporters to "forget old differences" and work with the ruling party.

Kalaben's husband Mohan Delkar, a seven-term MP from the seat, was found dead on February 22, 2021. Kalaben said, "My husband worked for 35 years for the UT. We will follow his footsteps. We will also ensure that there is no internal conflict among us." Her son also praised PM Modi. "We were impressed by the foresightedness of PM Modi for taking the country on the development path for a better future."

As his second Yatra ends, Rahul clearly has come a distance – but what about his party?

He has emerged as a symbol for those opposed to Modi, especially minorities. But for INDIA, and even Congress, the Yatra 2 was a missed opportunity

THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN

Weekly insight into what's changing in national politics — and why

PARADOXICALLY, RAHUL Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra ended the same day as the Election Commission announced the Lok Sabha polls for 2024, though the Yatra's final rally is to take place in Mumbai on Sunday at the historic Shivaji Park.

It will now get converted into the first election meeting by the Opposition INDIA bloc in Maharashtra, which has acquired an importance all its own for both sides.

Through his two Yatras, over the last two years, first from South to North and more recently from East to West, Rahul has gained a national profile. Position or no position, he is today recognised as THE leader of the Congress who is taking decisions for the party, no matter who is in-charge officially.

He has also become a symbol for all those dissatisfied with the Narendra Modi rule. And the first choice of the minorities — wherever the Congress is in a position to get its act together.

Last Friday, at the Muslim-dominated powerloom city of Bhiwandi in Thane district, a crowd of 7,000-10,000 of mainly Muslims waited for him to arrive from Palghar for the last lap of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, even though it was time to break their Ramzan roza. Speaker after speaker from the community urged those present to work to make Rahul the prime minister. As they milled round the Anant Dighe Chowk, they nostalgically recalled the Congress rule and the "mohabbat (harmony)" of earlier years!

The curiosity about Rahul has also increased in the last two years; people want to know more about him. At Bhiwandi, I found a large group of Hindu women who had come with their children. "We wanted to see for ourselves what he is like", "We had heard about him". Would they be voting for him? "We will vote for whoever works for us."

Rahul has also emerged as the sharpest critic of Modi today. He did not mince his words two days ago while criticising the PM, calling the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme the biggest "extortion" undertaken at the behest of Modi.

Over the last two years, Rahul has become more confident in the way he handles questions from the media; on electoral bonds, he remained determinedly focused on his subject, not letting the media deflect him by raising issues around the Congress's culpability in other matters. (Still, he continues to berate the media at every opportunity he gets!)

Congress workers also noted that between the two Yatras, Rahul did not disappear abroad as frequently as he used to earlier.

By design or default, in the way the situation has developed, and without being officially projected as the alternative to Modi either by his own party or by the Opposition alliance, it is Rahul who is seen as the counter to Modi in the battle that now lies ahead for the Delhi gaddi.

Rahul Gandhi's Yatra-1 was a novel, innovative idea. People responded positively to a politician, and that too the "Prince-like" scion of the Nehru Gandhi family, walking 4,000 km to come to them and listen to them. He stayed the course and the whole exercise helped him shed his non-serious, so-called "Pappu" image.

Though Rahul continued with the faux pas he is known for, such as a negative reference to V D Savarkar in Maharashtra, a state where he is a respected figure, during his first Yatra. This time, there was much heartburn within the Congress over his contemptuous reference to those who attended the Ayodhya Ram Temple consecration, saying it only had "people like Ambani, Adani" or a "dancing" Aishwarya Rai.

The second Yatra, particularly its timing, was also mystifying. Elections were around the corner, seat-sharing had to be fine-tuned with coalition partners; new challenges faced the INDIA bloc, with Mamata Banerjee pulling out, as did the Jayant Choudhary-led RLD. And a Yatra on wheels was like so many other such endeavours, with politicians undertaking tours all the time, interspersed with small group meetings.

Still, as during his first Yatra, Rahul drew large crowds in some places, such as in Nashik earlier this week where, as per a Congress leader, "Bhayankar response tha (There was huge response)". The Communists have had a base in the region, and ally Shiv Sena also put its best foot forward.

But, at the end of the day, the Yatras have done little to rebuild a dying Congress organisation. There could have been follow-up camps across the country, along the routes Rahul followed, tapping into the enthusiasm and new energies generated by his Yatra to create a support base for his party. Even when people talk of the good response Rahul drew in some places, they express in the next breath what worries most Congress karyakartas, "But we don't know if this will convert into votes!"

An organisation is a necessary prerequisite for garnering votes. And ultimately, a political party is all about power and winning elections – before it can get on to "serving the people", or "changing policy" or "protecting democracy".

It was towards the end of his Yatra-2, particularly after he entered Maharashtra, a state which is going to decide fortunes in the coming elections, that Rahul struck a poll pitch, and announced 'Nyay' / guarantees for farmers, youth and women like agenda points for his party's manifesto. He also shared the stage with NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut in Nashik, giving it the flavour of the INDIA bloc fighting the polls together.

Rahul's Yatra-2, many feel, could have been more of the above – about the INDIA alliance, and less about himself, signalling, as nothing else could have done, the coalition getting ready for the 2024 polls, moving in step from state to state. But the allies were not consulted, and they were made part of the journey only at the last moment, as in UP and later in Maharashtra. It was an opportunity lost.

"India is at a point today, not unlike the situation it faced in 1947", said an entrepreneur in Pune, "to be or not to be inclusive." Rahul raised the right issues, the entrepreneur added, "par woh unki pakad mein nahin aa rahe hain (but he is not able to convey the same to connect with the people)".

This was also true of issues such as "berozgari (unemployment)" – a reality for so many. Selling cucumbers from a cart at a chowk in Thane, Vikas Kumar said he had come all the way to Mumbai from Poorvi Champaran in search of work. "I have to pay Rs 4,000 per month to the policeman, eke out a living and send money to my ailing mother back home," says the 20-year-old OBC youth.

Rahul's posters around him, Vikas says he has heard about the Yatra. But the ideas espoused by Rahul, including caste census, language that suggests the Congress leader sees himself in the role of Mandal Messiah-2 — his constant refrain that "90% of India (OBCs, SCs, STs, minorities) does not figure among the top positions in the country's bureaucracy, judiciary, or the media" — do not resonate with Vikas.

But now the die has been cast. Rahul's opponent is no ordinary foe – pitching as Modi is for 370 seats this time. There will now be no time for anything but hard bargaining across the table for seats, and the heat and dust of a long, gruelling campaign spread over seven phases.

It is once again over to the people of India.

Neerja Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, The Indian Express, has covered the last 10 Lok Sabha elections. She is the author of 'How Prime Ministers Decide'

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Ajay Pratap Singh. *File*

'Corruption in party': BJP RS MP quits, may contest LS as Independent

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, MARCH 16

IN A first high-profile exit of a BJP leader in Madhya Pradesh, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Ajay Pratap Singh resigned from the party Saturday, alleging "corruption is prevailing in the party", after BJP fielded Rajesh Mishra from Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi constituency amid speculations that Singh would contest as an independent candidate. His Upper House tenure ends on April 2.

Announcing his resignation from the party's primary membership, Singh said, "Today some circumstances have arisen such that I do not consider myself compatible with the BJP... "

The Congress has fielded CWC member Kamleshwar Patel from Sidhi. Asked if his decision stemmed from being denied a LS ticket, Singh said, "I have no objection to any candidate, but I have objections to the functioning of the party and the selection system (of candidates)."

"I felt several things in the party during this period. I couldn't speak about them while being in the party, but I can say it now. Corruption is prevailing in the party on a large-scale. Corrupt persons are getting protection on a large-scale. Politics have become a medium of business... Rather we can say the party has become an 'adda' of political traders," Singh alleged.

MP Deputy CM Rajendra Shukla said, "He is a very senior leader and has worked for the organisation. Before taking this decision he should have thought about it."

Sidhi BJP MLA Riti Pathak said Singh's "departure from the party is saddening." "... His decision is not in line with the loyal BJP workers," she said.

SHEYPHALI SHARAN APPOINTED AS PIB PRINCIPAL D-G

Ex-UP bureaucrat Sehgal is Prasar Bharati head

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, MARCH 16

RETIRED BUREAUCRAT Navneet Kumar Sehgal has been named the new Chairman of Prasar Bharati, a post that had been lying vacant for four years.

He succeeds A Surya Prakash, whose term ended in February 2020 after he turned 70, the age limit for the post. Sehgal will be Chairman for three years, according to a March 15 order issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Meanwhile, Sheyphali Sharan was appointed as the Principal D-G of the Press Information Bureau, the ministry's publicity arm. The 1990-batch IIS officer will take charge on April 1 upon the superannuation of the incumbent Manish Desai.

Sehgal is a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. He retired in 2023 as the state government's Additional Chief Secretary for Sports and Youth Welfare.

"The President, on the recommendation of the Selection Committee, is pleased to appoint Navneet Kumar Sehgal, IAS (retd) as the Chairman of the Prasar Bharati Board with effect from the date of his assuming charge of the post for a term of three years or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier," the ministry statement said.

Reacting to his appointment, Sehgal said: "Prasar Bharti is known as the most reliable broadcaster. We will keep making efforts to give credible and unbiased news to people through Doordarshan and Aakashwaani."

Sehgal, who has served in almost all key posts in the UP government, has been perhaps the most sought after bureaucrat in the state's power corridors over the last two decades.

Navneet Kumar Sehgal; Sheyphali Sharan. *File*

Though he had been sidelined after governments changed hands in 2012 and 2017, his absence was felt and within months he was brought back to the centre-stage of the bureaucracy.

Sehgal first came to the limelight when he was appointed the district magistrate of Lucknow by the then CM Mayawati of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) during her brief tenure between 2002 and 2003. He was on Central deputation during the succeeding Mulayam Singh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party (SP) government. But soon after the BSP won the 2007 Assembly polls with a majority, Sehgal returned to his home cadre and cemented his utility to the extent that he remained one of the most powerful UP bureaucrats until his retirement.

Under the Mayawati government during 2007-2012, Sehgal's prominence rose and helped him build a network of friends across states in diverse fields including politics, sports and films.

Given his proximity to Mayawati, when the SP came to power in 2012, then CM Akhilesh Yadav removed him from all key posts and appointed him as the principal secretary of the Department of Religious Affairs, considered a "punishment posting". However, he made this department a coveted post by implementing government schemes for prominent temples and introducing train pilgrimage facilities for the elderly.

Within a year-and-a-half, Akhilesh brought him back as the head of the Information and Public Relations Department.

In 2017, when Yogi Adityanath took charge as the CM after the BJP stormed to power, he was initially sidelined.

In October 2020, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Sehgal was again appointed as the head of the Information Department. He was posted to the sports department after the BJP came to power again in 2022.

Azam, 3 others held guilty in '16 vandalism case

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, MARCH 16

Fifth case in which Khan has been convicted in past year

A SPECIAL MP/MLA court in Rampur on Saturday convicted senior Samajwadi Party leader and former minister Azam Khan and three others, including a retired police officer, in a case of alleged house trespass and vandalism in the Dongarpur area of the district in 2016.

This is the fifth case in which Khan, who is lodged in the Sitapur district jail, has been convicted in the past one year. The court will pronounce the sentence in the case on Monday.

He was produced in the Rampur court on Saturday.

"The court held Azam Khan, Aaley Hasan, a retired DSP, Barkat Ali, a contractor, and one Azhar Ali guilty in the case. Barkat and Aaley Hasan, who were out on bail, were taken into custody," said district government counsel Amit Saxena said.

The four were held guilty under Sections 452 (house trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint), 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of 50 rupees), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

The court acquitted three other accused — Zibran, Farman and Omendra Chauhan — in the case citing "the benefit of the doubt", the district government counsel said.

According to the prosecution, Ahtesham Khan told the police in his complaint that he bought a parcel of land in Dongarpur in 2011-12 to set up a school. In a portion of the land, he built a house where he was staying with his family, he added.

On the evening of February 3, 2016, Azhar Khan, Aaley Hasan and Barkat Ali along with 20-25 policemen forcibly entered his house and dragged him and his family out, he alleged. The accused vandalised the household items and ran a bulldozer over the property, he said.

The complainant said when he went to Azam Khan to lodge his protest soon after the incident, Khan along with Zibran his brother Farman, Omendra Singh Chauhan and others abused him.

Since the BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh in 2017, a total of 81 cases have been registered against Khan. These charges range from land-grabbing to cheating and criminal trespass.

Cadets medically boarded out for disabilities during training now eligible for resettlement facilities

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal to extend resettlement facilities to cadets who are medically boarded out for disabilities suffered during their military training.

There was, however, no word on providing them with a disability pension. The new proposal would be for officer trainees who undergo training at Dehradun-based IMA, NDA, Khadakwasla and naval and air force academies.

In a statement Saturday, the Defence Ministry said the decision has been taken as the cadets join military academies at a young age with the intention of joining as officers in the Armed Forces, and show a commitment to serve the nation in uniform, but are unfortunate in being invalidated from military training on medical grounds due to causes attributable to or aggravated by the training. It added that since decades, the cadets or their parents have been demanding such resettlement opportunities.

Sources said the resettlement opportunities to be provided to such cadets will include various self-employment schemes, currently implemented for ex-servicemen and their families, by the Directorate General Resettlement under Defence Ministry's Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare. As per the Defence Ministry, this will help 500 cadets who have been boarded out on medical grounds. "Future cadets in similar condition would also get same benefits," it said. As per extant rules, cadets undergoing military training at academies are treated as officers only after they are commissioned into the Armed Forces.

During training, there are instances where around 10-20 cadets a year are invalidated on medical grounds due to causes attributable to or aggravated by training. At present, such cadets are granted ex-gratia. They are treated in military hospitals.

ED SHEERAN IN MUMBAI

Singer Ed Sheeran performs during his 'Mathematics Tour', in Mumbai. *Amit Chakravarty*

Days after calling Modi 'big brother', Reddy stung by PM's attack on Cong

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD MARCH 16

TELANGANA CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy, who recently referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "bade bhai", was livid as the PM targeted the Congress in the state. Modi, who is on a two-day tour of Telangana, while addressing a public meeting at Nagarkurnool Saturday morning, said that after the "maha loot" by the Bharat Rashtra Samiti, the "buri nazar" of Congress would destroy Telangana.

"Congress and BRS together have shattered every dream of development in Telangana. And now, the difficulty is that here, the Congress's grip has tightened. First, the plunder by the BRS, and now, the evil eye of the Congress. It's like falling from a well into a pit. For the Congress, even 5 years are enough to ruin the entire state," Modi said.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad, Friday. *ANI*

Speaking to media persons later, Reddy said, "It is unbecoming of Modi to criticise the state government. Modi insulted Telangana and has no right to utter even a single word on Telangana."

Earlier this month, on March 4, Reddy flew to Adilabad to welcome Modi, who had arrived to inaugurate several development projects and lay the foundation of others. Addressing Modi at an event there, Revanth, while seeking support from the Centre to develop Telangana, said. "*Hamare hisaab se Pradhan Mantri matlab bade bhai* (According to us, Prime Minister means elder brother)."

Reacting to the arrest of Bharat Rashtra Samiti MLC K Kavitha by the Enforcement Directorate a day earlier, Reddy said it was a drama being played by BRS and BJP. "Kavitha was arrested 24 hours before the Election Commission issued notification. The arrest is an election stunt. BRS is eyeing to gain sympathy votes from Kavitha's arrest while BJP wants votes by taking credit for her arrest," he said.

India abstains, UNGA adopts Pak resolution to tackle Islamophobia

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, MARCH 16

INDIA ABSTAINED in the UN General Assembly on a draft resolution introduced by Pakistan and co-sponsored by China on Islamophobia, asserting that the prevalence of "religiophobia" against Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and other faiths facing violence and discrimination must also be acknowledged rather than singling out just one religion.

The 193-member UNGA adopted the resolution 'Measures to combat Islamophobia', introduced by Pakistan on Friday, with 115 nations voting in favour, none against and 44 abstentions, including India, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Ukraine and the UK.

India's Permanent Representative to UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj voiced condemnation of all acts motivated by anti-Semitism, Christianophobia and Islamophobia but asserted that it is crucial to acknowledge that such phobias extend beyond Abrahamic religions.

"Over decades, followers of non-Abrahamic religions have also been affected by religiophobia. This has led to emergence of contemporary forms of religiophobia, particularly anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist and anti-Sikh sentiments," she said.

India stressed that the adoption of the resolution should not establish a precedent that could result in numerous resolutions centred on phobias tied to specific religions, "potentially dividing the UN into religious camps." **PTI**

Record dog bites caused by stray, pet dogs separately: Govt to states

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

TO IMPROVE surveillance of dog bite incidents and rabies cases, the Centre has directed state governments to record instances of bites caused by stray and pet dogs separately.

In an order on March 7, the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) wrote to the states, directing them to provide quality data on animal bites from all public health centres, community health centres, district hospitals and tertiary care facilities with inclusion of specific details regarding dog bites caused by pets and strays.

States have been asked to avoid multiple entries of the same animal bite victims by maintaining separate records for new and follow-up patients in the animal bite exposure register.

The Centre's order comes at a time when there have been several cases of mauling by stray dogs and pet dog bites from urban areas. Even though there was a substantial dip in dog bite cases since 2018, the cases are on the rise since 2022. Between 2022 and 2023, dog bite cases increased from 21.8 lakh to 27.5 lakh, according to data tabled by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in Parliament. With 4.35 lakh cases, Maharashtra recorded the highest number of dog bite cases last year.

The government's order also comes on the back of the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)'s representations to the Union Ministry of Health, seeking segregated recording of data to improve public health tracking and resolution of dog bite cases.

In a representation the AWBI sent to the Ministry last year, it had pointed out that in the absence of specific segregated data, there was an assumption that most bites are predominantly caused by street dogs. The AWBI said segregating data would also help understand distribution of the dog bite cases and increase accountability and responsibility among pet owners as well.

The AWBI is a statutory advisory body under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Abi Vanak, an ecologist from the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), said segregating the recording of data will help in surveillance of dog bites and rabies.

However, he added, that authorities should more importantly pay attention to the vaccination and sterilisation history of dogs.

Vanak also pointed out that the Animal Birth Control Rules (ABC Rules), 2023, have created categories such as "street dogs and community dogs".

"In such cases, it becomes nearly impossible to ascertain actual ownership status, especially if the dog is free-ranging," said Vanak, senior fellow and director, centre for policy design, ATREE.

Yadav govt's push to make Ujjain religious tourism hub

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, MARCH 16

FROM LAUNCHING helicopter services to ferry Hindu devotees to temples across the state and proposing over 500 projects worth Rs 18,000 crore to develop Ujjain, the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh is racing to establish the holy city as the focal point of the state's Hindu religious tourism circuit ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

On Thursday, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, whose political turf is Ujjain, launched the two air services with a focus on religious corridors — PM Shri Tourism Air Service, with two twin-engine, eight-seater aircraft, and PM Shri Religious Tourism Helicopter Service, catering to devotees for the Mahakaleshwar and Mamleshwar (Omkareshwar) temples that are believed to contain sacred jyotirlingas.

Before that, on Monday, the office of the Department of Religious Trust and Endowment (Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana) was moved from Bhopal to Ujjain.

In September last year, the state government unveiled a 108-foot-tall 'Statue of Oneness' of Adi Shankaracharya at Omkareshwar.

The Ujjain push has been since Yadav was chosen unexpectedly by the BJP as the CM, after the party returned to power. Ujjain is a part of the politically significant Malwa-Nimar region in western MP, with 66 Assembly seats, and is considered a BJP stronghold.

Apart from the recent spree of projects, under the BJP government, the Simhastha festival in Ujjain, falling this year, has grown in form and size. Now, "523 projects worth Rs 18,804 crore that will span 19 departments" have been proposed, said a government official. "The MP government has already begun constructing a network of hotels and rest houses in Ujjain to host the massive crowds," the official added.

With the Ayodhya Ram Mandir consecration ceremony already seen as a shot in the arm for the BJP in the Hindi heartland state, the BJP is hopeful that the religious tourism push will help it better its 2019 performance from 28 of 29 seats, to a clean sweep.

Yadav has placed special emphasis on developing the religious sites connected to Lord Krishna, who is revered among the Yadav community to which the CM belongs. In the past, he has claimed that "From Mathura, Lord Shri Krishna came to the ashram of Sage Sandipani in Ujjain, where he learned the 64 Arts in 64 days and studied the Vedas and the Puranas".

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

At exhibition on Bose, a tale of how his Bharat Ratna remained on paper

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

IN 1991, the then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao recommended Bharat Ratna for Subhas Chandra Bose. President R Venkataraman accepted the recommendation and a communique was issued, only to be withdrawn years later as Bose's family refused the award.

Over three decades on, amid the demand once again to confer the country's highest civilian award on Bose — after it was recently announced for socialist icon and former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur, former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh and agricultural scientist M S Swaminathan — some declassified documents are back in focus, explaining how the decision to honour Bose went into indefinite deferment.

The documents, which were among the Bose files declassified by the Government between 2015 and 2019 on demands from his family, form the core of 'Subhash Abhinandan', a digital exhibition held by the National Archives of India as part of its 134th Foundation Day celebrations.

The exhibition, inaugurated on March 11, comprises 16 sections covering the period starting from Bose's birth and showcases some documents, including his civil service examination results, besides notings from his father Janaki Nath Bose's diary.

There's a special section dedicated to Bharat Ratna vis-a-vis Bose which highlights the efforts of the current BJP-led dispensation at the Centre to honour his legacy. It comprises PMO letters, press clippings, a 1992 press communique from the President's office announcing the award and a 1997 document related to the withdrawal of the communique.

According to one document dated October 10, 1991 — a PMO communication meant for the then Home Secretary, M D Godbole — President Venkataraman accepted PM Rao's recommendations of awarding Bharat Ratna posthumously to both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Bose.

Subhas Chandra Bose; the Bharat Ratna panel on the freedom fighter at the National Archives of India.

"The President has informed the Prime Minister that he has accepted the recommendations made for conferring the Bharat Ratna on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Subhas Chandra Bose posthumously. The President has suggested that the details may be settled by the concerned officers," reads the letter.

On January 22, 1992, a day before Bose's 95th birth anniversary, the Rashtrapati Bhawan issued an official communique announcing the award. "The President is pleased to confer the award of Bharat Ratna posthumously on Subhas Chandra Bose," the document reads, mentioning it was meant to be embargoed until the next morning.

However, Bose's family refused to accept the award, since it was being given to him "posthumously". Bose's family contested the claims about Bose's death, which continues to remain a mystery even today, saying, "Accepting the honour would be undermining the memory of Netaji".

PM Rao was informed about this through an internal note.

As per Government records, Bose died in a plane crash off Taipei in 1945 when he was on his way to Japan. However, the evidence on the circumstances of his death has been considered inconclusive so far.

But there was no provision to take back the Bharat Ratna announcement by the President. In this regard, another declassified note dated 28 July, 1997 read that it was decided with the approval of then President and PM that "no further action was necessary and the matter might be deemed as closed."

BRIEFLY

UTTAR PRADESH

Constable held for raping woman cop

Jalaun: A lady police constable was allegedly raped by another constable posted with her, a police official said on Saturday. ASP Dr Asim Choudhary said based on the complaint filed by the victim on Friday alleging constable Karamvir Singh misbehaved with her and raped her, the SP formed an investigation committee. Based on its report, a case was registered against Singh, who has now been arrested, the ASP said. **PTI**

MAHARASHTRA

'Provocative' speech: Jarange faces FIR

Mumbai: An FIR was registered against Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange and 15 others in Beed district Saturday in connection with an alleged provocative speech, a police official said.The case was registered in Neknoor police station for a speech made in Tandalwadi Ghat, the official said, adding was ninth FIR against Jarange in Beed in the last 15 days. **PTI**

RAJASTHAN

JEE aspirant missing for 5 months rescued

Kota: A JEE aspirant, 17, in Kota missing for 5 months was rescued from Thiruvananthapuram, police said Saturday. The boy from Bihar went missing after leaving his hostel in October. He was rescued from Thiruvananthapuram's Shivgiri area Thursday and handed over to his parents. SP (Kota City) Amrita Duhan said the boy had been preparing for JEE in Kota. **ENS**

UTTAR PRADESH

Court orders FIR against ex-SP leader Maurya

Lucknow: An MP-MLA court Saturday ordered Wazirganj Police Station to file an FIR against former SP politician Swami Prasad Maurya for allegedly hurting Hindu sentiments with a statement against goddess Lakshmi. Special Additional CJM Ambrish Kumar Srivastava ordered the probe against Maurya over a statement he made on X, as well as to media. **PTI**

Govt bans J&K groups for involvement in terror, extends JKLF prohibition for 5 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE MHA Saturday banned the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and all factions of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League associated with the separatist conglomerate Hurriyat Conference under the UAPA for five years. In another order, the Centre has also extended the ban on the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which is led by imprisoned terror accused Yasin Malik, for another five years. In a post of X, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "The Modi government has designated the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League (JKPFL) as an Unlawful Association for five years. The organisation threatened India's integrity by promoting, aiding and abetting the secession of Jammu and Kashmir through terrorism."

Shah also said, "…Pursuing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy of zero-tolerance towards terrorism, the Union home ministry has declared four factions of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League unlawful associations. There are the JKPL (Mukhtar Ahmed Waza), the JKPL (Bashir Ahmad Tota), the JKPL (Ghulam Mohammad Khan) and the Yaqoob Sheikh-led JKPL (Aziz Sheikh). These organisations were involved in inciting terror and abetting secessionism in Jammu and Kashmir and the government is committed to suppressing terrorism ruthlessly.

"The Modi government has declared the 'Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Mohd. Yasin Malik faction)' as an 'Unlawful Association' for a further period of five years... ," he said. In a notification, the MHA said, "Members of the JKPFL have remained involved in supporting terrorist activities and anti-India propaganda to incite secessionism in Jammu and Kashmir, and its leaders and members have been involved in mobilising funds to perpetrate unlawful activities..."

In a separate notification, the MHA said the four factions of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League (JKPL) were indulging in unlawful activities prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty and security of the country. "The JKPL has constantly asked the people of Jammu and Kashmir to refrain from taking part in elections and thereby, targeted and hampered the very basic constitutionally recognised fundamentals of Indian democracy," it said, announcing the ban on these groups for 5 years. In another notification, it extended the ban on the JKLF-Yasin Malik faction for five years. The ministry also cited nearly a dozen violent cases in which the members of the group were involved.

Muizzu: Steps for security not a concern for external parties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALE, MARCH 16

Maldives President says country is capable of monitoring its jurisdiction

ASSERTING THAT Maldives is not a small nation, President Mohamed Muizzu has said that the steps taken by his government to ensure the Indian Ocean island nation's security on its own should not concern any "external parties".

The pro-China Maldivian leader's comments came days after the first batch of Indian military personnel operating a helicopter gifted by India left the island nation after Muizzu stepped up his anti-India rhetoric. Muizzu had asked India to withdraw nearly 90 military personnel from the island nation soon after he assumed office in November last year. India has agreed to replace the military personnel with civilians and continue the operations of two helicopters and a Dornier aircraft provided to the country for humanitarian and medical evacuation services. Muizzu's comments came while speaking at a ceremony to launch the Maldives National Defence Force's Air Corps and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), a press release by the President's Office said on Friday.

Asserting that Maldives isn't a small nation, Muizzu said the country is capable of monitoring its jurisdiction.

"Maldives is an independent and sovereign nation and that surveillance of the Maldives' jurisdiction should not concern any external parties," he said, without naming any country.

He "affirmed the importance of the Maldives navigating its course towards self-reliance and remaining an independent and sovereign nation in every aspect," the press release said.

Muizzu said that Maldives' independence and sovereignty 'must be in the common interest of the entire populace, despite varying ideologies". He added that this would not impede the Maldives' relations with all countries. Muizzu has affirmed that no Indian military personnel, not even those in civilian clothing, would be present inside his country after May 10.

He rode to power last year on an anti-India stance, and within hours of taking oath, demanded India to remove its personnel from the strategically located archipelago nation in the Indian Ocean. Muizzu announced new initiatives to strengthen the Maldives' military capabilities at the ceremony.

An initiative to mobilise resources to recondition neglected military resources and bring them up to a standard for military use and public service was launched, the press release said.

Meanwhile, Maldivian defence minister Ghassan Maumoon said that the launch of the Maldives National Defence Force Air Corps has shocked enemies and friends. Ghassan said the role of defence forces and the strategies of war have changed in the modern world, adding that armies are now dependent on technology and tactics are used to reduce risk to lives.

Ghassan said the tide of war has changed in the world resulting in decreasing attempts to invade or occupy another country. However, he said powerful countries now try to influence the sovereignty of other countries.

Bihar govt doctor held in UP constable exam paper leak case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MARCH 16

A 27-YEAR-OLD doctor working at a government-run primary health centre in Bihar was arrested in connection with the Uttar Pradesh Police constable recruitment examination paper leak case, the state's Special Task Force (STF) said.

The arrested doctor has been identified as Dr Shubham Mandal. The state government had nullified the recruitment examination that the UP Police Recruitment & Promotion Board (UPPRPB) conducted on February 17 and 18 following allegations of paper leak and entrusted the investigation of the case to the STF.

The police said Mandal's name cropped up during the questioning of other people arrested in the case. A total of 178 FIRs related to the leak of two question papers have been filed and 393 people arrested, officials said.

In a press release, the STF said that Shubham, a resident of Patna, is posted at a primary health centre in Katihar district of Bihar. He did his MBBS degree from Nalanda Medical College, it said. Shubham and his friend Bittu, who completed his MBBS degree from Patna Medical College in 2021, were booked in 2017 in connection with the leak of NEET question paper, the release added.

On Friday, the STF arrested three persons — Abhishek Kumar Shukla, Shivam Giri, and Rohit Kumar Pandey — claiming that the paper was leaked at the Ahmedabad warehouse of the company responsible for transporting the examination papers.

Shivam and Rohit were current employees of the company while Abhishek Shukla worked for it previously.

According to the STF, it came to light during the investigation that when the question paper reached the warehouse in Ahmedabad, Dr Shubham Mandal was asked to reach the city.

The next day, Shubham and others gained access to the warehouse where he opened the box containing the question paper and sealed it after capturing the photographs with a cellphone.

A few days later, Dr Shubham went inside the warehouse again to click the photographs of another set of question paper.

An Indian Navy helicopter during an anti-hijacking operation on Saturday. *PTI*

Navy rescues 17 from ship hijacked in December, 35 pirates surrender

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

INDIAN NAVAL warship INS Kolkata on Saturday thwarted an attack by pirates, leading to the rescue of 17 crew members and surrender of 35 Somali raiders. The pirate ship involved was an erstwhile merchant vessel MV Ruen that was hijacked by Somali pirates in December last year.

According to the Navy, INS Kolkata intercepted the vessel about 2,600 km off the Indian coast and it came under firing. INS Kolkata forced the pirate ship to stop and forced all 35 pirates to surrender, safely evacuating 17 crew members from the vessel.

The latest anti-piracy operation was one of the significant ones carried out by the Navy in recent months, given that the vessel opened fire on the naval warship. Last month and in January, the Navy had foiled a series of piracy incidents, rescuing several Iranian and Pakistani nationals who were part of the crew. Data shared in Parliament lists seven incidents of hijacking of vessels on high seas by pirates in the last three years.

Since 2008, Indian Navy has deployed units in the Gulf of Aden and East Coast of Africa towards anti piracy patrols and a total of 3,440 ships and over 25,000 seafarers have been safely escorted as per official data.

Relatives of injured workers outside a hospital in Rewari on Saturday. *PTI*

40 injured in Rewari factory blast

AISWARYA RAJ
REWARI, MARCH 16

AROUND 40 workers were rushed to hospitals with burn injuries following a blast in the dust collector of a spare parts manufacturing facility in the industrial area of Dharuhera in Haryana's Rewari district around 5.45pm on Saturday, police said.

According to Dharuhera SHO Inspector Jagadeesh Chand, the incident took place at a unit by the name Lifelong India. "We will investigate the reason behind the blast and if the factory was following all the norms and safety standards," he added. Asked if the factory had NOCs and necessary clearances, he said the industrial inspector of Haryana State Industrial & Infrastructure Development Corporation will look into it.

At the burn ward of Sir Shadi Lal Trauma Center in Rewari, Rohit Kumar (18) from Bahraich, UP, who has been working in Dharuhera for two months, said that he heard a loud explosion and felt his body was burning. "It happened close to me as the cylinder was only a few yards away. All the lights went out and we all tried to get out. I came out on my own. Around 40 people were working at the time. The room was as small and crammed with workers," he said. Bhavesh Jha (19), the nephew of one of the workers Satyaprakash Jha (35), said his uncle was working at the factory when the incident took place. "We were informed of the incident and he was taken to the government hospital. Later, he was referred to PGIMS, Rohtak," he said.

Rajender Kumar (19) from UP's Ayodhya said his brother Ritesh Kumar (24) got injured in the blast. "I work at the factory, but today, I left early. I live around 500 metres away from the factory and around 5.40 pm, I heard a loud noise. I rushed to the site and got to know that the cylinder attached to the dust collector had exploded," he said. Dr Umesh Yadav, Associate Professor, Orthopaedics, who is also the PRO for University of Health Sciences, Rohtak, said, "All patients are stable with almost 100% superficial burns."

The Indian Express tried to reach out to Lifelong India management but did not receive a comment.

18 Pakistanis get Indian citizenship in Ahmedabad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, MARCH 16

MINISTER OF State for Home Harsh Sanghavi awarded Indian citizenship to 18 Pakistani nationals who had migrated and settled in Ahmedabad, at the office of the Ahmedabad District Collector, minutes before Lok Sabha election dates were announced on Saturday.

"Today is an important day in your lives. From today, you are the citizens of this great country India. As citizens, you will get all the rights and benefits of government schemes," Sanghavi was quoted as saying in a government statement.

So far, 1,167 Hindus who were staying in Gujarat have been awarded citizenships by the Ahmedabad District Collectorate.

The Gazette of 2016 and 2018 has empowered the district collectors of Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Kutch to grant Indian citizenship to individuals of the minority communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Later, the collectors of Anand and Mehsana districts were also added to this list.

Battered BRS faces blow with Kavitha arrest ahead of LS polls

Yet to recover from Assembly poll loss, party is losing leaders, slipping in urban turf, as it fails to rally troops

PUSHKAR BANAKAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

KCR-led BRS has been losing leaders to Congress and BJP

FROM APPEARING to be in a winning position for months ahead of the November 2023 Telangana Assembly elections, enough for its chief K Chandrashekar Rao to nurture national ambitions, to almost becoming "inconsequential" in its backyard in the Lok Sabha polls, the fall of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in a span of just over four months has been spectacularly drastic.

The arrest of KCR's daughter K Kavitha on Friday, in the Delhi excise policy case, while long-expected, will only add to the sense of unravelling about the party that ruled Telangana for 10 years till losing power in the recent Assembly polls. And yet, as recently as August last year, the BRS seemed far ahead of its rivals in Telangana.

With three months to go for the Assembly polls, the BRS had declared candidates for 115 of the 119 seats. The results which reduced the party to 39 seats from 88 in 2018 were devastating for KCR, the face of not just the BRS but Telangana itself, having led the struggle for the creation of the state.

The Congress got a fresh breath of life from its 64-seat win. It has since launched a two-pronged attack on the BRS – on its government's alleged misgovernance, and on the party's political standing in the state.

As per Congress Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, he is running a "prajala prabhutvam (people's government)", as opposed to the BRS's "dorala rajyam (rule of feudal landlords)".

Yet another probe was ordered earlier this week by the state government into alleged corruption in the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project cleared under the KCR government, alleged irregularities in the Bhadradri and Yadadri power plants, as well as the power purchase sharing arrangement signed with the Chhattisgarh government.

On the political front, the BRS has been losing leaders to both the Congress and BJP – from rural local bodies to MPs.

The BRS, which garnered most of its seats from urban pockets in the Assembly polls, is facing heat from the Congress in these areas as its corporators switch sides. In the Hyderabad region, for example, the Congress had drawn a blank across the 24 Assembly seats in 2023, with the BRS winning 16 of them, its ally AIMIM getting 7 and the BJP 1. Of the 119 Assembly seats in Telangana, 80 are classified as rural. In the 2018 Assembly polls, the BRS had swept the same, winning 62, with the Congress trailing at 15. But in last year's Assembly polls, the situation was reversed, with the BRS winning 19 and Congress getting 56.

Worryingly for KCR, even the BJP, a minor if rising force in Telangana, is breathing down the BRS's neck by "poaching" its leaders. Having won 4 LS sats in 2019, the BJP has gone all out to improve its tally, and is counting on the Ram Temple consecration to go a long way. "We almost doubled our vote share and increased our seats (to 8 from 1 in 2018) in last year's Assembly elections. Our analysis shows that a major chunk of the BRS vote has transferred to us," former MLA C Ramachandra Reddy, who is now with the BJP, said.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Body of youth killed in Russia reaches Surat

KAMAAL SAIYED
SURAT, MARCH 16

TWENTY-FOUR days after 23-year-old Hemil Mangukiya was killed at Donetsk during an aerial attack by Ukraine on the armed forces of Russia, his body reached Surat on Saturday afternoon – the process facilitated by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

This comes when his father Ashwin Mangukiya and two other family members had arrived in Russia Tuesday on a 16-day tourist visa after they failed to get a confirmation from either the MEA or the Indian Embassy in Moscow on when Hemil's body would be brought home.

Caught by surprise when informed by his brother that the body will reach Surat airport on Saturday, Ashwin, a resident of Velanja village in Surat, is currently on his way back from Moscow. The body for now has been kept at the morgue in SMIMER hospital after it was identified by the family members. Hemil's last rites are set to be conducted on Sunday.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Ashwin's younger brother Atul said, "I received a call from an official from the MEA on Friday, informing that Hemil's body will reach Surat airport Saturday afternoon. I immediately informed Ashwin... He is now on his way back..."

Ashwin, who has reached Mumbai, said: "I am thankful to MEA and Indian Embassy officials at Moscow who helped us."

Ram idol sculptor fought initial hiccups, on-job setback to carve out a niche

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

Arun Yogiraj's Ram idol was installed in Ayodhya

IT'S BEEN almost two months since the consecration of the Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya, but sculptor Arun Yogiraj says he has neither been able to absorb the feeling, nor has he been able to relax. Ever since, he has been touring the country on invitation to speak at various schools and colleges about his experience, and trying to return calls and messages that he couldn't over the six months he was in Ayodhya, on the job.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* during his overnight pit-stop in New Delhi this week, Yogiraj shares that his name didn't even figure in the initial shortlist of sculptors for the job, and it was just a day before the final call was to be taken by the "idol committee" formed by the Temple trust, that he was summoned to give a presentation.

Interestingly, once he was shortlisted among the three artists for sculpting the idol, there was another major setback. The stone he had been using to craft the idol failed one of the quality tests when 70 per cent of his work was done, but he was told he had to do it all over again if he wanted to remain in the reckoning, said the 40-year-old Mysuru-based sculptor.

A couple of months before three artists (including him) were finally shortlisted to sculpt the idols, around a dozen sculptors from across the country were invited to give their presentation to the committee, but Yogiraj says, he wasn't on the list and was even feeling bad about it. But just a day before the committee meeting, he got a surprise call from one of the members — Sachchidanand Joshi of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts — to come prepared with his presentation as well. His work had come to notice after he had sculpted the Subhas Chandra Bose statue to be placed at India Gate, and also the Adi Shankaracharya statue in Kedarnath — both of which were unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"After my presentation, I was told that three of us (along with Ganesh Bhatt from Karnataka, and Satya Narayan Pandey from Jaipur) would be stationed in Ayodhya to sculpt the idol, one of which will be finally selected for the temple," he recalls.

The 'pran pratishtha' of the Lord Ram statue sculpted by Arun Yogiraj took place on January 22 at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, but Yogiraj says he was informed of the selection by the trust almost a month in advance, on December 29, to be precise. "I can't forget that date," he remarks.

However, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has compensated all the three sculptors, and the two idols which couldn't make it to the sanctum sanctorum, will be installed inside the temple complex. After Arun Yogiraj started sculpting the idol in June 2023, he completed almost 70 per cent of the work by August. That's when he was set up for another test. The Chairman of the construction committee, Nripendra Misra, asked him to rush to Delhi.

"I was informed that we cannot go ahead with the statue that I had been carving since one out of eight tests on the stone came out negative," he says.

Misra explained to Yogiraj that since sculpting the Ram Lalla was supposed to be a landmark work, they are accountable towards the nation.

"You still have got two months," Yogiraj was told. So, he agreed to work on a fresh stone — the Krishna Shila — September onwards. However, he tried to think of his past experience of sculpting the idol as a practice session, and got on with the job at hand. "In two months, I was able to complete the idol," he says.

Yogiraj, the fifth-generation sculptor, says he started out doing several small assignments, earning him Rs 1,500-2,000 for a piece.

"I would always wonder, when would I get bada kaam," he says, adding that he didn't know that something like this would be in store for him.

UTTAR PRADESH STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

UPSIDA Complex : A-1/4, Lakhanpur, Kanpur - 208024

Notice regarding invitation of Public Objection/Suggestion on Amendment in Part Layout Plan of Industrial Area Kosi Kotwan District Mathura by which Industrial Plot No. E-64/65/66 (Area-6372.35 Sqm.) is being created by amalgamation of existing Industrial Plots No. E-64 (Area-2102.50 Sqm.), E-65 (Area-2102.50 Sqm.) & E-66 (Area-2167.35 Sqm.) of existing Industrial Area.

1 (a) The Layout Plan of L.A. Kosi Kotwan of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) situated in District Mathura has been prepared.

(b) A copy thereof will be available for inspection at the Regional Manager Office of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority at Agra between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on all working days till the date mentioned in Para 3 hereafter as well as website **www.onlineupsida.com**

2 Objections and Suggestions are hereby invited with respect of the Draft Amended Layout Plan.

3 Objections and Suggestions shall be sent in writing to the office of Regional Manager UPSIDA at Administrative Building, EPIP Shastripuram, Sikandra, Agra within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice mentioning subject as **"Regarding Public Objection / Suggestion on draft partial amendment of Layout Plan of L.A. Kosi Kotwan District Mathura."** Any person making the Objections or Suggestions should also give his/her full name & address, Email id and contact number.

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

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Mukund Kishore Kotnala** S/o Suresh Anand Kotnala R/o H. No. S-5/793, Oppsite Gayatri Bhawan, Shalimar Garden, Shahibabad, Uttar Pradesh has committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in a case vide **FIR No. 347/2014, U/s 354D/506/509 IPC** registered at P.S. Jagatpuri, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued stating that the said **Mukund Kishore Kotnala** could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the accused **Mukund Kishore Kotnala** have absconded (or are concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Mukund Kishore Kotnala** is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before **16.04.2024.**

By Order
Sh. Shruti Sharma,
Metropolitan Magistrate (Mahila Court)-01,
Shahdara, Room No. 55,
Karkardooma Court, Delhi

DP/2680/SHD/2024
(Court Notice)

GUJARAT URJA VIKAS NIGAM LIMITED

CIN U40109GJ2004SGC045195
ISO 9001 -2015 Certified Company
Sardar Patel Vidyut Bhavan, Racecourse,
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PBX: (0265) 2310582-86, www.guvnl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

GUVNL issued Request for Selection for Purchase of Power from 500 MW solar PV projects to be set up / under construction / already commissioned projects anywhere in India with Greenshoe option of additional capacity up to 500 MW without energy storage (GUVNL Phase-XXIV) through RfS No. GUVNL / 500 MW / Solar (Phase XXIV) dated 15.03.2024. For tender documents, please visit the website **www.bharat-electronictender.com** and **www.guvnl.com**. The last date of the bid submission is 22.04.2024.

Date: 16-03-2024 **General Manager (RE)**

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEE/EMU/GZB for and on behalf of President of India, Invites open e-tender for the under work:

1	Tender Notice No.	232-Elect-EMU-WC-11-23-24
2	Name of the work	Overhauling of carriage fans fitted with EMU/MEMU coaches at EMU Car Shed, Ghaziabad for the period of 03 years
3	Tender cost	NIL
4	Approximate cost	Rs. 14,41,443.54 inclusive of GST
5	Earnest Money	Rs. 28,800.00 (online payment mode available on IREPS website)
6	Completion period	36 Months
7	Validity of offer	60 days
8	Date & Time from tender advertised on IREPS website	15.03.2024 18:57 Hrs.
9	Date & Time from tender submission start and end	22.03.2024 to 05.04.2024 15:00 Hrs.
10	Tender closing Date & Time	05.04.2024 15:00 Hrs.
11	Date & Time of tender Opening (immediately when tender submissions ends)	05.04.2024 15:00 Hrs.
12	Publication cost allocation	06041132

Note 1: All participants Tenderer/Tenderers will submit their requisite documents along with their tender offer. " No post tender correspondence for submission of additional document shall be entertained after opening of the Technical & Commercial offer. Even suo-moto post tender letters of the tenders shall be treated as null & void". **Note 2:** Duplicate documents should not be enclosed/up loaded. Tender Notice is available on website of **www.ireps.gov.in. 232-Elect-EMU-WC-11-23-24. Dated: 16.03.2024.** 857/24

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SBI

Central Stationery Department
3rd Floor, Mafatlal Centre, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Dated: 15.03.2024

Bids (through GeM Portal) are invited by State Bank of India from the eligible bidders engaged in printing and supply of Bank's specified stationery like Forms/Registers/Vouchers/Envelopes etc. for selection as stationery printers & suppliers by the Bank for end-to-end supply of above specified Bank's stationery through Bank's Stationery Management Portal (ISMS). For details, please visit 'GeM Portal' at "**https://gem.gov.in**"

Bid Number : GEM/2024/B/4781724
Bid Start Date / Time : 14.03.2024 / 21:00 HRS
Bid End Date / Time : 04.04.2024 / 21:00 HRS

Note: Vendors who are presently empanelled with the Bank (SBI) under the stationery management project are also required to apply afresh if they are eligible and interested to be selected by the Bank.

Place: Mumbai **Deputy General Manager**
Date: 15.03.2024 **Central Stationery Department**

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. NER-BSB-SNT-GS-OT-01-2024

"Open Tenders" through Online (E-Tendering) are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecomm)/ Gati-Shakti/Varanasi/North Eastern Railway for and behalf of the President of India for the following works:-

Sl No.-1, Tender Notice No.& Description of Work: NER-BSB-SNT-GS-OT-01-2024, Name of Work: Signalling works in connection with Engineering works related to LHSW etc. in the section of Sr.DSTE/GS/Varanasi. **Details:** Approx. Value (Rs.): ₹ 2,66,19,998.56, Earnest Money (Rs.): ₹ 2,83,100/-, Cost of Tender Form (Rs.): ₹ 00.00, Completion Period:12 Months. Tender Closing date & Time: 08-04-2024, up to 15:00 Hrs.

(1) Tender Online will be submitted up to 15:00 hrs. on date 08-04-2024.

(2) For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the official website of Indian Railways i.e. ***www.ireps.gov.in***

Divl. Rly. Manager (S&T)/Gati-Shakti Varanasi
CPRO/Signal-109

Never travel on roof and foot boards.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

(Survey & Construction)

Open E-Tender Notice (Two Packet System)

Dy. Chief Engineer(Construction)-1 NWR/Jaipur, Near Jagatpura Railway Phatak, Rail Nirman Bhawan, Jagatpura, Jaipur-302017 for and on behalf of the president of india invites open E-tender. Tenderer shall on-line submit their original/ revised offer before the date and time of closing of E-Tender. **1. E-Tender Notice No. : NWRSCCIVIL410640120 2. Name of work with location:** Construction of new Gauntlet (Meter Gauge + 610 mm Narrow Gauge) Rail Over Rail Bridge (1x45.70m Open Web Girder) at km 7/1-2 in lieu of old Rail Over Rail Bridge (1x7.0+1x12.85+ 2x13.20 m Steel Girder) and other approach P.Way and Civil works required for Sambhar Salt Limited at Sambhar Lake station of Phulera - Merta Road section & construction of foot over bridge for connecting passenger platforms at Sambhar Lake and Nawa City stations in connection with Phulera-Degana doubling project of Jodhpur Division of North Western Railway. **3. Approximate Cost of work :** 21,47,99,657.42 **4. Earnest money to be deposited** :- Rs.1224000.00 **5. Completion Period :** 18 (Eighteen) Months **6. Closing Date & Time of submission of on line E-Tender** : Up to 15.00 Hrs. on 23.04.2024 **7. Website Particulars where complete details of E-Tender can be seen** : Tender can be seen at website **www.ireps.gov.in** under unit of Dy CE-C-1/JP **8. Official E-Mail Address :** dycecjpl@gmail.com **Note** : **1.** No manual tender will be accepted. **2.** Bid security should be in proper form. Bid security should be submitted by the Tenderer only through net banking or payment GATEWAY/ or in form of BG in favour of FA&CAO /Construction, North Western Railway, Jaipur. **363-DG/24**

Please join us on /NWRailways NWRailways_

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD.

(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
Victoria Cross Vijeta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun-248001
Corporate I.D. No. U40109UR2001SGCO25867/2358 E-mail ID:- cgmupcl@yahoo.com,
Website: www.upcl.org, Ph.No. 0135-2762444, Fax - 0135-2763839

No. 155/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 **Date :- 16-03-2024**

CORRIGENDUM FOR PURCHASE OF POWER UNDER MEDIUM TERM PROCUREMENT AGAINST TENDER SPECIFICATION No. 10/CE(COMM)/ UPCL-10/MTPP/2023

It is to inform that an amendment/modification has been made by UPCL in tender specification No. 10/CE(COMM)/UPCL-10/MTPP/ 2023 and the detailed amendment/ modifications/ corrigendum can be read/studied completely in official website of UPCL i.e. **www.upcl.org** and website of MSTC India Limited (DEEP Portal) i.e. **www.mstcecommerce.com**
All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

SE(COMMERCIAL)

"SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION" Use L.E.D. Bulb to Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912) Pay Electricity Bill Online 24 x 7 from www.upcl.org (For information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll Free No. 1800 180 4185 / Fax No. 0135-2760911)

CORRIGENDUM

Name of Work:- Work under PM-DevINE Scheme: (i) Setting up of Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for drug addicted at Bishramganj, Sepahijala District, Tripura., PNIeT No.:23/EE- BRG/PWD/2023-2DNIeT No:-CE(Buildings)/PWD/ACE/ Project unit/DNIeT/69/2023-24 Tender ID No:- 2024_CEPWD_47550_1

The last date of downloading of bid document and submission of bid for the above mentioned tender is extended up to 15:00 hrs (IST) of April 09, 2024 instead of March 28, 2024. The Technical Bid will be opened on April 09, 2024 at 15:30 hrs (IST), if possible

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Bishramganj Division, PWD (R&B).
ICA/C/5321/24 **Bishramganj, Sepahijala: Tripura**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that my Client, is entering into a transaction in relation to the property mentioned in the Schedule hereinbelow **('Scheduled Property').** If anyone has any right, title, interest, claim or demand in, or to the **Scheduled Property** he/she/they should make the same known at **yogesh.chaudhry2022@gmail.com** with documentary proof within 14 (fourteen) days hereof, failing which, all claims and demands shall be treated as waived and not binding on my Client.

SCHEDULE

All the pieces and parcel of land comprised in – Mustatil No./Rectangle No. 11 Killa Nos. 4/1(6-0) admeasuring 6 Kanal 0 Marla i.e., 0.75 Acres owned by and in possession of its present landowner and situated in Village: Dhorka, Sub Tehsil: Harsaru, Gurugram, Sector 95, Haryana.

Date: 17.03.2024

Yogesh Chaudhry, Advocate
H-448, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-110060
yogesh.chaudhry2022@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
TOMO RIBA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH & MEDICAL SCIENCES (TRIHMS)
GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
NAHARLAGUN - 791110: ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Phone: 0360-2350331 FAX: 0360-2350791 Email: trihmsap@gmail.com

No.TRIHMS-67/2017(Vol-V) **Dated Naharlagun 15th March, 2024**

ADVERTISEMENT

Interview for filling up of following posts will be held on 15/04/2024 at 10.00am onwards in the Office Chamber of the Director (TRIHMS) TOMO RIBA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH & MEDICAL SCIENCES (TRIHMS), Naharlagun.

Interview will be conducted through virtual/in person as Committee decides.

Sl. No.	Department	Required Positions		
		Professar	Associate Professar	Assistant Professor
1	Anatomy	-	-	2 (two) posts Regular
2	Physiology	-	1(one) Contractual for 2 years	1(one) post Regular
3	Biochemistry	-	-	1(one) post Regular
4	Pharmacology	-	-	1(one) post Regular
5	Pathology	1(one) post Contractual for 2 years	-	2 (two) posts Regular
6	Microbiology	-	-	1(one) post Regular
7	Forensic Medicine	1(one) post Contractual for 3 years	-	1(one) post Regular
8	Community Medicine	-	-	1(one) post Regular
9	General Medicine	-	-	2 (two) posts Regular
10	Pediatrics	-	-	1(one) post Regular
11	General Surgery	-	-	3 (three) posts Regular
12	Orthopedics	-	-	1(one) post Regular
13	Oto-Rhino- Laryngology	1(one) post Contractual for 3 years	-	
14	Ophthalmology	1(one) post Contractual for 2 years	-	
15	Obstetrics & Gynaecology	-	-	2 (two) posts Regular
16	Anaesthesiology	-	-	1(one) post Regular
17	Cardiology	-	-	1(one) post Regular
18	Emergency & Trauma	-	-	1(one) post Regular
	Total	**4 (Four)Posts**	**1(one) post**	**22(Twenty two) posts**

Pay Scale

(a)	**Professar**	(a). Consolidated pay of 2,50,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh Fifty Thousand Only) per month
(b)	**Associate Professar**	(a). Consolidated pay of 2,20,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh twenty Thousand Only) per month
(c)	**Assistant Professor**	(b). Rs 78,800-2,09,200/- (EP Level 12)+NPA per month and other allowances as Admissible.

Terms and Conditions:

1. Eligibility criteria as per NMC.
1. All interested candidates need to send the CV and copies of relevant documents to **trihms.hr@gmail.com** or hard copies of application for the desired post along with documents may be submitted to the OSD (HR) TRIHMS on or before 10/04/2024 by 4.00pm thereafter no applicants shall be accepted.
2. All candidates have to bring their original documents and set of extra copies of the same at the time of the interview.
3. **The Director, TRIHMS reserves the right to cancel/vary the vacancies without assigning any reason thereof.**
4. Those who are working in any institution/organization shall submit NOC from their concerned authority. No TA/DA shall be given for attending the interview.
5. However, if any change is made then it shall be posted in TRIHMS Website.
For further details please visit **www.trihms.com** or contact Dr. B.V.S.Murthy, OSD (HR) at mobile no. 9612484018.

Sd/-
(Dr. Moji Jini)
Director (TRIHMS)
Naharlagun

DIPR/ARN/10832-34

Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR
No. NIT/2023-24/30890-906 **Date 15.03.2024**

निविदा सूचना/2023-24

निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिये केन्द्र/राज्य सरकार के अभियांत्रिकी विभागों एवं उनके अधिकृत संगठनों में पंजीकृत एवं अनुभवी संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं:

कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रू.)	निविदा सूचना संख्या
Construction of Court Complex at Kaman, Bharatpur.**UBN: RRC2324WLOB01553**	**1346.74 Lakh**	अल्पकालीन ई-769/23-24
SITC of Lift, Fire Fighting & External Electrical work at Medical College Hospital, Karauli. **UBN: RRC2324WLOB01572**	**1087.00 Lakh**	
SITC of Fire Fighting System in Hospital Block at Pali. **UBN: RRC2324WSOB01559**	**270.00 Lakh**	ई-775/23-24
SITC of Central Air Conditioning Chiller System at Shekhawati University at Sikar. **UBN: RRC2324WLOB01564**	**850.00 Lakh**	अल्पकालीन ई-776/23-24
Remaining RCC work & other work at Regional Cancer Institute at Jodhpur. **UBN: RRC2324WSOB01562**	**493.00 Lakh**	अल्पकालीन ई-779/23-24

निविदा से संबंधित प्रपत्र में निविदा शुल्क, धरोहर राशि, डाउनलोड करने व खोलने की तारीख सहित सम्पूर्ण विवरण एवं संशोधन वेबसाईट **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.nic.in** तथा **http://roads.rajasthan.gov.in/rsrdc** पर देखा जा सकता है। इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाईट **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है। **महाप्रबंधक**

टैलीफैक्स–05946–264331 **BRIDCUL (ब्रिडकुल)** ई–मेल: **pmbridculhld@gmail.com**
CIN No.U45203UR2008SGC032591

ब्रिज, रोपवे, टनल एण्ड अदर इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर डेवलपमेंट कॉरपोरेशन ऑफ उत्तराखण्ड लिमिटेड
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम) पूर्व में उत्तराखण्ड राज्य अवस्थापना विकास निगम लिमिटेड परियोजना इकाई–हल्द्वानी
इकाई कार्यालय : रौतेला कॉलोनी, छोटी मुखानी, पो0ऑ0 –बड़ी मुखानी, हल्द्वानी, नैनीताल – 263139

पत्रांक: 439/ब्रिडकुल/टेण्डर–90/2024 दिनॉक:– 16/03/2024

निविदा सूचना

महामहिम राज्यपाल, उत्तराखण्ड, की ओर से प्रबन्ध निदेशक ब्रिडकुल द्वारा इस निगम में सम्बन्धित श्रेणी–III (2 करोड़ तक के सिविल निर्माण कार्यों) हेतु पंजीकृत एवं अनुभव प्राप्त ठेकदारों/फर्मों से मदवार दरों पर टू–बिड सिस्टम के आधार पर निम्नानुसार ई–निविदाएं आंमत्रित की जाती है:–

S. No	Ref No.	Name of Project	Estimated Cost including (GST & all Taxes) (In lac)	Earnest Money (In Lac)	Cost of tender Document (In Rs.)	Time Period
1	BRIDCUL / HLD /11/2023-24	जिला कारागार नैनीताल परिसर में पहुँच मार्ग, प्रतिक्षालय, मुख्य मार्ग से टाईप–4 भवनों तक मार्ग निर्माण कार्य।	54.70	1.10	4000 + 18% G.S.T.	09 माह

उपरोक्त निविदा प्रपत्र डाउनलोड करने की प्रारम्भ तिथि **23.03.2024**, अपराह्न 03.00 बजे तथा निविदा जमा करने की अतिम तिथि **05.04.2024** अपराह्न 03.00 बजे तक है। उपरोक्त के सम्बन्ध में वर्णित निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी एवं निविदा प्रपत्र व किसी भी प्रकार के परिवर्तन आदि की सूचना वेबसाईट **https://uktenders.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध होगी।
अधोहस्ताक्षरी को बिना कोई कारण बताये निविदा को स्वीकृत अथवा निरस्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार होगा।

परियोजना प्रबन्धक

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU STADIUM COMPLEX, POLOGROUND SHILLONG-793001

No. DSYA/KheloIndia.9/Procurement/2023/94 **Dated: Shillong, the 15th March 2024**

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT)

Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya invites **Manual bids** from eligible bidders, in single stage two bid systems for procurement of the following:-

Khelo India State Centre of Excellence, Meghalaya under Directorate Of Sports & Youth Affairs, Meghalaya

Sl. No.	Name of Service
1.	Procurement Of Miscellaneous Items For Hostel, Gym & Physiotherapy Room And Office For Khelo India State Center Of Excellence Shillong, Meghalaya

Scanned copy of Bid Security and Hard copy of the same must be sent to the Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya on or before Bid Submission Date & Time as mentioned in Critical Date Sheet.

Bidders may download the Bidding Documents from the website –www.megsports.gov.in. **Bidders shall ensure that their Bids, complete in all respect are mailed/submitted before the closing date to Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Polo Ground, Shillong -793001.**

1. Bidders shall not tamper/modify the tender form in any manner. In case, the same is found to be tampered/modified in any manner, tender will out-rightly be rejected.
2. Intending bidders are advised to visit again **www.megsports.gov.in** website before submission of tender for any corrigendum / addendum/ amendment.

Sd/-
Director
Sports & Youth Affairs,
Meghalaya, Shillong

MIPR No. 1947

Govt. of Jharkhand
Energy Department
Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (JREDA)

3rd Floor, S.L.D.C. Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-834002.
Ph.: 0651-2491161, Fax: 0651-2491165, E-mail: info@jreda.com; Website: www.jreda.com

DATE EXTENSION NOICE (PR No. 322945)

Revised e-Procurement Notice

Tender Reference No. : 50/JREDA/FSPP/23-24 Dated: 16.03.2024

1	Name of the work	Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Solar Power Developer (SPD) for Setting up of 600MW Grid Connected Floating Solar PV Project at Chandil Dam in Saraikela – Kharsawan district of Jharkhand
2	Work completion period	24 (Twenty Four) Months
3	Date of publication of NIT on website: http:// jharkhandtenders.gov.in	02.04.2024 (Tuesday)
4	Date & time of Pre-bid meeting	22.04.2024 (Monday) at 12.00 P.M.
5	Last date & time for receipt of online bids	16.05.2024 (Thursday) upto 05:00 P.M.
6	Submission of original copies of Bid fee & EMD (Online through SBI Payment Gateway of Jharkhand Tendersssp)	16.05.2024 and 17.05.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.
7	Technical Bid Opening Date	20.05.2024 (Monday) at 03:00 PM
8	Name & address of office inviting tender	Director, Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency(JREDA), 3rd Floor, SLDC Building, Kusai, Doranda, Ranchi- 834002 (Jharkhand)
9	Contact no. of procurement officer	06513502645/ 7004806449
10	Helpline no. of e-procurement	0651-2491167/68/61

Any corrigendum/addendum can be seen on website: http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in & www.jreda.com. Further details can be seen on website: http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in & www.jreda.com

Sd/-
Director,
JREDA, Ranchi

PR 323039 JREDA(23-24)#D

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Anil S/o Raghubir R/o D-172, Camp No.02, Nangloi, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 465/15 U/s 380/457/511/34 IPC at PS: Aman Vihar, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Anil** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Anil** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Anil of FIR No. 465/15 U/s 380/457/511/34 IPC of PS: Aman Vihar, New Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 27.04.2024.**

By order
Navdeep Gupta
Metropolitan Magistrate (NW)
Room No.109, 1st Floor,
Rohini Court, Delhi

DP/2263/RD/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Sumit Kumar** S/o Jai Prakash R/o Village Bakkargarh, Jaffarpur Kalan, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 72/2023 u/s 174A IPC P.S. Jaffarpur Kalan, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Sumit Kumar** cannot be found and whereas it have been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Sumit Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Sumit Kumar** accused of FIR No. 72/2023 u/s 174A IPC P.S. Jaffarpur Kalan, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **23.04.2024.**

By Order : Sh. Abhinav Ahlawat
Metropolitan Magistrate-09,
Room No. 314, 3rd Floor,
Dwarka District Courts, New Delhi

DP/3004/DW/24

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Where as complaint has been made before me that one accused **Mrs. Mayawati** W/o Shri Naresh Kumar, R/o H.No. 532, Vikas Nagar, Loni Dehat, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh have Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **CC NI ACT/243/2022 u/s 138 NI Act** has been registered at **P.S. Gokalpuri, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Mrs. Mayawati** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Mrs. Mayawati** has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Mrs. Mayawati** of **CC NI ACT/243/2022 u/s 138 NI Act** has been registered at **P.S. Gokalpuri, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **19.04.2024.**

By Order
Ms Snehil Sharma
Metropolitan Magistrate NI Act,
Room No. 409, Fourth Floor, New Building,
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

DP/3095/NE/2024 (Court Matter)

UJVN LIMITED

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No.U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website:www.ujvnl.com

Letter No:346 **e-Tender Notice** Date: 07/03/2024

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-Maintenance), Vyasi Project, Dakpathar, invitesonline bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below :

1- e-Tender No. & Name of work: 24/2023-24/EE(C-M)Vyasi Project, "Annual Maintenance and Repair of Power House and allied structures of Vyasi HEP (2X60MW) at Hathiyari, Dehradun."

2- e-Tender No. & Name of work: 25/2023-24/EE(C-M)Vyasi Project, "Annual Repair and maintenance of VyasiDam & Allied structures of Vyasi Project at Juddo (Dehradun)".

3- e-Tender No. & Name of work: 26/2023-24/EE(C-M)Vyasi Project, "Annual Repair and maintenance of residences allotted to officers/employees of Vyasi HEP at Dakpathar, Dehradun".

Estimated cost (Respectively)-i) Rs. 4126104.62 (GST extra), ii) Rs. 3173555.21 (GST extra), iii) Rs. 4224449.46(GST extra)

Date of availability of biddocument on website- i, ii& iii) 14-03-2024 From 17:00 Hrs.

Last date for submission of bids on website- i, ii & iii) 05-04-2024 Upto 17:00 Hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal **https://uktenders.gov.in"**

Executive Engineer (Civil-Maintenance)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

epaper.indianexpress.com

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, DELHI

OLD ST. STEPHEN'S COLEGE BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI-110006
www.ceodelhi.gov.in
Helpline Nos. 1800-111-400 and 1950

GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA, 2024- NCT OF DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public, political parties and all aspiring candidates and their supporters, that defacement of any property (government or private) in public view by way of writing or marking with ink, chalk, paint or any other material in the form of posters, writing on wall, banners and unauthorized hoardings are prohibited under the provisions of "The Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, 2007".

Hoardings and advertisements displayed at duly authorized public places are allowed after approval by appropriate authorities for a specific period after paying the applicable charges.

An offence punishable under this Act shall be cognizable and whoever is found to be committing/indulging in defacement shall be punishable under Section 3 of the Act, with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one-year, or with fine which may extend to fifty thousand rupees, or with both. Where any offence is committed under this Act is for the benefit of some other person or a company or other body corporate or an association of persons (whether incorporated or not) then, such other person and Every President, Chairman, Director, Partner, Manager, Secretary, Agent or any other officer or persons connected with the management thereof, as the case may be, shall, unless he proves the offence was committed without his knowledge or consent, be deemed to be guilty of such offence.

It is also informed that Section 127A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 inter-alia mentions that no person shall print or publish any pamphlet or poster which does not bear on its face the names and address of the printer and the publisher thereof. Any person who contravenes the provisions of Section 127A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 shall be liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees or with both.

Further Section 171H of IPC also prohibits incurring of expenditure, inter-alia, advertisement, circular or publication, for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of candidate without authority from the candidate. As such in any advertisement/election matter for or against any political party or candidate in print media, during the election period, the name and address of the publisher should be given along with the matter/ advertisement.

The above mentioned provisions of the law shall be strictly enforced during the period of the Model Code of Conduct for the General Election to the Lok Sabha, 2024.

This is being issued for the guidance, information and compliance of all parties/ candidates/printing presses.

Sd/-
(RAJESH KUMAR)
Special CEO, Delhi

DIP/SHABDARTH/CLASSIFIED/0403/23-24

PURVANCHAL VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED, VIDYUT NAGAR, P. O.- BLW, VARANASI - 221004

Short Term E-Tender Notice (Corrigendum) E-Tender already invited for the following material date 14.03.2024, The Corrigendum has been done as under. The tender will be accepted up to at 15.00 hrs. Please visit website **www.etender. up.nic.in** for details/ download and for any other corrections/ amendments/ modifications/ extensions till the date of submission of bids. **SI. No.:** 1., **Tender Specification No.:** EAV-225/23-24, **Name of Material:** Polymeric Disc Insulator 45 KN (T&C Type) **Quantity:** 16000 Nos. **Name of Material:** Polymeric Disc Insulator 70 KN (B&S Type) **Quantity:** 17200 Nos. **Earnest Money (Rs.):** 1,00,000.00 **Tender Fee (Rs.).:** 5,000.00 + GST @ 18%, **Last date & Time for online submission of tender document:** 08.04.2024 15.00 Hrs., **Date & Time for online opening of tender part-1:** 09.04.2024 15.00 Hrs. Sd/- **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM-I) "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"**

पत्रांक 1118/ दिनांक 16.03.2024

"IMPORTANT"
Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, DELHI

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GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

REGARDING MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT & ELECTION CONTROL ROOMS IN NCT OF DELHI

The Election Commission of India has announced General Election to Lok Sabha, 2024 and therefore, Model Code of Conduct has become operational. The District Election functionaries / Returning Officers will be enforcing the Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit.

It is informed that as per section 171 B of Indian Penal Code, any person giving or accepting any gratification in cash or kind during election process, with a view to inducing any person to exercise his / her electoral right is punishable with imprisonment upto one year or with fine or with both.

Further, as per section 171 C of Indian Penal Code, any person who threatens any candidate or elector, or any other person, with injury of any kind, is punishable with imprisonment up to one year or with fine or both.

Flying Squads have been formed to register cases against both the giver and taker of bribe and for taking action against those who are engaged in threat and intimidation of electors.

All the Citizens are hereby requested to refrain from any illegal activities as above and in case, anybody offers any bribe or is having knowledge about the bribe or case of threat / intimidation of electors, then he / she should inform on the toll free number of the 24x7 Complaint Monitoring Cell of the Returning Officers / District, set up for receiving complaints.

General Public is therefore, informed that if they come across any of the following incidents:-

- Violation of Model Code of Conduct including defacement of any public property / any property in public view
- Distribution of cash, liquor, gifts etc. or offering / attempting to offer bribe by the candidates / political parties
- Threatening / intimidation of electors
- Any other electoral malpractices

They may report the matter to the Returning Officer / District Election Officer of the area at Toll Free Numbers as follows:-

S. No.	No. & Name of Parliamentary Constituency	Address of Control Room	Toll Free No.	Phone No. & E-mail ID
1	01 - Chandni Chowk	Court Room-03 D.C Office Complex Alipur, Delhi-110036	1800111408	011-20872012, 011-20872013 011-20872014, 011-20872015 districtcontrolroompc01@gmail.com
2	02-North East Delhi	Office of District Election Officer D.C. (North East) Deputy Commissioner's Office Complex, F-Block Nand Nagri, Delhi-110093	1800111402	011-22115289, 011-22595737 011-22132054, dcne@nic.in
3	03-East Delhi	DDMA Building Office of District Magistrate District East A-Block, L.M Bundh Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110031	1800111406	011-22010004 padmajaelectioneast@gmail.com
4	04-New Delhi	NDRF Building Jam Nagar House Shahjahan Road New Delhi-110011	1800111409	011-23075139 controlroomls2024nd@gmail.com
5	05-North West Delhi	Room No. 34 DDMA DM Office Kanjhawala Delhi-110081	1800111401	011-20893623 controlroompc05nw2024@gmail.com
6	06-West Delhi	Room No. 2 Office of DM (West) Shivaji Place, Raja Garden New Delhi-110027	1800111407	011-25107440 controlroompcwest@gmail.com
7	07 - South Delhi	Room No. 30, Ground Floor, Office of District Magistrate (South) M.B Road, Saket New Delhi-110068	1800111403	011-40791515 nocontrolroomsdpc07@gmail.com

Control Room of CEO Delhi Toll Free No. 1800-111-400

Citizens can also upload live complaint through "cVIGIL" mobile App

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, DELHI

OLD SEPHEN'S COLEGE BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI-110006
Helpline No. 1800-111-400 and 1950:

GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA 2024-NCT OF DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Single Window System for Issuance of Permissions During Election period

It is hereby informed to all political parties, candidates and other concerned that "Single Window System" has been setup in the office of all 07 Returning Officers of Delhi, for receiving of applications and to issue permissions/decisions to the political parties and candidates for public meetings/rallies/processions/loudspeakers and use of vehicles for election campaigning as well as use of non-commercial/remote/uncontrolled airports/helipads etc. to facilitate during the election period.

The procedure at **"Single Window System"** will be as follows:-

1. a. The political party/ candidates seeking permission has to apply online through the Mobile App "Suvidha Candidate" or "ENCORE" on ECI portal at encore.eci.gov.in at least 48 hours before the event along with details of Expenditure Plan in the prescribed format given in Annexure-D1 of Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditure Monitoring (January-2024) in accordance with the instructions of Election Commission of India.
   b. The political party/ candidate seeking permission may also apply to the ACP (Permission) at Single Window in the office of the Returning Officer concerned.
   c. A political party/ candidate may apply through an application for permission in respect of those events/rallies/ processions etc. scheduled to be organized within 07 days of making the application (excluding the day of application).
   d. Separate application has to be filed for more than one event on a particular day.
   e. In case an event/rally/procession etc. is to be held in the area covering jurisdiction of more than one Returning Officer of Parliamentary Constituency, then separate applications have to be filed to the ACP (Permission) in the office of concerned Returning Officer.
2. ACP (Permission) after obtaining necessary clearance, if any, from other departments such as fire, local authorities, land owning agencies, DISCOMS (Electricity), Delhi traffic Police etc. will issue the permission/decision to the political party/candidate within 36 hours of the receipt of application.
3. The permission/decision to the applicant will be issued on "First Come First Served" basis from the Single Window only.
4. The application form can be downloaded from CEO's Delhi website at URL https://ceodelhi.gov.in

The above mentioned system/procedure shall remain in force till the completion of election process.

Following is the details of the Single Window of Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs):-

S. No.	No. & Name of Parliamentary Constituency	Address of the Single Window	Name & Designation of Officers	Mobile No.
01	01-Chandni Chowk	Office of District Magistrate (North) Near Shardhanand College G.T. Karnal Road Alipur, Delhi.	Sh. Hemant Kumar, ACP/CAW	9868376900
			Inspr. (Exe) Rakesh, D/4451 (DIU/N)	8076649795
02	02-North East Delhi	Office of District Election Officer/ D.C. (North East) Deputy Commissioner's Office Complex Nand Nagri, Delhi-110093	Sh. Ashok Kumar, ACP/ HQ	9717766775
			Inspr. (Min.) Kamal Kumar, 248/D	8860505503
03	03- East Delhi	1 & F Deptt. Complex B-Block, L.M Bandh Shastri Nagar, Delhi	Sh. Sanatan Singh, ACP/ MACT	9717502519
			Inspr. Lalit Kumar, No. D-/376 (DIU/ED)	9717927757
04	04-New Delhi	D.M, New Delhi Complex 12/A, Jam Nagar House New Delhi	Sh. Dharmender Pal Singh, ACP/ATHU	9873093686
			Inspr. Ram Niwas, D/3801	9811282318
05	05-North West Delhi	Office of D.C (North-West) Kanjhawala, Delhi	Sh. Neki Ram, ACP/DIU	7065036112, 9999886225
			Inspr. Ram Kishan, D-1/40 PIS No. 16950109 (RI/OD)	9268111170
06	06-West Delhi	Plot. No. 3 Shivaji Place Near West Gate Mall. Raja Garden New Delhi-110027	Sh. Jagbir Singh, ACP/ Vigilance/West	9811192923
			Inspr. Hanumant Singh, D-1/1249 (Vigilance Br./West)	9999947780
07	07-South Delhi	Office of SDM Saket Court Room MB Road, Saket, New Delhi	Sh. Amreek Raj Birdi, ACP/PG	9868167557, 7503380057
			Inspr. (Exe.) Praveen Kumar, No. D-1/ 1072, Inspr. Vigilance Branch	9811371617

This is being issued for the information, guidance and compliance of all concerned including political parties/candidates.

Sd/-
(RAJESH KUMAR)
Special CEO, Delhi

DIP/SHABDARTH/CLASSIFIED/0402/23-24

For voting, your name in the Electoral Roll is mandatory

NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I Varinder s/o Sikander Lal r/o 1/258 Subhash Nagar Delhi 110027 have changed my name to Varinder Kumar Kakkar 0050239165-1

It is for general information that I Bhoomika Upadhyay,W/o-Ankur residing at-1402,Tower No.G-2,Plot No.11,Golf City,Sector-75, Gautam Buddha Nagar,Uttar Pradesh-201301 declare-that name-of mine has been wrongly-written as-Bhoomika Pasricha in-my Government Service-Record (Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, Government of NCT of Delhi).The actual name-of mine is Bhoomika Upadhyay respectively which may be amended accordingly.

0040720431-1

I,Sanjeet,S/o Mr. Sant Singh,R/o H.No.-B-769,Sainik Colony,Sector-49,Faridabad,PIN:121001,Haryana,India,have changed my full name in this way,to Sanjeet Singh,where Sanjeet is my first name and Singh is my surname for all future purposes.

0040720460-1

It is for general information that I,Anjani Kumar Chaurasia,S/o Ram Samujh, R/o RZC-167, Nihal Vihar, Nangloi, West Delhi,Delhi-110041, declare that name of mine and my minor son has been wrongly-written as Anjani Kumar and Ansh Kumar in my minor son Ansh Chaurasia aged-11-years in his School Records. The actual name of mine and my minor son are Anjani Kumar Chaurasia and Ansh Chaurasia.

0040720447-9

I,YASH KATYAL,S/O SHRI CHANDER MOHAN KATYAL, R/O,B-123, SWASTHYA VIHAR DELHI-110092, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME YASH KATYAL TO YASH KKATYAL,FOR ALL, PURPOSE,IN FUTURE, BOTH ARE NAMES OF SAME-PERSON.

0040720452-7

I,VIKAS GULATI R/O C-32,THIRD-FLOOR,BALI-NAGAR,RAMESH NAGAR,DELHI-110015.HAVE CHANGED MY CHILD NAME SAMYRA GULATI TO SAMAIRA GULATI. 0040720446-6

I,Suresh Kumar S/o Lila Ram Chokker R/o 610,Pocket-3, Janta-Flats, Paschimpuri, New Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Suresh Kumar Chokker. 0040720460-3

I,Ruksar D/o Mohd. Nabi Hussain R/o,Flat-No.2-D, Second-Floor, Part-of-Property-No.151-152, Village Patparganj, Delhi-110091, have changed my name to Ruksar Hussain. 0040720460-5

I,Rajesh Kumar Dilawari,s/o Somnath Dilawari,R/o-AN-4A,GF Shalimar Bagh,New Delhi-110088,have changed my name to Rajesh Dilawari,for all,future purposes.

0040720467-1

I,RUCHI W/O RAM SHARAN SEHGAL R/O HNO.109-B,ASHRAM WALI-GALI,PUNJABI-KHOR,DELHI-110081.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RUCHI SEHGAL. 0040720446-9

I,RAJESH SAINI,S/O LATE SHRI.MANOHAR LAL,R/O HOUSE.NO-15-A, GALI.NO-4,A2-Block CHANDER VIHAR,SANT NAGAR,BURARI, DELHI-110084,inform that RAJESH SAINI and RAJESH,both names are same person.

0040720446-5

I,KM SWETA POONIA(Aadhar-579479321682),D/O DHARAM PAL SINGH,R/O-PLOT.NO.13-A,CHAUHAN ENCLAE,NAJAFGARH,NEW DELHI-110043,inform that KM SWETA POONIA and KM SWETA POONIYANA,both names are same person.My correct name is KM SWETA POON??.

0040720446-4

I,Jasmeet Singh Anand,S/o Inderpal Singh Anand,R/o.H.no-3,Building no-2,Aster-Vatika City Sector-49,Gurgaon,Haryana-122018,Have changed my name to Jasmeet S Anand,for all purposes. 0040720446-3

I,HARDEEP SINGH,S/O GURMEL SINGH BRAR,R/O B-802, BESTECH PARK VIEW SPA SECTOR-47,GURGAON,HARYANA-122018,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO HARDEEP SINGH BRAR.

0040720446-1

I,Ghanshyam Dass,S/o Mahabir Parasad R/o,H.No.1936,Sector-4, PO.Rewari,Dist. Rewari(Haryana),have changed my name to Ghanshyam Dass Aggarwal,for all Purposes.

0040720467-3

I,Deepak Mittal S/o Sh.Ved Prakash R/o-D-1173,Dabua-Colony,Near K.D School Faridabad.that Deepak.& Deepak Mittal both are the names of the same person.The Actual name is Deepak Mittal.

0040720381-4

I,DEEPANSHU AGGARWAL S/O SHYAM AGGARWAL,R/O-4431,VISHNU BAZAR, CLOTH MARKET, FATEH PURI,DELHI-110006 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME,FROM DEEPANSHU TO DEEPANSHU AGGARWAL FOR.ALL,PURPOSES.

0040720467-2

I,Arti Mahajan W/o Rajiv Madan R/o-B-21,Sector-93B,Noida UP-201304,have changed my name to Aarti Madan

0040720381-1

I,Chetan Singh S/o,Gopal Singh R/o,Flat-No.88-E, Pocket-1, Mayur-Vihar Phase-I,Delhi-110091, that-name of mine has been wrongly-written as Chetan in my-10th & 12th Class-Marksheets & Certificates.The actual-name of mine is Chetan Singh. 0040720460-6

I,Babli W/o-Rajinder Pal Singh Sapra,R/o-29,Tagore Park,First Floor, Near Model Town,Delhi-110009,have changed my name to Jatinder Sapra,permanently.

0040720446-2

I,Arvind Kumar,R/o G 53, DLF New Town Heights, Sector-91,PO.Garhi Harsaru, Distt. Gurgaon (Haryana)-122505,have changed my Minor Daughter's name from Sanya to Sanya Arora for all purposes.

0040720460-2

I,ASHAR BEG,S/O MASROOR AHMAD BEG, Residing at, F-101,TAJ ENCLAVE, GEETA-COLONY, DELHI-110031, have changed my name to ASHAR BAIG,all future purposes.

0040720447-2

I,ANAM BEG,D/O MASROOR AHMAD BEG,Residing at,F-101,TAJ-ENCLAVE, GEETA-COLONY,DELHI-110031,have changed my name to ANAM BAIG,all future purposes

0040720447-1

I,ADESH KUMAR S/O GURDAYAL MAKHIJA R/O 2327,NEW HOUSING BOARD COLONY,SECTOR-11-12,PANIPAT,HARYANA-132103.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ADESH KUMAR MAKHIJA. 0040720446-8

I,AAKASH S/O ADESH KUMAR MAKHIJA R/O 2327,NEW HOUSING BOARD COLONY,SECTOR-11-12,PANIPAT,HARYANA-132103.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO AAKASH MAKHIJA.

0040720446-7

I, Yugal S/O, Harish Chander R/o Gali No 5 Vikas Nagar Kalaka Road Rewari Haryana 123401 have changed my name to Yugal Saini for all purposes.

0040720465-1

I, Ved Parkash Koli, S/O Krishan Lal Koli, R/O. C4F/118, Third floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058, have changed my name to Ved Parkash, for all Purposes. 0040720447-3

I, Vartika, D/O Vikas Sharma, R/O Tower- O 1403, Logix Blossom County, Sector 137, Noida, 201305 have changed my name to Vartika Sharma.

0070894661-1

I, UDAY SINGH S/O SH. SATNAM SINGH R/O H.NO. H-210, J.J. COLONY, WAZIRPUR, ASHOK VIHAR, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110052 declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as MANPREET in my 10th and 12th class marks-sheet and certificate. The actual name of my mother is VEENA KUMARI

0070894738-1

I, TALAPA SUDHAKAR, son of, Talapa Reddy Pichaiah, residing at,H.No.7-2-26, Ferozguda, Post,Bowenpally, Distt.Medchal Malkajgiri, Secunderabad, Telangana-500011, have changed my name, from TALAPA SUDHAKAR to SUDHAKAR TALAPAREDDY.,Vide-affidavit dated-16.03.2024,

0040720452-10

I, Sumit s/o Late Sh. Inderjeet Singh R/o 601, Neelamber Apartments, Sec.14, Kaushambi, Ghaziabad, UP-201010 have changed my name to Sumit Singh for all future purposes 0040720367-1

I, Sourabh Arora S/o Rajender Kumar Arora R/o B-27/2, Block-B, East Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to Saurabh Arora for all purposes. 0040720452-4

I, Sonu Gupta W/o Gaurav Bindal R/o 308, Bankey Lal Market, Badarpur, Delhi-44 have changed my name to Sonam Bindal 0070894715-1

I, Nisha Suri,W/o Mohan Handa, R/o A-25, Mohan Park, Naveen Shahdara, Delhi-110032, have changed my name after marriage to Radha Handa,for all purposes. 0040720452-5

I, Sarita Sahrma W/o Ajay Sharma, R/o-11190-91, Mandi-Road, Doriwalan,Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005, have to changed my name from Sarita Sahrma to Sarita Sharma,for all future purposes. 0040720381-2

I, Santosh Yadav S/o Ahivaran Singh R/o D-81, Chawda Village, Sector-22, Noida, UP-201301, have changed my name to Santosh Kumar Yadav for all future purposes

0070894711-1

I, SATINDER PRASAD GOUR, S/O RAM CHANDER GOND, ADD-VILLAGE DEURWA KAPTANGANJ, PO:KHABHARA BHAR, DIST:KUSHI-NAGAR, U.P-274301, changed my name to SATINDER, for all future purposes.

0040720452-6

I, Rita Gupta w/o Akhilesh Kumar R/O. G-03 Tower-10 LA-Residentia Techzone-4 Greater Noida West G.B.Nagar,UP-201306 has changed my name from Rita Gupta to ANURADHA CHAURASIYA for all future Purposes. 0070894718-1

I, PRADIP KUMAR TRIPATHI, S/O PERMESHWAR PRASAD TRIPATHI, R/o 178, PIPRA SADWA, BELBHARIA, BALRAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH-271206,changed my name to PRADEEP KUMAR TRIPATHI.

0040720448-2

I, Ravi Kumar Thakur S/o Sh. Manharan Thakur, R/o RZG-299-B, Gali No.6, Back Side Lohiya Marg, Near Pandit Chowk, Raj Nagar-II, Palam Colony, New Delhi-110077, that in my school documents my father's name has been mentioned as M. Thakur instead of Manharan Thakur. have changed my father name from M. Thakur to Manharan Thakur for all future purposes.

0040720444-1

I, Mukesh Bhola, S/o Hari Ram Bhola, R/o GH-13/1117, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110087, have changed my name as Mukesh Kumar Bhola, for all future purposes.

0040720452-1

I, Mohd Ashfaq Ahmad S/o Nabi Ahmed R/o D-536/1, Buland Masjid, Shastri Park, Gandhi Nagar, North East, Delhi-110053, have changed my name to Ashfaq Ahmed.

0040720460-4

I, Mohammad Nematulla Khan S/o Mohammad Israil Khan R/o-197, UGF, Hauzrani Delhi-17, have changed name to Md Nematulla Khan S/o Md Israil Khan 0070894722-1

I, Manish S/o Mahender Kumar,R/o 10580, S.F., Gali No.4, Near Pratap Nagar Metro Station, Pratap Nagar, Delhi-110007, have changed my name to Manish Kumar for all purposes. 0040720403-1

I, LAXMI CHAND KARADIA, S/o Late TODU RAM, R/o Flat No.242, Block.No-7, Old MIG DDA Flats, Prasad Nagar,Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005,do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that LAXMI CHAND and LAXMI CHAND KARADIA all names are one and same person,for all future purposes.

0040720447-5

I, KM SHILPI CHAKRAVARTI, W/O GAURANGA CHAKRABARTI, R/O SEM-1202, SHIPRA SRISHTI APARTMENT, AHINSA KHAND-2, INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201014,changed my name to SHILPEE CHAKRABARTI,for all,future purposes.

0040720448-4

I, KARTIK S/O DEVENDER R/O PANA TODSAN, DULHERA, DULHERA(56) JHAJJAR H:R-124507, have changed my name to KARTIK DESWAL.

0040720452-8

I, Jasmeet Singh Kandhari, S/o Than Singh, R/o-A-53, Defence Colony, Delhi-110024, have changed my name as Jasmeet Singh,for all future purposes.

0040720452-2

I, Jagvir Singh S/o Nandram Bhardwaj R/o-H-444, Sector-17, Green View Apartments, Vasundhara,Ghaziabad, U.P.-201012,have changed my name to Jitendra Kumar for all future purposes. 0040720417-1

I, Hitherto known as Miss Ambika Rani,D/o Mr. Mahipal Singh Negi, Resident of, E-1/335, Third-Floor, Cpwd Flat Type-3, Dev Nagar Karol Bagh, Central, Delhi-110005, have Changed my Name and shall hereafter be known as Ambika Negi. All Names are One and Same-person, for All, Future Purposes. 0040720447-4

I, Gurmit Kaur,W/o Gurpreet Singh, R/o B-140, Janta Colony, Raghubir Nagar, Delhi-110027, have changed my name to Gurmeet Kaur. 0040720452-3

I, GYANENDRA KUMAR S/o HEM NARAYAN SAH R/o-160 GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK-C, PANDAV NAGAR, SHAKARPUR, DELHI-110092, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO GYANENDRA NARAYAN SAH. FOR ALL PURPOSES IN FUTURE.

0070894735-1

I, GOPAL PRASAD S/o Shanker Lal, R/o 672-B/7A, Govindpuri, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019, have changed my name to GOPAL PRASAD KASHYAP for all purposes. 0040720401-1

I, Dushyant S/o Jaipal Singh R/o 349, street no-8, Near JKG School, Shivpuri/Vijay Nagar Ghaziabad U.P. have changed my name to Dushyant Kumar for all future purposes.

0070894724-1

I, Bijay Kumar Gupta R/o-E-41, Dayal Baugh, Surajkund, Faridabad-121009, have changed my minor daughter name from Ayushi to Ayushi Gupta 0070894733-1

I, Bhukya Surendar S/o Bhukya Erya R/o 3- 12/ 2 Manchukonda, Khammam Urban, Khammam, Manchugonda, Khammam, Telangana- 507182, have changed my minor daughter's name from Bhukya Manvetha aged 11 months to Bhukya Sahasra forever

0070894743-1

I, Bal Bir Singh S/o Late Indraj Singh R/o 45/49, Village Birondi Chakrasenpur, G.B. Nagar U.P. have changed my name to Balveer Singh for all future purposes. 0070894749-1

I, Babu Lal S/O RAGHNATH SHARMA R/o House No -912/20, Gali No -11, Gejha, Sector-93, Noida, 201304, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh have changed my name to BABU LAL SHARMA. 0070894713-1

I, BHARTI KARADIA,W/o LAXMI CHAND KARADIA, R/o Flat. No.242, Block.No-7,Old MIG DDA-Flats, Prasad-Nagar, Karol Bagh, New-Delhi-110005, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that BHARTI and BHARTI KARADIA all names are one and same person, for all future purposes.

0040720447-6

I, Aaleem Khan S/o Masuzuma Khan R/o R-4, Saurabh Vihar, Jaitpur, Delhi-44 have changed my name to Aleem Khan

0070894731-1

I, ARTEE RANI GUPTA, W/O MANOJ KHANDELWAL, R/O, HOSTEL EZ STAYS MANDELA MANSION 13-B,KNOWLEDGE PARK-III GREATER-NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201308, changed my name to ARTEE KHANDELWAL for all future purposes.

0040720448-3

I, ANIL KUMAR TYAGI,S/O NIRANKAR TYAGI, R/O 113, MAKARAIDA, BHADAULI,GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201206,changed my name to ANIL TYAGI.

0040720448-1

I hitherto known as-Neelam Bhatia alias Neelam Badlani,W/o-Jai Kumar,residing at-H.No.05, 3rd Floor,Chander Lok Enclave,Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034,have changed my-name and shall-hereafter be known as Varsha Badlani.

0040720433-1

I Mahendra Ram Arya S/o Jivan Ram Arya R/o Teen Pani, Khanna Farm, Haldwani, Nainital, Uttarakhand-263139, have changed my name to Mahendra Singh

0070894745-1

I Harjeet Kaur W/o Amit R/o Phusgarh (Part) (2), P.O.:- Phoosgarh, Dist:-Karnal, Haryana-132001, have changed my name to Jeet kaur

0070894740-1

I H Sureshchand Alias Sureshchand H S/o Harakchand Jain R/o 1791, 1st Cross Road, Robertsonpet K G F, Bangarapet, Kolar, Karnataka- 563122, have changed my name to Sureshchand

0070894729-1

I Garima D/o Rajesh Kumar and W/o Chanchal Kumar R/o Behat, Jhanjharpur Rs, Lakhnaur, Madhubani, Bihar-847403, have changed my name to Garima Rajesh Kumar

0070894748-1

It is for general information that I,Munish Kumar, S/O-Pramanand, R/O A-164, Friends Enclave, Mundka, Nilothi, PO Nilothi, West Delhi-110041, declare that name of mine and my-minor daughter has been wrongly written as Munish Pal and Kavyansha in my minor daughter namely Kavyansha Pal aged 16 years in her 10th class educational documents. The actual name of mine and my minor daughter are Munish Kumar and Kavyansha Pal.

0040720447-10

~~I Sanjay Solanki S/o Shri Shishu~~ Pal Singh Solanki R/o 1/181 3rd flr , Subhash Nagar, New Delhi - 110027 have changed my name to Sanjay Kumar Solanki for all purposes.

0040719951-1

I, Geeta D/o Rajender Singh, W/o Rajender Gahlot, R/o H.No.73, Kakrola Village, South West Delhi-110078, have changed my name to Geeta Gahlot for all purposes.

0040719720-6

LOST & FOUND

I have lost my class10 Certificate, while going to my College. If someone finds it, please return to me as soon as possible. Sibghatullah Mansoor Ph: 93124 20602

0040720366-1

I, Renu Singh d/o Mr. Amar Singh, R/o D-1037, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110025 lost my original buyers agreement and allotment letter fir Apartment No. PPJ081 in DLF Park Place, DLF Phase-5, Gurgaon, Haryana issued by DLF Home Developers Limited. In case anyone find it, please let me know at Ph 9810419540 and Email id <renusab@gmail.com>

0070894726-1

I, Surender Lal, S/o Late Shri Lakhi Ram, R/o Plot. No.67, Vill-Rangpuri, Delhi Estate Abadir Rangpuri Extn. Blk-B,Kh.No.1227, Delhi.have lost my property document no is DL64963658987236RT. if found Pl contact as per below address.

0040720448-10

I,Poonam Mann,D/o-Balbir Singh Mann,R/o 545A,Near-Jaat Chowk,Nangloi,Delhi,have lost my 1st-Year,Marksheet Roll.No.909677 (57P90) of Maharaja Surajmal Institute of Pharmacy & Technology,Janakpuri,Delhi. Anyone found-please contact:8383844323.

0040720460-10

I,Shweta Aggarwal,D/O.Kamlesh Chand Aggarwal,R/O.X-1585,gali no 20,Rajgarh Colony,Gandhi-Nagar,Delhi-110031,have lost my Demand letter of flat no.55,Third-floor, Block-C-5,Pocket-1,Sector-34,Rohini, Delhi-110039.

0040720452-11

ORIGINAL Conveyance Deed of H.D.Pillai for Flat-252 Sidhartha-Enclave,New Delhi-14,lost in Jun-08 if Found pls contact-9818729046

0040720381-3

BUSINESS

PioneerPark Residents Welfare Association Sector 61 Gurugram proposes engaging Project Management Consultant Agency for its Façade Repairs and Painting Project . Interested agencies having relevant experience may email their credentials to Estate Manager PPRWA on pioneerparkestatemanager@gmail.com <mailto:pioneerparkestatemanager@gmail.com> by 24.03.2024

0050239163-1

PioneerPark Residents Welfare Association Sector 61 Gurugram has received EOIs for engagement of Estate Management Agency. Now PPRWA proposes engaging a Consulting Agency for handling the bids. Interested agencies having relevant experience may email their credentials to Secretary PPRWA on ppupkeep2024@gmail.com <mailto:ppupkeep2024@gmail.com> by 24.03.2024.

0050239164-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my client Mrs. Archana W/o Late Sh. Manoj Kumar R/o BE 366 A/2, Hari Nagar, Gali No.1, South West Delhi, Delhi-110064 has debarred/disowned her elder son Kartik Bhalla from his all movable and immovable properties and severed all relations from him. Any person dealing with him shall be doing so at his/her own risk, my client and rest of her family members shall not be responsible in any manner what so ever for any conduct, act or deeds done by him.

PRAVEEN RASTOGI (Advocate)
ENRL No.D-244/06
RZ-97, Khushi Ram Park,
Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is informed that my clients Jakam and his wife Tabussum Nisha, R/o House No.102, Hazipabad, Chandan Hola, New Delhi-74, have severed all relations and disowned/debarred their son namely Zahid along with his wife Wasima including their present and future children from their all movable and immovable properties due to their misbehavior. My clients will not be responsible for transaction, deeds and actions of their son and his wife. If anybody deals with them shall be responsible for the same.

Jameel Ahemad (Advocate)
Chamber No. 545-B,
Saket Court New Delhi-17

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publicly notified that FLAT NO "C-167B", SECTOR- "20", NOIDA, has been allotted in the name of SURAJ KAPOOR S/O LATE SHRI CHANDER BHAN KAPOOR R/O B-41/G-4, DILSHAD GARDEN, DELHI-110032 and GPA was executed in favor of FRANCIS N. D. S/O SHRI N. V. DEVASSY R/O NETTICADAN SANTHIPURAM MELUR THRISSUR KERALA-680311, and the GPA executed at Noida Vide Book No IV Volume No 365 on pages 226/227 at Document No 12010 dated 11/7/1986, So with the help of the notice it is informed the transfer of the above flat in favor of ASHA SHARMA DO BALDEV RAJ SHARMA R/O B-3, SECTOR-20, NOIDA and the Agreement to Sell was not registered. If any one has any objection he/she may submit his/her. objection in the Housing Department of Noida Authority along with sufficient proofs within 15 days of the publication of this notice

Sd/-
KAMAL SINGH
Advocate
Enrl. No. D/748/2014

PUBLIC NOTICE

On behalf of my client **Sinder Pal Singh S/o Kartar Singh R/o D-88, Sudershan Park, Moti Nagar, Ramesh Nagar, West, Delhi-110015** had disowned/debarred, disinherited his married son namely **Inderjeet Singh (Son) and his wife namely Geetu Sharma W/o Sh. Inderjeet Singh** from her all movable and immovable properties and other assets and has severed all family relations with them because they are misbehave, torture, harassing my client and using filthy language and beyond the control of my client if any person deal with them upon his/her own responsibility for which my client will not be responsible for this.

Sd/-
RAVI MEHRA
Advocate
Ch . No. 419A, 4th Floor,
Lawyer's Chamber Block,
Rohini Courts Complex, Delhi-110085

Public Notice

Public in general is hereby informed that My Clients Mr. Arun Kumar S/o Ram Singh age 51 yrs & Pooja W/o Arun Kumar age 46 yr R/o 9/2742 A, Gali-17 A, Kailash Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, East Delhi, Delhi-31 have Disowned their daughter namely Karishma D/o Mr. Arun Kumar aged about 19 yrs. from all their movable & immovable properties/assets & severed all relations because of her misconduct, mis-behavior towards them. In future my client shall not be responsible for any of their acts, deeds, etc

Bhawna Jakhetia Advocate
Enrl.No.D/4471/2014; M:9711230627

Public Notice

Residential Property No. A-46, FF, Jangpura B, New Delhi-110014.

Be it known to all concerned that the above said property was in the joint names of (1) Late Neeta Bhalla & (2) Late Rakesh Bhalla both children of Late Shri Nand Kishore Bhalla.

As both the above owners are no more, therefore following legal heirs are now the owners of the above said properties:

(i) Mrs. Renu Hansrani
W/o. Mr. Pramod Hansrani
D/o. Late Sh. Nand Kishore Bhalla (Elder Sister of both the deceased):
(ii) Mrs Kamlesh S Bhalla W/o. Late Sh. Surinder Bhalla (Widow Sister in law of both the deceased with two children Ms. Stuti Bhalla & Mr. Shivam Bhalla)

The above stated property cannot be sold/purchased without involvement and knowledge of above Class-II legal heirs.

Any otherwise unscrupulous sale/purchase/registry of above said property will be at the risk/consequences of the parties involved.

Kamlesh S Bhalla
w/o Late Shri Surinder Bhalla
R/o. A-146, UGF,
Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092.
Contact no. 9971661560

सार्वजनिक सूचना

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि दस्तावेज/विक्रय विलेख सं.2076 जो कि बही सं.1, जिल्द सं.273 के पृष्ठ सं.260 से 262 तक के क्रमांक सं.2076 दिनांक 25.09.1999 को उपनिबंधक कार्यालय करछना में पंजीकृत है, जो कि श्रीमती रीतू आनन्द के नाम से है। वर्ष 2000 ई. में चोरी हो गयी, जिसके बावत प्रथम सूचना रिपोर्ट संख्या 66 दिनांक 18.03.2000 थाना सिविल लाइन्स, प्रयागराज में पंजीकृत करायी गयी। उक्त विक्रय विलेख आज तक मिला नहीं है यदि किसी बैंक अथवा वित्तीय संस्था में बतौर बंधक जमा या किसी व्यक्ति को मिली है तो अधोहस्ताक्षरी के निम्नलिखित पते पर अविलम्ब सूचित करें।

रीतू आनन्द पत्नी संजय आनन्द निवासी-77, गुरू नानक लेन नं.2 नैनी, प्रयागराज।

PUBLIC NOTICE

~~That my Client SMT. SAVITA RANI W/o~~ SHRI NARESH KUMAR R/o RZ-132, Ist FLOOR, SHIV BLOCK, RAGHU NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110045 and her original PROPERTY DOCUMENTS i.e.DDA POSSESSION SLIP AND NOC OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER IN RESPECT OF DDA BUILT UP FLAT NO.14-A, GROUND FLOOR, POCKET-F-1, MIG CATEGORY, SITUATED AT G-8 AREA, RAJOURI GARDEN, NEW DELHI, VIDE FILE NO.F-25(17)/85 LOST AND HAVE AREADY LODGE A FIR VIDE L.R.NO.1548642/2024:DATED 15.03.2024 AND IF ANY BODY FOUND OF THE SAID PROPERTY PAPERS THEN PLEASE GIVE ME A INFORMATION OF MY M.NO. 9654161852

Sd/- B.B.N. DEO, Advocate
S.R.IInd,B Coumpus, Janak Puri,ND-58

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it ~~known to all concern~~ed on the behalf of my client SMT. USHA DEVI W/O SH. CHEDDI LAL R/O 225/23 JUGGI, NEAR GANDA NALA KISHAN GANJ, PRATAP NAGAR SADAR BAZAR, DELHI- 110007, that she has severed all her relations with her son Sh. SATISH KUMAR, HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN and has disowned and disinherited them from all her movable and immovable properties & assets. Anyone dealing with them shall do so on their own risk and consequences.

Muzammil (Advocate)
362, II Floor,Kohat Enclave,Pitampura,
Delhi-110034 Enrl. No. D/3781/2017
Email:muzammil.adv92@outlook.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, BOB SAKSENA Son of Late Mr. RANDHEER SAKSENA, resident of FLAT NO. 5137, SECTOR - B, POCKET - 7, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI 110070. My Original Conveyance Deed dated 05.01.2005 of the said property has been misplaced. An Information Report of this effect has been lodged in police station, Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR NO. 232999/2020 on 06.03.2020.

Any person(s) claiming my right, interest having any objection or found in possession of original; original possession slip, may write/contact with above named person at above address / phone No. 9354505103/9910536464 within 20 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Sd/-
R.K. prasad (Adv)
Ch. No. 121 Saket Court
Complex New Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Pradeep Sapra has acquired Property No. 1/7529-A, area measuring 50 sq. yrds., Khasra No. 220, situated at Village Babar Pur in the abadi of Gali No. 13, East Gorakh Park, Shahdara, Delhi vide regd. GPA dt. 18.06.1997 along with ATS & Will executed by Mrs. Pushpa Devi, Now Mr. Pradeep Sapra is the undisputed owner of above said property.ORAny person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is hereby required to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate)
H.No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024

व्यक्तिगत

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The first few election contests in India were lopsided: Congress was the only organized political party, Jawaharlal Nehru was a colossus, and there were only pockets of resistance to the Congress' juggernaut. The first real election between two rival and equal formations was in 1977. In the wake of the Emergency, the Opposition parties were brought under one umbrella by Jayaprakash Narayan. The Janata party's electoral victory was decisive, but it left Indians divided. The northern states voted one way and the southern states voted the opposite way.

The division between North and South has persisted since 1977.

THE UNHAPPY DIVIDE

In subsequent elections too, with exceptions, the northern states voted one way and the southern states voted in a different way. In the Hindi-speaking and Hindi-knowing northern states, the rivalry was largely between Congress and BJP. Slowly but steadily, the BJP gained at the cost of the Congress. The situation in the southern states was very different. In elections held after 1977, regional parties challenged the Congress: DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Telugu Desam and YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh, TRS in Telangana, JD(S) in Karnataka, and the Communist-led LDF in Kerala. The BJP could not sneak into this crowded battleground. It did in Karnataka but with mixed results.

The success of the regional parties has worsened the distance between the North and South.

The regional parties in the southern states are deeply suspicious of the BJP. More than the Congress, it is the regional parties that paint the BJP as a party of Hindi, Hindu and Hindutva. Pride in the regional language, acceptance of all religious groups, and the legacy of social reformers have marked a distinct path for the people of the southern states. Their suspicions are fuelled by the perceived discrimination in devolution of revenues, dominance of Hindi over the regional languages, and the imposition of one set of beliefs (food, dress, culture, etc.).

Further, the BJP has injected the poison of 'centralism' into centre-states relationships by enacting numerous laws that reduced the autonomy of the states. The BJP has also weaponised the laws and used them openly to tame or destroy regional parties. As a consequence, the distance between North and South has, sadly, grown wider.

AGENDA REVEALED

The BJP's approach to the Congress is no secret: it wants *Congress-mukt Bharat*, that is an India where the Congress will cease to exist as a party. The BJP's approach to non-Congress parties is no different. It may appear to ally with a regional party for a period of time but its ultimate objective is to obliterate that party. Examples are the fate of the Janata party, Akali Dal, INLD, BSP and JD(S). It has practically obliterated the identities of the regional parties of the north-eastern states. At one time, it befriended the TMC, YRSCP and TRS but the goal was — and is — to obliterate them from West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, respectively. The goal is the same in Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana. DMK and the AIADMK woke up in time. Shiv Sena, NCP and JJP woke up rather late. Soon, the RLD, BJD and the TDP will realize what is in store for them if the BJP entrenched itself in the central government.

The BJP is asking the people to give the party 370 seats to advance its core agenda. Its strident Hindutva campaign will not stop with Ayodhya and Kashi. More mosques near Hindu temples will be disputed. More cities and roads will be re-named. The implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 has started with the notification of the Rules on March 11, 2024. The Uniform Civil Code, experimented in Uttarakhand, will be replicated and a law passed in Parliament. The 'One Nation One Election' idea will be made into law by amending the Constitution. Federalism and parliamentary democracy will be further eroded and the Indian government will be closer to a Presidential system with all powers concentrated in one person.

Unfortunately, many people will actually welcome centralism because true democratic values have not been fully imbibed in our family, social or political structure. In the name of development, we will accept the rich getting enormously richer and tell the bottom 50 per cent of the people to be satisfied with a 3 per cent share of total wealth and a 13 per cent share of national income. Social and cultural subordination and oppression will continue. Economic inequalities will grow wider.

LEARN FROM HISTORY

The above is not an imagined horror story. History teaches us that the only way to ensure freedom *and* development is to change the regime from time to time. European countries do it all the time. The United States has term limits. Many countries of South America and Africa have not learned the lesson and suffer under authoritarian governments. In India, we had learned the lessons but seem to have forgotten them. The examples of China, Russia, Türkiye and Iran are before us. The world is watching India's elections.

> ...Pride in the regional language, acceptance of all religious groups, and the legacy of social reformers have marked a distinct path for the people of the southern states. Their suspicions are fuelled by the perceived discrimination in devolution of revenues, dominance of Hindi over the regional languages, and the imposition of one set of beliefs (food, dress, culture, etc.)

Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH
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Of elections and bonds

ONE OF the things I do not like being called is a 'veteran journalist'. It makes me feel ancient. But I have no hesitation in admitting that I have been around in journalism for a very long time and that this has its advantages. It has enabled me to bear witness to a lot of history and a lot of elections and it has made me learn how to view political events and changes from a vantage point of some distance. This could be why I see the electoral bonds scheme with a degree of perspective. Do not get me wrong. I have no intention of defending this dangerously deceptive scheme. I am very happy that the Supreme Court demanded answers and forced the names of donors to political parties to be revealed along with their donations.

This scheme that turned 'black' money snowy white as soon as it became a political donation was 'not perfect' as the finance minister admitted at the India Today conclave last week. But she was right when she reminded the audience that the system that existed before was much worse. It might have been more accurate to say that it did nothing to improve corrupt practices from times of yore.

I remember elections in the seventies and eighties, and even in more recent times, when powerful politicians were able to coerce industrialists to make huge donations with the promise that if they won, they would ensure payback. Stashes of cash continue to be found regularly in the homes of politicians and their associates which means the practice is thriving. Money is concealed this way because it is usually dirty money. The election bonds were supposedly an attempt to make political donations more transparent, but this did not happen. The bonds failed to bring transparency or end black money which is what they were created to do. But they provided a useful cover for political parties who wanted to appear to have hands too clean to touch black money.

Congress Party spokesmen are taking a high moral tone on the issue and tarring the BJP. Hypocrites. Have they forgotten their own grubby history? In the seventies and eighties when elections came, Delhi's political grapevine would buzz with rumours of 'suitcases of cash' coming from the Soviet Union. Nobody ever confirmed if this was true or not but many years later, when KGB spymaster Vasili Mitrokhin wrote his memoirs, he mentioned casually that several members of Indira Gandhi's cabinet were on the KGB payroll. Mitrokhin's revelations were damning and should have caused a furor in India. This did not happen because nobody seemed really surprised.

Anyone with the smallest interest in the Indian political system knows well that our elections are funded by money donated by rich businessmen and that often these donations are linked to a contract or a favour. What is worrying about the donations made through the election bonds is that some of them seem to have been made to evade environmental clearances. Others seem to have been made by people who feared that they were on the verge of being raided by the Enforcement Directorate or the Income Tax department.

It is not easy to break the symbiotic relationship that exists all over the world between big money and big politics but in countries that have better checks and balances things work better. If India's political system continues to be reliant on black money it is mostly the fault of our political leaders. If they made it easier for businessmen to work without needing to rely on bribery and corruption there would be less black money. The question we need to be asking is why this has not already happened, and the answer could be that it suits our politicians to fund their elections with hidden resources.

The electoral bonds were an attempt to conceal this ugly truth rather than an honest attempt to bring transparency into the political system and this is why the Supreme Court has expressed its disapproval so strongly. So, will things change some day soon? The sad truth is that this is unlikely because what happens at the very top of our political system also happens at the very bottom. In rural India people talk openly about how their local leaders never let go of their position until they can give it to a relative because politics has become such a lucrative business. When they contest elections, they do it on other people's money and not their own. This they use to build themselves big houses and buy their family big cars.

The Supreme Court's resolve to lift the veils that concealed the names of the people who bought those election bonds and the names of the parties who benefited from them is a vital first step towards change. But, for real change to happen there will need to be a total cleansing of our political culture. When Narendra Modi first became prime minister one of his first 'guarantees' was that he would end black money. If he becomes prime minister for the third term, we must hope that he will deliver on this promise because there is no question that things need to change if India is to ever become a developed country.

Countries whose elections are fueled by black money usually remain trapped in the swamp and miasma that corrupt political systems wallow in forever.

Why Mayawati is the patron mother of Bahujan politics

Dalitality

SURAJ YENGDE
Twitter @Surajyengde

NOT MANY have understood Mayawati or the BSP, creating difficulties in deciphering the telltale signs of Indian politics. India should be grateful to have a charismatic leader like her, despite the casteist regime in media, politics, business and other sectors. The BSP has created a democratic experience in a land that enquires about caste before establishing a relationship.

She is not to be taken for someone soft-spoken. She cannot be easily guarded, but is ideologically pure. In her memoir, a complete unison of the party and self, she narrates her life story through the lives of Jyotirao Phule and B R Ambedkar. Mayawati has been in active politics since the age of 21. Many cadres who work with her refuse to give up on her. They say they have seen the struggles she endured due to the limited opportunities available to her as a "woman in a patriarchal, Manuwadi society" — a fact she reiterates in her memoir.

Along with her mentor Kanshi Ram and other cadres, Mayawati has surveyed the country. Many reminisce about how they took her on their bicycle to the remote parts of the country, where they would often wind up sleeping on the floor at a cadre's house. She gave up on her job and the benefits it accrued for the mission.

This is the story of the rise of the Bahujan movement and Mayawati, and how she carved a path for herself despite being a single woman out in the world. She defied the sexist, casteist and pathetic gaze of the world. She is where she is today because of her scarred feet, hardened back and blemished face. What does a woman need to endure to win people over? Mayawati has done it all. It is about time the country recognised her as a leader who can lead everyone, as she has demonstrated in her long public career of 47 years.

She cannot be equated with any north Indian leaders, save for Narendra Modi. Yet, she is more experienced than him. She has been an elected representative since 1989. Before taking the reins of UP four times as CM, she was out on the field from early 1977 and became a full-time BSP worker in 1984.

Besides the appeal of a mass leader, the ideology works in her favour. In India, three mainstream political parties are firmly rooted in ideologies — BJP, BSP and the Communists. They have a set goal that uses politics as a tool, while other parties make politics their ideology and fail at every turn.

Kanshi Ram used to tell his cadres that if Congress becomes weak, BSP will strengthen, whereas the rise of the BJP will eventually pave the way for the absolute rise of BSP. As a scientist, he observed the nature of the chemical osmosis of various properties of society. Looking at the response to BJP's current mandate, only BSP can take it head-on ideologically today. Though it may not end up sending representatives to the House, the vote share count makes it a strong player.

One of the difficulties of party politics is the possibility of alliances. By not aligning with either of the alliances, Mayawati has established the kernel of democracy that needs to move beyond the two-party system — a system that often privileges the dominant classes. Both Congress and BJP have demonstrated their bad intentions towards SCs, STs and Mayawati. By standing apart from these hegemonic forces, the patron mother of Bahujan politics of India has privileged the community's interest rather than running the errands of electioneering.

Pre-poll alliances mean getting subsumed in anti-Dalit political dispensation, where core voters get neutralised and the party's vote share gets compromised. BSP is unlike other alliance partners. A national party, it can field candidates in all states. It also does not flinch from breaking alliances after finding that the government is not working in favour of SCs, STs and OBCs.

Mayawati's drawbacks are her inaccessibility to the public and her uncharismatic deputies. There is hardly any pioneering leader worth the name who has continued in the party under her leadership. Most were fired.

In his foreword to the book *The Iron Lady Mayawati*, Kanshi Ram has explained the reason for Mayawati's strong character: having faced opposition from senior colleagues, she sidelined them when she got a chance to make way for her reign.

Her possibly biggest stumbling block are her advisors. The aims of this mediocre, irrelevant posse is extremely limited since it does not have a Kanshi Ram in them, which is to think about India and the world as a petri dish of Bahujan politics. That is why, currently, one cannot see party-sponsored social movements.

The colour of the party has changed, from being a missionary movement to charges of nepotism. Perhaps this is the party's adaptability to the challenges of the 21st century. Mayawati remains a thick wall for Indian democracy.

Suraj Yengde, author of 'Caste Matters', curates Dalitality, has returned to Harvard University

history HEADLINE

LEENA MISRA & RITU SHARMA

Gandhi's experiments with truth at Kochrab

THE STAFF at barrister Jivanlal Desai's house, Jivan Nivas, would wonder why their guest — a wiry man who had returned from South Africa — spent most of his time at home, while their boss was at work. "In a bid to end the chatter, the guest, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi told them, 'I am not idle. I am thinking about how to start a war against the British'," says Desai's grandson Shailesh Diwan, 86, narrating an account passed down in the family since 1915.

He says Desai and Gandhi had studied law together in London. On his return from South Africa, Gandhi stayed at Desai's bungalow, located in the now-crowded Kalupur area on the banks of the Sabarmati.

Desai later let out his 'vacation home', a European-style bungalow with a large garden, in Kochrab village, then on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, to Gandhi. It was here that the Mahatma started his first ashram, Satyagraha Ashram, in India, on May 25, 1915, and began his experiments with truth.

Diwan and his wife Gita visited the bungalow, located on a 5,000-sq-metre plot, on March 13 this year. A day earlier, PM Narendra Modi had virtually inaugurated the renovated Kochrab ashram. "We are happy that nothing has changed in the building after the latest renovation. Otherwise, what is the point?" Diwan says.

Diwan, who has recently moved to Ahmedabad from Mumbai, says, "Since both did not believe in freebies, my grandfather and Gandhi decided on annual rent — Re 1 — for Kochrab house."

A plaque on the bungalow's wall says that Morarji Desai, then CM of Bombay, declared this "historic and pure" ashram a memorial on October 4, 1953, five years after Gandhi's assassination. In 1954, the ashram's management was handed over to Gujarat Vidyapith, the varsity founded by Gandhi in Ahmedabad.

The two-storey building's thick walls that are plastered with limestone and the wooden ceiling offer much-needed respite from the blazing Ahmedabad sun. During a tour, Bhim Bahadur, 44, a caretaker here for 22 years, unlocks the aged but strong iron latches on each of the solid wood doors to the rooms and flips the antique black switches, each of them working.

At the start, the ashram had 25 men and women who had accompanied Gandhi back from South Africa. The ashram took in children as young as four years old too with their parents' consent. Its strength grew to about 100, including Vinoba Bhave and Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar, in the two years Gandhi occupied it.

The ashram at Kochrab. *Rizwan Kadri*

The ground floor, surrounded by a verandah, has rooms used by Gandhi, Kasturba, the other inmates and a storage space. A wooden staircase leads to the top floor, which has a low-seating conference room and a library with a wooden flooring. While the ground floor has bathrooms, the first floor has a spacious balcony.

Everything here is over 100 years old, including the wooden blinds on doors, says Bahadur, who belongs to Nepal. A heavy brass bell hangs from the ornate eaves of the upstairs balcony. "This was rung to wake everyone at 4 am so they could come down for prayers by 5.30 am, have meals on time and go to bed by 9 pm," he says.

A single-storey building on the rear side is a kitchen, with its roof made of "imported tiles". It also has a storeroom, toilets and bathrooms. Another longish building, *Paanch Ordiyo* (five rooms), on the premises was used for weaving, carpentry, etc.

The January 26, 2001, earthquake caused immense damage to the building. Ramesh Trivedi, a retired Vidyapith teacher who spent over 18 years at the ashram, was posted here around that time by then university Vice-Chancellor. Using government funds, he got the broken Kota stone floor in Gandhi's room replaced.

Historian Rizwan Kadri, who lives in his ancestral home at Kagdiwad, a stone's throw from the ashram, says his grandfather came to Kochrab from Raikhad in 1910 "to get away from the crowd". He says, "On the way to the Sabarmati river, Gandhi would often stop by at our house to chat with my grandfather."

Over the years, the ashram became a victim of neglect. "Luxury buses would remain parked outside, creating a mess, even as the ashram mostly remained closed," adds Kadri.

Bahadur shows pictures of the decorated ashram on March 12, 2024, which also marked the 94th anniversary of Dandi March. "The PM was supposed to come here, but he inaugurated it virtually."

A series of wall panels quoting from his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, tell the story of the ashram under Gandhi. A panel states how many friends convinced Gandhi to choose Ahmedabad over Haridwar and Rajkot.

Kadri's book *Mahatma ni parikrama* (The path of the Mahatma) in Gujarati, says when Gandhi decided to settle in Ahmedabad, he transformed the ashram "into an antithesis of everything Ahmedabad stood for in those days (opulent living)". On September 11, 1915, hitting out at untouchability — a practice he considered a "blot" on the country — Gandhi took a Dalit weaver family into the ashram. There were vehement protests by the inmates, including Kasturba. The move "upset a neighbouring community and even Vaishnav businessmen refused to fund Gandhiji's activities", Kadri writes. However, a wealthy businessman from Ahmedabad anonymously donated Rs 13,000 to the ashram a few days later, easing all money worries. In June 1917, when plague hit the city, Gandhi shifted the ashram to Sabarmati, around 8 km away, where he founded the Harijan Ashram, popularly called Gandhi ashram.

While Diwan does not have historic documents on the exchange between his grandfather and Gandhi, the entire family, spread from Ahmedabad to the US, often gets together at Kochrab for a family photograph. They are happy to have the permission to "host family events there some times, while maintaining the sanctity of the place, without *band-baaja*," says Gita.

She SAID

RANI ROHINI RAMAN

Breastfeeding is a necessity, a privilege

FIVE YEARS back, when I gave birth to my daughter, I was determined to breastfeed her exclusively for the first six months. After her birth, we were at the hospital for a month for an unavoidable medical procedure. Since our focus was to keep her alive, we ended up giving her formula.

To my surprise, the hospital staff ensured we relied less on formula and more on mother's milk. A friend introduced me to support groups for breastfeeding mothers. Encouraged, I weaned my daughter off formula in a month and breastfed her till she was four years old. We sailed through the growth spurts together and she outgrew this bond on her own.

When I look back, as a working mother in a nuclear set-up, I wonder if it was as easy for all working mothers. One doesn't need to reiterate the importance of mother's milk for a child's early nutrition and immunity development. Yet, there seems to be a decline in breastfeeding. Is it just a gimmick by formula companies? Or do we need to think beyond? Here, we need to think about the percentage of working women who can avail maternity leave and the impact it has on their job. The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, entitles women to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave for their first two children.

There is a dearth of published data to understand the impact of maternity leave on exclusive breastfeeding. Offices need to be seen through the lens of maternity benefits and support structures for new mothers. While the range of benefits vary in the organised sector, those in the unorganised sector struggle to get even maternity leave.

Till the age of one year, mother's milk or formula is the main source of nourishment for a child. But breastfeeding even for the first year is an uphill task for working mothers. Do offices have systems in place to help new mothers continue breastfeeding? Not everyone has the privilege of an understanding environment, where a new mother can pump milk and refrigerate it in the office till she can carry it back home.

In an environment where maternity leave is denied, breastfeeding in public is looked down on and everyone gives their two cents on a child's nutrition, how can a woman make this her own journey alone? We need to think as a society and policymakers: are we visualising a mother as a worker? Or a parent without proper support structures? Or a parent who does not have access to knowledge to debunk myths surrounding breastfeeding?

There has been a rise in feeding stations in public places, a welcome step. However, the need is to ensure that more parents are informed and supported, so they themselves choose to walk inside these feeding rooms. My breastfeeding journey has made me more aware of my privilege — access to information, social positioning and economic status — to be able to do just that. And behind everything was a partner who understood the importance of breastfeeding our child.

Despite knowing the importance of mother's milk for the child, for a healthy society and the environment, we now need to understand the struggles of parents, mostly mothers, who walk the tightrope of breastfeeding while working. But with more women pushed to work in unorganised sectors, exclusive breastfeeding will remain a distant reality in the present work regime.

Rani Rohini Raman is a faculty member at Azim Premji University
National Editor Shalini Langer curates the fortnightly 'She Said' column

LOOTED AFTER BATTLE OF OKINAWA

22 ARTIFACTS RETURNED TO JAPAN

Boston: Twenty-two historic artifacts that were looted following the Battle of Okinawa in World War II have been returned to Japan after a family from Massachusetts discovered them in their late father's personal items, the FBI said Friday. They include six portraits, a hand drawn map of Okinawa from the 19th century, and various pieces of pottery and ceramics. **AP**

TOP OF THE WORLD

Vaughan Gething

UNITED KINGDOM

Wales set to get its first Black leader

London: Vaughan Gething won the Welsh Labour Party leadership contest on Saturday, and is set to become the first Black leader of Wales' semi-autonomous government. Gething, who is currently Welsh economy minister, beat Education Minister Jeremy Miles in a race to replace First Minister Mark Drakeford. Drakeford announced late last year he would step down once a replacement was chosen. Gething, 50, will be the fifth first minister since Wales' national legislature was established in 1999. He needs to be confirmed next week by the Welsh parliament, the Senedd, where Labour is the largest party. Gething, son of a Welsh father and Zambian mother, will be the first Black leader of a government in the UK. **AP**

TAIWAN

Chinese boats warned again as tensions simmer

Taipei: Taiwan Saturday warned off Chinese coast guard ships that entered its restricted waters near frontline islands close to China for a second day in a row, as tensions simmer across the sensitive Taiwan Strait. Taiwan's coast guard said four Chinese coast guard boats on Saturday morning entered the restricted waters of Taiwan-controlled Kinmen islands, which hug the Chinese coast. It said the Chinese boats stayed just over an hour after Taiwan authorities asked them to leave. **ENS**

CHINA

12 get jail for storming Hong Kong legislature

Hong Kong: A Hong Kong court on Saturday sentenced 12 people to jail terms from more than four years to nearly seven years in a high-profile rioting case linked to the storming of the city legislature during a pro-democracy protest in 2019. Protesters broke into Hong Kong's legislative council building on July 1, 2019, smashing windows and streaming inside as public anger mounted over an extradition bill that would have allowed authorities to send people to mainland China for trial. **AP**

VENEZUELA

Opp leader faces deadline for poll withdrawal

Mexico City: It's her choice — but one on which the hopes of millions of Venezuelans fighting to restore their democracy depends. Barred from running for office, opposition leader María Corina Machado is facing pressure from foreign leaders and fellow government opponents to abandon her dead-end presidential candidacy ahead of a March 25 candidate registration deadline and make space for a substitute to take on the entrenched incumbent, Nicolás Maduro. **AP**

A ship transporting humanitarian aid from the World Central Kitchen organisation, led by the United Arab Emirates, arrives in the Gaza Strip's maritime space, on Friday. The Israeli military says a ship has delivered 200 tons of food, water and humanitarian supplies to Gaza, inaugurating a sea route from Cyprus. *Israeli Army via AP*

PEACE TALKS TO RESUME IN QATAR TODAY

Israel okays Rafah attack plan but keeps ceasefire hopes alive

REUTERS
GAZA STRIP/CAIRO/DUBAI, MARCH 16

ISRAEL FRIDAY approved a potential assault on the Gaza city of Rafah while also keeping ceasefire hopes alive with plans to send another delegation to Qatar for talks on a possible hostage deal with Islamist militant group Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he had okayed a plan to attack the city on the southern edge of the shattered Palestinian enclave where more than half of its 2.3 million residents are sheltering after five months of war.

Global allies and critics have urged Netanyahu to hold off attacking Rafah, fearing mass civilian casualties. But Israel says it is one of the last strongholds of Hamas. In Washington, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said the US had not seen the Rafah plan, but would like to. He told a regular briefing a Hamas ceasefire-for-hostages proposal was within the bounds of what was possible and expressed cautious optimism about it. Hamas has presented a Gaza ceasefire proposal to mediators and the US, which includes release of Israeli hostages in exchange for freedom for Palestinian prisoners, 100 of whom are serving life sentences.

A statement from Netanyahu's office on the Rafah attack plan said Hamas' demands for the release of hostages remained unrealistic, but an Israeli delegation would still head to Doha once the security cabinet had discussed its position. The Israeli statement said the Israeli Defence Force was "preparing operationally and for the evacuation of the population" of Rafah.

It gave no time frame and there was no immediate evidence of extra preparations on the ground. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters in Austria the US needed to see a clear and implementable plan from Israel for Rafah, including to get civilians out of harm's way. Negotiators failed this week to reach a ceasefire agreement in time for the Ramadan Muslim holy month. Washington and Arab mediators are still determined to reach a deal.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri accused Netanyahu of "manoeuvring ... to conduct more crimes of genocide."

"He isn't interested in reaching an agreement," he told Reuters.

Ukraine attacks Russian city, refinery on Day 2 of election

REUTERS
MOSCOW, MARCH 16

A UKRAINIAN missile attack killed two people in western Russia and a separate drone strike set an oil refinery ablaze on Saturday, the second day of an election that President Vladimir Putin has accused Kyiv of trying to disrupt.

The Ukraine war has cast a shadow over voting in the three-day presidential election, which is all but certain to hand Putin six more years in the Kremlin.

In the Belgorod region where cross-border attacks from Ukraine have become part of daily life, the governor reported the deaths of a man and a woman.

Video obtained by Reuters showed fires ablaze and air raid sirens sounding on the empty streets of Belgorod city.

Dmitry Azarov, governor of the Samara region 850 km (530 miles) southeast of Moscow, said the Syzran refinery was on fire but an attack on a second refinery had been thwarted.

Russia's Defence Ministry said it had repelled attempts by Ukrainian forces to cross the border into Belgorod region. Governor Gladkov said that, given "the current situation", schools in much of the region would close on Monday and Tuesday, and that shopping centres in Belgorod city would be shut on Sunday and Monday.

Putin's hold on power is not under threat. His leading critics are in prison or have fled abroad.

Overall turnout had topped 40% by the afternoon of day two. Some of the highest rates - approaching 70% - were reported in the Belgorod region where the missile strike occurred and in Russian-controlled regions of Ukraine where Kyiv says voting is illegal and void.

A family at a polling station in St. Petersburg, Saturday. *Reuters*

'Welcome to hell': UN panel says Russian war crimes are widespread

NICK CUMMING-BRUCE
GENEVA, MARCH 16

TWO YEARS after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, United Nations investigators say they have uncovered new evidence of systematic and widespread torture of Ukrainian prisoners held by Russian security forces.

A UN Commission of Inquiry Friday detailed a range of what it described as Russian war crimes, including summary executions, sexual violence and forced transfer of Ukrainian children into Russia. The commission paid special attention to "horrific" treatment of Ukrainian prisoners by Russian security services at detention centers in Russia and occupied Ukraine.

The commission will deliver a report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva next week, detailing accounts of torture from four locations in Russia and seven in occupied Ukraine.

"We are concerned at the scale, continuation and gravity of violations and crimes that the commission has investigated and the impact on victims," Erik Mose, chair of the three-person panel, said in a statement.

The commission, set up in 2022, said it had previously expressed concern over arbitrary arrest and ill treatment by Ukrainian authorities of people suspected of collaborating with Russian authorities. But in this report, its fifth, the commission recounted only two new cases of Ukrainian aggression, in addition to 3 reported earlier. Russia guards told one prisoner "welcome to hell," the commission said, describing brutal admissions procedures that included beatings and electric shocks. Torture was reportedly carried out "everywhere": in cells, corridors, courtyards and the bathhouse. **NYT**

Pak court slams govt for its failure to deport 'Indian' held 11 yrs ago

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI, MARCH 16

A PAKISTANI court has slammed the interior ministry for its failure to deport an Indian national arrested nearly 11 years ago despite court orders and warned that the secretary concerned would be summoned to explain how his department is working in such cases.

The single-judge bench of the Sindh High Court (SHC) headed by Justice Mohammad Karim Khan Agha Friday directed the interior ministry to depute an officer well-versed with the facts of the case or file a compliance report at the next hearing, the *Dawn* newspaper reported Saturday.

Abdul Mughni was arrested in 2013 by the Mobina Town police station near Abul Hassan Ispahani Road and booked under various provisions of the Foreigners Act. A sessions court sentenced him to six months in prison in 2017. The convict filed an appeal against his conviction before the SHC.

The court observed that the appellant was an Indian national, while the interior ministry was not able to confirm his nationality apparently due to lack of efforts, the report said. At the last hearing, it also noted that the focal person of the home department of Sindh had submitted that a correspondence was made with the Ministry of Interior on the subject matter and it did not respond and thereafter, the court had issued a notice to the secretary to send an official familiar with this case to explain as to why the appellant had not been deported yet. On Friday, a section officer of the ministry turned up and said that the deportation did not happen due to certain procedural issues.

EXPANDING AFGHAN TIES TOP PRIORITY: DAR

Islamabad: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Saturday that "expanding cooperation" with neighbouring Afghanistan is a "top priority" of the new government. Dar took to X after receiving a telephone call from his Afghan counterpart Amir Khan Muttaqi who congratulated him on his appointment as the foreign minister. **PTI**

Two Pak Army officers among 7 personnel killed in terror attack in KPK province

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR MARCH 16

AT LEAST seven Pakistan Army soldiers, including two officers, were killed when six terrorists launched multiple suicide attacks on a security check post in the restive tribal district of North Waziristan bordering Afghanistan on Saturday, the military said.

A Lieutenant Colonel and a Captain were killed along with five soldiers. All the six terrorists who attacked the check post in Mir Ali area were shot dead.

According to the ISPR statement, after the troops foiled the initial attempt of intrusion, the terrorists rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the post, followed by multiple suicide bombing attacks.

During the subsequent clearance operation, troops effectively engaged and killed all six terrorists. However, during the intense exchange of fire, Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar were killed, the statement said.

Food being served at a shelter for displaced families in Port-au-Prince. *AP*

UN agency warns of acute food shortage as tensions soar in Haiti

REUTERS
PORT-AU-PRINCE, MARCH 16

RESIDENTS BRACED for another tense night in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince on Friday, as attacks continued across parts of the city in the aftermath of the resignation of Prime Minister Henry and in the absence of a clear plan to replace him. "Ariel Henry resigned but we are still in political distress," said resident Claude Atilus. "We must take our destiny into our own hands. I want the political players to rise to the task and commit themselves to organising the country." "The situation is not good for us," said vendor Jean-Phillipe Jean-Louis, adding he was exhausted, prices were exorbitant and working on the streets was dangerous.

"When we merchants go out into the streets looking for money to feed our children and wives, we find nothing," he said.

The United Nations' children's fund has warned of record hunger and life-threatening malnutrition concentrated in the capital's poorest, most dangerous and busiest neighborhoods, with one in four children nationwide suffering chronic malnutrition, or stunting.

Satellite images on Thursday showed shipping containers blocking access to heavy cranes at the country's main cargo port, which shut operations after a break-in, and set up around the country's National Palace, the site of heavy shooting last week.

Local media reported police were facing off late on Friday with gangs in the Delmas area, traditionally a stronghold of the G9 alliance led by Jimmy "Barbeque" Cherizier.

Local outlet Gazette Haiti reported that meetings on a compromise were set to take place on Saturday.

Not endorsing Trump: Ex-US Vice President Mike Pence

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK, MARCH 16

FORMER VICE President Mike Pence says he will not be backing Donald Trump in the 2024 election.

"It should come as no surprise that I will not be endorsing Donald Trump this year," Pence said in an interview with Fox News Channel on Friday, weighing in for the first time since the former president became the presumptive GOP nominee. Pence ran against Trump for their party's nomination but dropped his bid before voting began last year.

The decision makes Pence the latest in a series of senior Trump administration officials who have declined to endorse their former boss]s bid to return to the Oval Office. While Republican members of Congress and other GOP officials have largely rallied behind Trump, a vocal minority has continued to oppose his bid. It also marks the end of a metamorphosis for Pence, who had long been seen as one of Trump's most loyal defenders.

FIRST CASE TRIED UNDER AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN INTERFERENCE LAWS RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT BREADTH OF REGULATIONS

'Chinese spy' gets jail in Australia, he says 'scapegoat of geopolitical tensions'

YAN ZHUANG
MELBOURNE, MARCH 16

THE POLICE officers asked the man what he meant when he said that involving an Australian government minister in a charity event could benefit "us Chinese." Was he talking about mainland China and the Chinese Communist Party, or the local Australian Chinese community? Depending on the answer, he faced up to 10 years in prison.

"You are understanding the Chinese is China. We always say, 'I'm Chinese,' that not mean, 'I'm mainland China,'" said the man, Di Sanh "Sunny" Duong, who was brought in for questioning.

The officer pressed on, according to a tape played for a jury. Was Duong effectively building a relationship with the minister, "who you thought would be the future prime minister, to support the views of the Chinese?" Another officer asked, "Mainland China?"

But the first case, Duong's, came to trial only in November, and it was, by all accounts, a low-stakes affair. It involved throwing the weight of the Australian government against a suburban tombstone maker over diverging interpretations of two words ("us Chinese"), and a $25,000 donation to a community hospital that — prosecutors said — would at some point have become the basis for a pro-China pitch to a local member of Parliament.

In December, a jury found Duong, 68, guilty of preparing for or planning an act of foreign interference. Late last month, a judge sentenced him to two years and nine months in prison. He is expected to serve a year behind bars.

Duong did not testify at the trial and his lawyers did not call any witnesses. But in his only in-depth interview since his arrest, with NYT, he said that his patriotism toward China never conflicted with his loyalty to Australia and its interests. He saw himself as a scapegoat of geopolitical tensions, saying his prosecution was intended to send a message: "Don't walk too close to China."

Born and raised in Vietnam, he fled in 1979, one of the hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese who left the country. After cobbling together a middle-class life in Australia, he often sought to portray himself as a man on the rise. He ran unsuccessfully as a candidate in the conservative Liberal Party in a state election in 1996. He worked his way up through the ranks of local Chinese community groups, eventually becoming the No. 2 of the Global Federation of Chinese Organizations from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The groups, he said, allowed him to connect with officials in China, and to mingle with local Australian politicians and officials at the Chinese consulate in Melbourne.

Duong was already being investigated by the authorities. They wanted to know why he often traveled to China, made comments that echoed Beijing's policies, and boasted about his friendship with a Chinese intelligence officer. In 2020, Duong was charged under the foreign interference law, which criminalised any deceptive or covert behavior that is intended to influence Australian politics or policy on behalf of a foreign government. Mr. Duong's lawyer, Peter Chadwick, argued that his client simply liked to exaggerate his connections to rich and powerful people. Relationships with Chinese officials were a necessity for someone who did business in China, like Duong, he argued. This "doesn't mean that a person or an organization are forever co-opted to do what the Chinese government says," he said. **NYT**

Duong in 2021 at a charity event in Springvale, a suburb of Melbourne. He worked his way up to become a Chinese-Australian community leader. *NYT*

CRUDE WATCH

OIL PRICES DROP

Houston: Oil prices dipped on Friday, but prices were expected to finish more than 3% higher for the week on rising demand from US refiners completing planned overhauls. **REUTERS**

'Despite protectionism & nationalistic rhetoric, trade deals still being signed'

TRADE DEALS are being signed elsewhere and in India despite the rhetoric of rising protectionism and nationalism, in a sign that global trade will pick up pace after the ongoing phase of slowdown, JOHN PEARSON, global Chief Executive Officer of DHL Express - German-headquartered global package delivery and freight forwarding service provider - said in an interview with RAVI DUTTA MISHRA.

Citing the DHL Global Connectedness Report on global trade flows, Pearson said that investments are flowing in India more than any other place in the world apart from the US, due to the 'China plus one' phenomenon. However, the phenomenon is also fueling Chinese firms increasing operations in geographies closer to its territory such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

India has an FTA with ASEAN countries and it is currently reviewing the same. *Edited excerpts:*

THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW WITH JOHN PEARSON CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF DHL EXPRESS

WTO projections for 2024 are still somber. How do you see this year for global trade growth?

Global trade and the global economy is quite weak right now. The economy has bottomed out and I'd expect some sort of uptake. When it will happen is difficult to predict. Interest rates and inflation are moving in the right way. Sentiment will start to improve. But whether that comes in April, May, June or July, and it's very difficult to tell.

I have seen these cycles before. The slowdown has been quite protracted after the pandemic. But by the same token, some parts of the world are growing rather nicely such as India. South America, Africa and the Middle East, North Africa region for us is performing well. And then various countries, dotted around in Europe are likewise. So this is by no means a doom and gloom situation. Global trade and the global economy is a bit of a deflated balloon right now. But businesses are very self resuscitating and I expect it to come back.

How are you reading China at the moment because their trade with ASEAN nations are rising but there is a bit of a decline in its trade with the West?

So I don't think one can be anything but positive about China. The track record is proven. The China plus one story is also there. That doesn't mean companies are lifting their businesses out of China and putting them somewhere else. It means that they are de-risking. Businesses want factories in China and in Jakarta, Bangalore, Vietnam and the Philippines. In fact, those were the regions that were most commonly cited as benefiting from China plus one.

China plus one also means that Chinese companies are putting their own branches nearer to their markets such as in Egypt,Thailand among other regions. And so we're now putting Chinese salespeople into several areas like Jakarta, Hanoi and Tijuana to become their logistics partner.

This China plus one thing is but a fraction of the overall scale of what China produces and exports. It is nevertheless a trend and a movement that companies Chinese and multinationals are diversifying from an only China type set up.

Do you see China plus one phenomenon is affecting India in a positive way?

This China plus one thing is perhaps three years old. All the inward investment data that I've seen in the DHL Global Connectedness Report on India says that more money is coming into India than anywhere else in the world apart from the US.

This suggests that the export story is a strong one. The advancement in internal logistics and infrastructure is a strong one, or the ability for companies to want to do business in India is a good one. And some of that will come from China.

So, I think to say everyone benefits isn't right. But the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, India, are the Asian beneficiaries of that, and also Turkey and Mexico.

Are you concerned by rising protectionism globally?

What the report continues to show me is that despite all the record rhetoric and narrative on protectionism, nationalism, tariff, trade wars.. trade deals are still being written. They were written in 1969 in ASEAN, one of the most successful trading bloc's created and they are written recently between India and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

So, these things will create inward investment to India and create trade on those links.

What is concerning is the fracturing of trade along the lines of the geopolitical ally groups. China only deals with Chinese companies and the US only deals with its companies. I think this is something that the world would be concerned about.

What has been the impact of the Red Sea shipping crisis on the logistic costs?

People were nervous about putting things on the sea. For a period of time, there were longer transit times, some nervousness and volatility in the marketplace, and some higher prices. To say there were massively higher prices on every lane on every ship and every customer wouldn't be right. But thankfully we have our own aviation assets. So where we have to accommodate spikes in global trade, we can put those aircraft in places that need it.

Advance tax receipts up 6% on quarter in Q4; direct tax receipts at 97% of FY24 RE

PRASANTA SAHU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE CENTRE'S advance direct tax receipts for the fourth quarter of the current fiscal from companies, LLPs and individuals rose by a decent 6 per cent on quarter to Rs 2.85 trillion as per the data till March 15 of the current financial year.

The sequential advance tax increase in Q4 comes over a 19 per cent annual increase in advance tax receipts for the third quarter of FY24, indicating continued traction in the economic activity. Advance tax collections are a good indicator of corporate profitability and rise in the earnings of individuals. March 15 was the due date for fourth quarter advance tax payments by companies and individuals.

Despite higher refunds during the period till March 15, direct tax receipts (post-refund) stood at Rs 18.91 trillion or 97 per cent of the full-year revised estimate (RE) of Rs 19.45 trillion for FY24, indicating that receipts for the full year will exceed the revised estimate.

Extra collections (post-devolution) would help the Centre to keep the fiscal deficit within the revised estimate of 5.8 per cent of GDP in FY24 even though the nominal GDP size is expected to be a little lower than projected earlier.

In the budget presented on February 1 this year, the Centre raised the direct tax receipts target by Rs 1.22 trillion to Rs 19.45 trillion, largely due to buoyancy in personal income tax receipts.

Advance tax collections are a good indicator of corporate profitability and rise in the earnings of individuals. *File*

Refunds were at Rs 3.34 trn till March 15 of the FY24, about 9% higher than Rs 3.07 trn in the whole of FY23

Refunds were at Rs 3.34 trillion till March 15 of the current fiscal, about 9 per cent higher than Rs 3.07 trillion in the whole of FY23, indicating faster processing of refunds.

The rise in corporate profitability across various sectors led to continued buoyancy in the quarterly advance tax mop-up. Advance tax receipts rose from Rs 1.17 trillion in Q1FY24, Rs 2.39 trillion in Q2, Rs 2.7 trillion Q3 and Rs 2.85 trillion in Q4FY24.

Till March 15, direct tax collections comprised corporation tax of Rs 9.16 trillion, or 99.2 per cent of FY24RE. Despite Rs 1.22 trillion increase in the target in FY24RE, income tax receipts including securities transaction tax (STT) stood at Rs 9.75 trillion or 95.4 per cent of FY24RE.

So far in the current fiscal, TDS and TCS receipts stood at Rs 10.3 trillion, securities transaction tax at Rs 34,130 crore and equalisation levy of Rs 3,527 crore. **FE**

India to be third top economy in few years: FM Sitharaman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said India currently needs economic freedom to achieve developed nation status by 2047 and assured that the country would move to the third spot in world economy from the current fifth position in the near future

Criticising those who compared India with China, Sitharaman said that certain things could not be replicated from them."India should attain self sufficiency on economic matters. It should become an economic power. The country has come from 10th position to 5th in global rankings and a few years down the line we will achieve the third spot", Sitharaman said, after unveiling a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at Shrimati Indira Gandhi College here.

Appealing to the students gathered at the venue to contribute to the progress of the nation, she said, "It is through the efforts of students like you that our country will become a developed nation by 2047." Referring to people talking about how China has progressed and comparisons with India, Sitharaman recalled that the two countries were at the same level 30 years ago."They have progressed because of various reasons which cannot be followed here. For example, (in China) there is no democracy at all. But we have civil liberty, freedom of speech is here and we have values in our system. And to become a developed nation, we should think positively," she said.

Observing that India was a rich country about 400 years ago, she said that even today there are references to Indian connections in Indonesia and other East Asian countries."Cholas had gone to Indonesia and set up a kingdom there. Even today there are references to that. So, what I am trying to say is that today, on this day when we remember Mahatma Gandhi, we should attain economic freedom and we should be free from imperial forces. That is why Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks about the Atmanirbhar Bharat (campaign) in his speeches to attain a developed nation with all your contribution", she said.

Real estate sector may touch $1.3 trn by 2034: CREDAI

Indian real estate will have a significant impact on the Indian economy in the coming years, said CREDAI report

To achieve Viksit Bharat, real estate is going to be at the nucleus of growth which is also validated by the recent sheer volume that has coincided with strong quarter-on-quarter GDP numbers

MANOJ GAUR, CREDAI Chairman

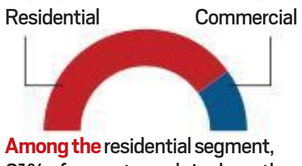
GLOBAL MARKET SIZE

2034: $1.3 trn

2047: $5.17 trn:

Rs 24 lakh crore: India market size

80% Residential — 20% Commercial



Among the residential segment, 61% of current supply is above the cost of Rs 45 lakh

The average home area is also increasing at 11% on an annual basis

CREDAI also projected that there will be 7 crore units of additional housing demand by 2030

Over 87.4% of Indian housing demand by 2030 is expected to be of houses costing more than Rs 45 lakh. *Source: CREDAI/PTI*

India's forex kitty expands $10.47 bn to $636.095 bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

INDIA'S FOREX kitty jumped by $10.47 billion to $636.095 billion for the week ended March 8, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had risen by $6.55 billion to $625.626 billion.

In October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of $645 billion. The foreign exchange reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended March 8, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by $8.121 billion to $562.352 billion, the RBI said.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by $2.299 billion to $50.716 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by $31 million to $18.211 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was also up by $19 million to $4.817 billion in the reporting week, the central bank data showed.

BRIEFLY

Govt approves 17% wage hike for 1.10 lakh employees of LIC

New Delhi: The government has approved a 17 per cent overall hike in wages for more than 1.10 lakh employees of insurance giant Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). The wage hike approval has come days after the government cleared a similar raise for the employees of public sector banks. The wage hike for LIC employees is effective from August 1, 2022, the insurer said. NPS contribution is enhanced from 10 per cent to 14 per cent of nearly 24,000 employees who joined after April 1, 2010, it said while thanking the government for the wage revision. **PTI**

Stock exchanges impose fines on Dish TV over board strength

New Delhi: Leading Indian bourses BSE and National Stock Exchange have again imposed penalties on DTH operator Dish TV over composition and lack of quorum for its Board meeting, according to a regulatory filing by the company. The company has again received notices, imposing fines on February 22, 2024, said Dish TV on Friday. **PTI**

Majority of issues in India-UK FTA towards resolution: Commerce ministry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE MAJORITY of difficult matters in India-UK FTA negotiations are moving towards resolution, and both sides are actively engaged for a fair and equitable deal, commerce ministry officials said on Friday. India and the UK launched talks for an FTA in January 2022 to boost economic ties between the two nations.

There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which include goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said both sides are actively engaged in talks, and both of them "want a fair, equitable deal". He was replying to media queries after the ministry released trade data for February.

The 14th round of negotiations was held in January. Chapter-wise textual negotiations are near close, and the schedule on goods and services is at an advanced state of negotiations, commerce ministry officials said. Recently, a team from the UK visited India for negotiations on outstanding issues.

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to $20.36 billion in 2022-23 from $17.5 billion in 2021-22.

On the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and Oman, Secretary Barthwal said this is one trade pact, which will be concluded very soon.

When asked whether coming into force of Model Code of Conduct with the announcement of General Elections on Saturday would impact the pace of negotiations or signing of a new FTA till the new government assumes office, the official said, there is no restraint on ongoing projects.

India's 10 export destinations during April-February 2023-24 were UAE, Singapore, Netherlands, China, the UK, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Germany and Bangladesh.

The top import sources were Russia, Switzerland, China, South Korea, Singapore, Iraq, Indonesia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and the US.

On smartphone shipments, the commerce ministry data showed that the US is India's top exporting destination with a share of 34.4 per cent from April-January 2023-24. The decline in the exports of smartphones to the US was also observed from the world along with China, Hongkong and Vietnam.

India's overall exports (merchandise and services combined) in April-February 2023-24 were estimated to be $709.81 billion, exhibiting a growth of 0.83 per cent over April-February 2022-23. Overall imports in April-February 2023-24 were $782.05 billion, registering a contraction of 4.64 per cent over the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

Global equity funds draw big inflows as investors eye central bank signals

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

GLOBAL EQUITY funds saw notable inflows in the week to March 13 as investors focused on strong global stock performances, overlooking inflation concerns ahead of the Federal Reserve meeting next week that could provide clues on the timing of the central bank's interest-rate cuts.

According to data from LSEG, global equity funds saw a net $22.63 billion worth of inflows during the week, the largest amount in a week since the first week of February 2022.

Wall Street was set to end marginally higher this week in spite of hotter-than-expected consumer prices and producer prices data pointing to sticky inflation. "Equities continue to disregard moves in rates, as despite paring back of Fed rate cut pricing in recent months, the S&P500 is up 25% since its October trough," said Chris Whelan, senior strategist at TD Securities.

"Furthermore, this comes alongside a broad-based cross-asset bull-run, with gold and bitcoin garnering much attention as they recently reached new highs."

Regionally, European equity funds led with $15.07 billion in inflows, the most since Feb. 2, 2022. U.S. and Asian equity funds also saw substantial inflows of $4.93 billion and $2.11 billion, respectively. Sector-wise, technology funds continued their growth trend, receiving $1.01 billion, marking the ninth consecutive week of inflows. Industrial and metals & mining sectors garnered $301 million and $222 million in inflows, respectively, while consumer discretionary sectors faced net outflows of $962 million. Meanwhile, global money market funds remained in high demand for the third week in a row, with $35.51 billion in net purchases.

Global bond funds also continued their positive streak, attracting $7.27 billion in the 12th consecutive week of inflows. Within this segment, medium-term U.S. dollar bonds, global corporate, and government bond funds drew $2 billion, $1.78 billion and $475 million respectively.

In commodities, precious metal funds saw outflows diminish to an 11-week low of $122 million. Conversely, energy funds experienced their first weekly inflow in three weeks, at $25 million.

Emerging market funds, encompassing 29,721 funds, reported that bond funds received $473 million, breaking a four-week trend of outflows. Equity funds in these markets continued to see outflows, though reduced to $282 million from $1.72 billion the previous week.

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway boosts CEO-designate Greg Abel's pay to $20 million

REUTERS
NEW YORK, MARCH 16

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY said Warren Buffett raised the pay of his designated successor Greg Abel to $20 million last year, as the conglomerate posted a record operating profit.

The company also urged the rejection of six shareholder proposals, including that Berkshire disclose more about its plans to reduce greenhouse gases and improve diversity, monitor the safety of its BNSF railroad unit more closely, and discuss how much its operations depend on Chinese government activities.

Berkshire disclosed executive pay and the recommendations on shareholder proposals in its annual proxy filing on Friday, ahead of the Omaha, Nebraska-based conglomerate's May 4 annual meeting.

Warren Buffet. *File*

Abel's salary comprised virtually all his compensation, which grew from $19 million a year earlier. That sum included a $16 million salary and $3 million bonus. The 61-year-old vice chairman oversees Berkshire's non-insurance operations such as BNSF, Berkshire Hathaway Energy and dozens of chemical, industrial and retail operations.

Vice Chairman Ajit Jain, who oversees insurance operations such as Geico, also received $20 million, up from $19 million.

Buffett's own pay totaled $413,595, comprising a $100,000 salary unchanged for more than 35 years, plus personal and home security.

But the 93-year-old Buffett also owns 15.1% of Berkshire, and his $135 billion fortune ranks sixth worldwide according to Forbes magazine. Berkshire's operating profit totaled $37.4 billion in 2023.

BNSF, CHINA PROPOSALS

Some of the shareholder proposals on Berkshire's climate and diversity efforts mirror proposals offered at last year's meeting, none of which drew more than 27% support.

Buffett controls 31.2% of Berkshire's voting power, making passage of proposals he opposes an uphill battle.

The BNSF proposal by the AFL-CIO Equity Index Funds urges independent Berkshire directors to form a railroad safety committee to monitor financial risks.

Delaware court rejects Byju's lenders' plea, freezes funds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE DELAWARE court has rejected Byju's $1.2 billion Term Loan B lenders' request to impose a mandatory injunction against its group's US entity seeking a deposit of $533 million with the court, Byju's Alpha counsel said on Friday.

The court, however, has restrained Byju's from further transferring or using any of the $533 million in loan proceeds, purportedly parked at an unknown location, the lenders claimed.

The steering committee of the ad hoc group of term loan lenders of Byju's $1.2 billion term loan B said that the court found that Byju Raveendran and Divya Gokulnath are working in concert with the defendants -- Riju Ravindran, Inspilearn LLC, and Camshaft Capital Fund, LP and ordered them to comply with its ruling.

Lenders said that Judge John T Dorsey has ordered the arrest of hedge fund manager William Cameron Morton who worked with Byju's Alpha for not appearing before the court in the case to explain the location of the fund. The court observed that the excuse made by Morton was not credible, according to the lenders' statement.

Think and Learn said that the order merely maintains the status quo, because it has always maintained that the said funds are safely parked in one of its subsidiaries and, as per the order, it will rightfully remain there.

BRIDGE

Rationalism is the enemy of art, though necessary as a basis for architec-

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ K85	♠ AQ
❤ A2	❤ 10975
♦ 73	♦ AQ82
♣ KQ7543	♣ J102

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1D		
pass	2C	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	pass	pass

South plays in 3NT with the lead of the six of hearts. Some plays in bridge are just not intuitive. You learn these plays one at a time. The hand here is one such. The only danger to your 3NT contract is that the opponents can take four heart tricks and a club. Given that they have led hearts, there could be a threat to 3NT. Does your play at trick one make any difference?

It may well make a difference. If 3NT is in danger, it is because someone has five hearts. That person is most likely to be West, judging from his opening lead.Let's make the assumption that West does have five hearts. If he has just four, there is nothing to worry about because they can only take three more heart tricks after getting in with the ace of clubs. If West has five hearts, how good do you think they will be? Do you think, for instance, that West has the KQJ63 of hearts?

No. West would lead the king of hearts from that holding. What this means is that East is marked with one or more heart honours. Say that West has five to the KJ and East has the doubleton queen. What happens if you play low at trick one? East wins with the queen and returns the suit, setting up three more heart tricks for West. If West has the ace of clubs, you are down one.

The West hand: S-1042 H-KJ863 D-10954 C-A

The East hand: S-J9763 H-Q4 D-KJ6 C-986

Let's say you hop up with the ace of hearts. East will play low and when West gets in with the ace of clubs, he can not run the hearts at this time. He can lead a low heart to East's queen but East is out of hearts so he can't hurt you. Or, West can lead the king of hearts. This drops East's queen but this defense provides you with a second heart stopper.

This is called a blocking play. It stops the defense from running off a suit immediately. If they have entries they may still get their tricks but if they do not have convenient entries, they may fail to get their defensive winners.

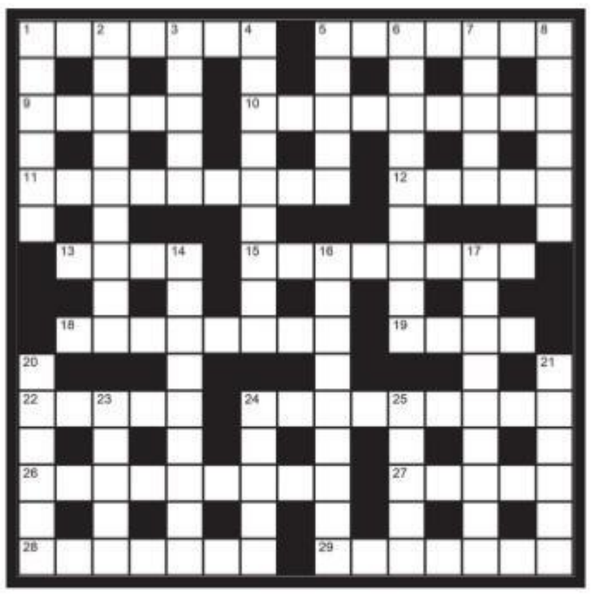
Dealer: South Vulnerable: Both

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ 42	♠ KQ3
❤ 86	❤ Q10
♦ KJ10754	♦ A9632
♣ AQ3	♣ K105

West	North	East	South
	1D♦		
pass	3D♦	pass	3NT
pass	pass	pass	

West led a spade, giving South hope that he would be able to win the first trick and run off ten tricks. But East won the ace. The fate of 3NT was still in the balance. Do you think that East returned a spade?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2469



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

1. Become dislodged ? (4,3)
5. Lyrical or melodious (7)
9. Custom or practice (5)
10. Darted or dashed about; scurried (9)
11. Cliff face (9)
12. Engaged (2,3)
13. By oneself (4)
15. Try out for a part in a play (8)
18. Legendary king of Ithaca (8)
19. Ship's company (4)
22. All together, musically ? (5)
24. Vigorous (9)
26. Infringement (9)
27. Supped at home (3,2)
28. A picturesque landscape or view (7)
29. ___ populated : like India or China ? (7)

DOWN

1. Dowdy (6)
2. Occupancy without ownership (9)
3. Script symbols (5)
4. Captivate (9)
5. Union general in the Civil War (5)
6. Fallacious (9)
7. Greek island (5)
8. Spoons (6)
14. Stubborn (9)
16. Saw, perceived or understood (9)
17. At that place, yonder (4,5)
20. Cooking devices (6)
21. Insufficient (6)
23. Literary device (5)
24. Novelist Bronte (5)
25. Fruit of cereal plant (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

1. Free time around quiet stream (7)
5. The calls they make are always noted (7)
9. German town in a profitless enterprise (5)
10. Not the popular time to get away with a ticket (3-6)
11. But a Red Indian isn't necessarily one (9)
12. Mother has bearing in a stroke when playing billiards (5)
13. Something with bite, a strong taste that comes back up (4)
15. I am extremely virtuous about the leader remembered for all time! (8)
18. Greyhound missed turn, applied gas (8)
19. Do it up for a good meal (4)
22. Laugh over the thing one found in the Caribbean (5)
24. One not included in the score, don't utter it (5,4)
26. No use getting praise for boasting (4-5)
27. Little land is rented out (5)
28. Reclassifies Ypres and French involvement (7)
29. Attempt to gain part of the river away from the mouth (5,2)

DOWN

1. The tongue of a World War One field marshal (6)
2. Yes, one may make it without exertion (4,5)
3. Back high-class Brahman, maybe (5)
4. Getting walkover in several races, I am in good form, cheating (3-6)
5. To live well appears to be appropriate (5)
6. Old ones ain't what they used to bet (4,5)
7. Squandered asset which belong to the Orient (5)
8. He hasn't done well in biting nails in nervousness (6)
14. Increasing the volume on arrival (7,2)
16. Provides staff with hen murderer (9)
17. Religious leader upset Lola at Hay (9)
20. One may seem young when one removes the whiskers (6)
21. Ridiculed that it was mailed north (4,2)
23. Being a fool,I do it badly (5)
24. Padded jumpers? (5)
25. Showy fair lady (5)

Solutions to 2468

QUICK CLUES Across: 8 Varuna, 9 Aso, 10 Achy, 11 Backgammon, 12 Kali, 13 Wretch, 16 Disputes, 17 Easiest, 18 Spotted, 22 Cleanser, 25 Greasy, 26 Laze, 27 Compassion, 30 Vera, 31 AMU, 32 Though **Down:** 1 Mama, 2 Junk, 3 Marathas, 4 Narmada, 5 Bounds, 6 Lacklustre, 7 Shelve, 14 Rna, 15 Tricameral, 19 Pageants, 20 Ers, 21 Grampus, 23 Loaves, 24 Social, 28 Slog, 29 Orgy **CRYPTIC CLUES Across:** 8 Caruso, 9 UNO, 10 USSR, 11 Casualties, 12 Dray, 13 Scouts, 16 External, 17 Caddies, 18 Bouquet, 22 Scarlett, 25 Sloppy, 26 Isn't, 27 Altarpiece, 30 Keno, 31 Eve, 32 Kennel **Down:** 1 Java, 2 Hutu, 3 Coalesce, 4 Quailed, 5 Doesn't, 6 Quid pro quo, 7 Asmara, 14 CIA, 15 Understood, 19 On strike, 20 ESP, 21 Stutter, 23 Cussed, 24 Evaded, 28 Ions, 29 Chew

If it's your Birthday

Sunday March 17
If you thought that you could rely on life staying the same, think again. If you are ready for positive change, be prepared. You can steer events to your favour by choosing changes which suit you.

Monday March 18
Personal matters come first. Once domestic duties are sorted out and family members are happy, you can get on with your own ambitions.

Tuesday March 19
You are undoubtedly in an emotional mood, yet the question you must now ask yourself is why you should feel so strongly attracted to some people.

Wednesday March 20
You've been keeping your feelings well hidden in recent times, but a romantic secret is about to come into the open, so you'd better get your story ready.

Thursday March 21
You will be able to implement changes and improvements in whatever area of life you wish, and that's sufficient reason to lay your plans with care.

Friday March 22
Sometimes you may feel as if all the good things lie in the past, but there is plenty still to come, as you'll be finding out over the coming few weeks.

Saturday March 23
There's a lot of poetry in the air, but also an insistence that you get on with life free from sentimental distractions. You can persuade people to support you by convincing them that your vision.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
The planets are still in a formation which encourages secrecy, but please do steer clear of people who are determined to spread rumours or go behind partners' backs. Upheavals early in the week could knock you off course, but you'll soon steady your nerve.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Rarely have the trends been better for Taureans with professional ambitions. Venus and Mars indicate that this is an excellent week for securing a new job or, if you're staying put, achieving respect for your accomplishments so far.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Most of your planets are in that part of your chart which encourages you to project yourself in public and play down your personal feelings. However, don't ignore your very real individual needs. Mercury, your planetary ruler, is in a poetic mood, and you may create a vibrant impression.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
There are times of year when the planets offer you a degree of inspiration that takes you beyond the normal limits of your life. To make the most of such trends you must consciously look for ways to improve your lot. Such a time is now.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Very interesting developments are taking place in the area of your chart ruling your finances. There does seem to be some confusion, but also a great opportunity to benefit from any savings or investments. Money is a concern, although there are definitely some excellent bargains to be had. Keep your eyes open.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Life's not all plain sailing at the moment, but then nobody ever said it would be. The one area of opportunity is romance, which many of you, for one reason of another, have tended to ignore. The next set of lunar alignments falls in a lively, assertive part of your chart, setting you off on a new cycle of adventure.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Venus and Mars combine to offer the best planetary influences as far as relationships with loved ones and children are concerned. You must act in line with your feelings. There is bound to be a mystery early in the week, and that could set your mind thinking about fresh ideas.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
Your planetary influences this week are pleasurable. This is why you must find some time to enjoy yourself free from the cares of everyday life. Please don't waste this valuable opportunity. One other point to bear in mind is that emotional ties could prove costly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
Short journeys are on the cards, as are family encounters. If you have brothers or sisters, they are the relatives who will be most important over the coming two weeks. Otherwise, stick with those friends who you know and trust as yourself. Any professional upsets should be cleared up with a bit of goodwill.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Emotional ties are not always what they seem. The indications that a new partnership could be profitable, financially, are growing stronger. Perhaps a new friend will come up with a lucrative proposal. It's a positive time to take a gamble – as long as the odds are on your side.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Venus and Mars are planets that rule your social life, making you irresistible to other people. Now that both these marvellous celestial bodies are offering you their support, you will at last make new friends. Oh, and your financial stars will improve as the week passes, bringing hints of new prosperity.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Discreet romantic encounters are in store for the typical Piscean. All of you will relish quiet moments spent with loved ones, especially if an element of mystery or intrigue is involved. One thing is certain, and that is that you must listen very carefully to all well-meaning advice. Plus, you could change your mind by the end of the week.

JUMBLED WORDS

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

___ is the enemy of art, though necessary as a basis for architecture - Arthur Erickson (11)

CSAAR

TELNET

DTIIO

AERYMS

SOLUTION: SACRA, IDIOT, NETTLE, SMEARY
Answer: **Rationalism** is the enemy of art, though necessary as a basis for architecture - Arthur Erickson

SUDOKU 5504

Difficulty Level 2s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5503

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

कार्यालय मुख्य चुनाव अधिकारी, दिल्ली
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, DELHI
Old St. Stephen's College Building Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006
पुराना सेंट स्टीफन कॉलेज भवन कश्मीरी गेट, दिल्ली-110006
E-mail: osdmedia2024@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

RESTRICTION ON PRINTING OF PAMPHLETS, POSTERS BY CANDIDATES/POLITICAL PARTIES/PRINTING PRESSES ETC. DURING THE GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA-2024.

It is hereby informed to all concerned that the printing and publication of election pamphlets, posters etc. is governed by the provisions of Section 127A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. According to the said provision, no person shall print or publish or cause to be printed or published any election pamp poster. hlet or

(i) Which does not bear on its face the names and addresses of the printer and the publisher thereof.
(ii) Unless a declaration as to the identity of the publisher thereof, signed by him and attested by two persons to whom he is personally known, is delivered by him to the printer in duplicate.
(iii) Unless, within a reasonable time i.e. within three days of the printing of the document, one copy of the declaration is sent by the printer, together with one copy of the document to the Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi, or the District Magistrate as the case may be.

For this purpose, any process for multiplying copies of a document, other than copying it by hand, shall be deemed to be printing and the expression "printer" shall be constru ed accordingly. 'Election pamphlet or poster' means any printed pamphlet, hand bill or other document distributed for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or group of candidates or any placard or poster having reference to an election.

Any person who contravenes any of the above provisions shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees or with both.

Reference is also invited to Section 77(1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, according to which expenditure involved in advertisements in connection with the election of any candidate has to be added to the account of election expenses of the candidate, required to be maintained under that Section.\ Further, Section 171H of IPC prohibits incurring of expenditure, interalia, advertisement, circular or publication, for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate, without authority from the candidate. As such, in any advertisement/election matter for or against any political party or candidate in print media, during the election period, the name and address of the printer or the publisher should be given alongwith the matter/advertisement.

This is being issued for the guidance of all concerned especially political parties/candidates/printing presses and to make the public aware of strict provisions of law relating to printing of posters, pamphlets etc. by the candidates and political parties.

Sd.
(GAURAV YADAV)
Joint Chief Electoral Officer

DIP/SHABDARTH/CLASSIFIED/400/23-24

कार्यालय मुख्य चुनाव अधिकारी, दिल्ली
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, DELHI
पुराना सेंट स्टीफन कॉलेज भवन कश्मीरी गेट,-110006
Old St. Stephen's College Building Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006 E-mail :osdmedia2024@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

CERTIFICATION BY MEDIA CERTIFICATION AND MONITORING COMMITTEE (MCMC) FOR POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT TO BE TELECAST/BROADCAST OVER TV / RADIO CHANNELS/AUDIO-VIDEO DISPLAYS/ CINEMA HALLS/INTERNET BASED MEDIA/VVEBSITES INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA AND CABLE NETWORK DURING GENERAL ELECTION TO 18th LOK SABHA-2024.

It is hereby brought to the notice of all registered political parties /groups/organizations/associations **having Headquarters (Registered Office) in NCT of Delhi** and individuals contesting elections that certification of advertisement of political nature/relating to **General Elections To 18th Lok Sabha-2024,** is required to be obtained before it is telecast/broadcast over TV/Radio Channels/Audio-Video Displays/Cinema Halls/Internet Based Media/VVebsites including Social Media & Cable Network.

The necessity for obtaining certification is required, in pursuance of Order No. 509/75/2004/JS-I dated 15th April, 2004 issued by Election Commission of India consequent upon Order of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in SLP(C) No. 6679/2004 in the matter of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting Vs M/s Gemini TV Pvt. Ltd. & Others wherein it has been directed that no cable operator of TV Channel shall telecast any advertisement which does not conform to the law of the country and which offends the morality, decency and susceptibility of view or which is shocking, disgusting and revolting. Moreover, no advertisement shall be permitted which derides any race, caste, color, creed and nationality, is against any provision of the Constitution of India and tends to incite the people to commit crime, cause disorder or violence or breach of law or glorifies violence or obscenity in any way.

It is also brought to the notice of all Candidates/Political Parties seeking certification that their advertisements **should also comply with the Model Code of Conduct.**

In fulfillment of guidelines issued by Election Commission of India, Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) has been constituted at the level of Additional / Joint Chief Electoral Officer in the Office of Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi, Old St. Stephen's College Building, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006 for dealing with applications for previewing, scrutinizing and certifying the advertisements of political nature of Political Parties/Groups/Organizaions/Associations **having registered office in Delhi.**

Similar committees for dealing with the applications from individuals contesting elections have also been constituted in each District called District Level Media Certification and Monitoring Committees under the Returning Officers of the Parliamentary Constituencies/District Magistrates.

An application for certification of any advertisement by registered National/State Party/Registered Political Party/Group/Organisation/Association **having Headquarters in NCT of Delhi** and individual contesting candidate in Delhi in the format prescribed shall be made to the respective Committee, not later than three (03) days and not later than seven (07) days in other cases, prior to the date of telecast of such advertisements. Applicants have to submit the two copies of the proposed advertisement in electronic form (CD) along with duly attested transcript thereof in English and Hindi.

Advertisement to be telecast/broadcast only after the issue of certificate certifying that the concerned advertisement is fit for telecast.

The decision taken by the respective committee on the application for certification of an advertisement to direct deletion/modification of any part of the advertisement shall be binding and complied with in 24 hours from receipt of such communication from the Committee. The advertisement so modified will be resubmitted for review and certification. Any appeal against the decision of the Committee at Additional / Joint Chief Electoral Officer or District Election Officer (DEO) level will lie with the State Level MCMC headed by the Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi, having office at Old St. Stephen's College Building, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006.

All concerned may also refer to the Compendium of Instruction on Media Related Matters published in January, 2020, consolidated instructions issued by ECI vide letter No. 491/MCMC/5/2023/Communication dated 24th August, 2023 and other relevant guidelines available on Election Commission of India website: **http://eci.gov.in**

The prescribed application format for certification of any advertisement can either be downloaded from website: **www.ceodelhi.gov.in** or obtained from the O/o Additional / Joint Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi or from the O/o District Election Officer concerned.

The broadcasting/telecasting agencies are required to broadcast/telecast only the advertisement material duly certified by the committees constituted for the purpose.

This is being issued for the information, guidance and compliance of all concerned.

Sd-
(GAURAV YADAV)
Joint Chief Electoral Officer

DIP/SHABDARTH/CLASSIFIED/0399/23-24

The Indian Express.
For the Indian Intelligent.

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JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

INTERVIEW: KULDEEP YADAV

'The stuff Rohit says... *Hamare liye pyaar hai*'

Left-arm wrist spinner opens up about Rohit Sharma's captaincy, technical adjustments post-injury and bowling with MS Dhoni behind the stumps

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MARCH 16

WITH 19 wickets in four matches, Kuldeep Yadav had an influential role in India winning the recently-concluded five-Test series against England. In an interview with The Indian Express, the left-arm unorthodox spinner explains his art, talks about his return to the Test side after over a year, the changes made to his technique after an injury and Rohit Sharma's captaincy.

Devendra Pandey: At Visakhapatnam, you were playing a Test match after over a year and against an aggressive set of England batsmen. What was going on in your mind?

I was nervous. At the same time, excited too because of their (England's) playing style. I had seen in the Hyderabad Test how they were playing reverse-sweep a lot. So, it was important to keep on length or a bit outside of it and vary the pace because if they could use pace from the bowling, it would be easy for them. Field placing was Important as well. Rohit bhai communicated well and it wasn't a traditional field placement. I got the wicket of (Ben) Duckett in the first or second over. It gave me confidence. The more I got to play, the better I got.

> **Zak Crawley was the best player of spin in the England team... He was playing proper cricketing shots, so it was challenging to get him out. Twice I got him out — in Ranchi and Dharamsala – and those were my best balls."**
> ON BOWLING AGAINST ENGLAND

Sandeep Dwivedi: When you bowl, there is a special atmosphere around the pitch – wicketkeeper advising you and both of you planning something. How important is this team spirit for someone like you who plans his wickets, and how satisfying is it when a plan works?

It's very important because the wicketkeeper and short-leg fielder have an idea about what the batsman is going to do; whether he is comfortable in defence or when he is going to attack. I used to focus more on all this earlier, not that much now. You can sense yourself what the batsman is going to do. You know that after three dot balls, a batsman will step out as he doesn't defend for long.

That wicket (Ollie Pope in the first innings of the Dharamsala Test), I had some idea that he was going to advance. But if your wicketkeeper and short-leg are involved in the game, it can be a big help.

As far as wickets are concerned, I got several important wickets. In my opinion, Zak Crawley was the best player of spin in the England team. He hardly played any sweeps or reverse-sweeps, he was playing proper cricketing shots, so it was challenging to get him out. Twice I got him out, in Ranchi and Dharamsala – and those were my best balls. He is a quality player no doubt, and sometimes you have to bowl a good ball to get a good batsman out. Those two, I feel, were the best balls. The ball that got Ben Stokes out in Ranchi, it drifted, came in and then spun away, was also good.

Sandeep Dwivedi: Jonny Bairstow had hit two sixes off R Ashwin in Dharamsala, and then you came on to bowl and got him out.

I now know how to read a batsman. When I came on, I bowled two wrong 'uns. I started with a googly. I didn't let him get comfortable. I let him know that I would not bowl the ball spinning into him, as if I was a bowling machine. He was having a good batswing, so I didn't want to make him comfortable. I bowled a ball that was the toughest for him to hit and bowled two wrong 'uns. The second-last ball was a quicker one coming in, so he would think that a googly could come too. All this is a plan to get the batsman out.

Sandeep Dwivedi: You have seen Brendon McCullum at Kolkata Knight Riders. He is an innovative coach. What is your reading of him?

I have known Baz for a long time. He keeps the players very free and is very supportive. Tactically, he makes a lot of changes on the field, as we saw in this series. When I was batting, then also I saw a lot of tactical changes in bowling and the field under Ben Stokes' captaincy.

Also, in batting, the way Joe Root batted in the last two games, that is his style. Every player has a certain style of playing. If he plays according to that pattern, it's better for him and also the team. But as an opposition player, you want a player like Joe Root to play in an attacking fashion so that you have a better chance to get him out because he can play a long innings.

But I don't have much to say about Bazball. They do a lot of things to make you uncomfortable. If you are batting, they will set a field that will make you uncomfortable so that you want to play an attacking shot. When they are batting, they will try shots like the reverse-sweep to make you uncomfortable. That was their approach.

Tushar Bhaduri: You seemed to have worked a lot on your batting. Did the team management say that you needed to do this or it was your initiative?

The team management backed me but didn't say I had to compulsorily do it. They told me that I have a lot of batting skills, but didn't put any pressure on me that I had to score runs. If I can contribute to the team in crucial situations, especially in Test cricket, the game changes (if the lower order scores runs). I had the ability and Vicky Paaji (batting coach Vikram Rathour) made me bat a lot (in the nets). He also kept me relaxed because when you don't get runs, you tend to think a lot about what you have to do, saying I needed to stay calm and not take any tension, and focus on my bowling.

'I FEEL LUCKY HE IS THERE': India spinner Kuldeep Yadav said captain Rohit Sharma guides and backs all youngsters. *PTI*

Nihal Koshie: At the start of your career, we had seen MS Dhoni instructing you and Yuzvendra Chahal a lot from behind the stumps. So once Dhoni retired, how was it for you?

I wanted him to play more because it was very easy for us when we were bowling. After Dhoni retired, my performance with the ball wasn't great. It happens when a person guides you and that person's influence is not there anymore, then suddenly everything is on your shoulders. It takes time for you to react to the situation... that probably happened to me. Then slowly you understand and become self-reliant.

But Chahal and I really enjoyed when Mahi *bhai* was keeping wickets, he used to give lots of ideas. I didn't have to think too much when I was bowling. I just had to bowl and he would even adjust the fields. No doubt the time I had with Mahi *bhai* on the field and even off the field was great.

Sriram Veera: What changes in your bowling action and run-up that you effected, apart from fitness, that has brought this change around?

I remember Ashish Kaushik, our physio at the NCA, telling me during the injury-rehab process: 'Whenever you get back to proper bowling, remember to put as less of a load on the landing foot as possible before release.' That stuck with me and also challenged me: how am I going to do that?

I then decided to try it in a local match in Kanpur later in the process. I decided to be more aggressive through the crease, rush through it so that I don't end up loading too much pressure on that front foot. More energy through the crease.

> **I wanted him to play more because it was very easy for us when we were bowling. After Dhoni retired, my performance with the ball wasn't great... Then slowly you understand and become self-reliant"**
> ON IMPACT DHONI'S RETIREMENT HAD ON HIS BOWLING

I also cut down the angle of my approach; that has also helped in my getting more energetic. This was something Sunil Joshi (former India spinner and selector) told me as well. He had told me earlier that you can approach much straighter and with shorter strides but I hadn't understood its significance then. There were lots of doubts too, how would the ball go from my hand. Now, all of this was playing through my mind during that rehab phase. Then on return home, when I tried that approach, I found that batsmen had less time to handle me; they were a bit rushed as the ball was going quicker through the air.

I then told my childhood coach Kapil Pandey sir who asked me a lot of questions: If I am rushing through the crease, will I be able to pivot properly on that front landing foot? Will I be able to impart more revolutions on the ball? Will the ball be quicker without turn? I told him we have a month and a half on our hands, let's try and see and he agreed and encouraged me.

I did work a lot then; I remember my leg would swell up but I would tell, 'Sir, don't worry I shall apply ice'. He was with me through that journey. He is my guide, mentor, the person who pushes me and doesn't allow me to get too relaxed.

Sriram Veera: You seem to have a special relationship with Rohit Sharma; he cajoles you, can be strict with you and now seems to have become your batting coach at nets?

He was there at NCA when I was there rehabbing and then bowling. He had actually wanted me to incorporate some of the changes I was doing much earlier in fact. He would say when I stand at slip I feel the batsmen have enough time to play you off the pitch, that I need to get more energy through the action and that the batsman should not get time to play me. If he thinks he can get onto the backfoot to play me off the pitch, the ball should rush to hit the stumps or the pad. What he had thought in the past, I was now doing.

We have a great connection, we move around a lot together, we share personal stuff. So our bonding has been great. And the stuff he says on the field, no one minds. We have that relationship. *Jo bhi voh bolte hain, humare liye pyaar hai unka* (it's his love for us). He guides and backs all the youngsters. He shows trust in others. Even If I didn't have trust in myself, Rohit would tell me or the other person, 'I trust you, bindaas khel'. As a batsman, he understands bowling and so that was helpful.

Now, he doesn't tell me anything about bowling. We have reached that stage where he is focusing on my batting now, he talks a lot to me in nets and even told me after the Test series what I can work on in the break now. I feel lucky he is there.

Sriram Veera: Your coach Pandey told us your dip started after the bad experience with KKR in 2021; you weren't getting to play. What did you learn from that phase; did it prove a motivating factor to prove a point later?

As a player you obviously want to play, contribute to the team's wins. If you are happy, it means you are doing well in cricket. That's confidence. That wasn't happening then. I guess it was a learning phase.

I wasn't perhaps accepting failure in my life. I have now become more mature, understand the game and even my personal life too. I understand that this is how the game goes, failure is part of it. So these days, I am a lot more relaxed. If something doesn't work out, it doesn't, you find a way out. I am more relaxed and confident about my game now, in a happy space. I now enjoy my bowling and football!

FOOTBALL DREAMS: 'IN FUTURE, WOULD LIKE TO GET INTO IT'

KULDEEP YADAV is more than just a casual football fan. He knows the finer details of the teams he follows, which are not limited to the ones fighting for the English Premier League crown, but also clubs fighting the relegation battle.

A team like Brighton and Hove Albion may not be a much-followed side outside England, but they have caught Kuldeep's eye. "I like them, and their coach Roberto de Zerbi. He is one of the best going around at this moment. There are talks that he is in line to manage Barcelona, my favourite club. That would be exciting. When they have all the players fit, Brighton are better than Manchester City when building up from the back. There are other teams, too, like Newcastle United, who are tactically strong when competing against the big teams," he told *The Indian Express*.

The ongoing EPL season is witnessing one of the closest title races and has Kuldeep hooked. "Really enjoying this season. Arsenal looks like a better team (than last season); Liverpool is the most competitive side. They have a good team, but many are injured and some just returning from injuries. City has the best core team in the league, and of course, you know how Pep guides them with his philosophy. He has a group of players that fits into his tactics.

"Although Arsenal don't have a striker, they have Leandro Trossard, Bukayo Saka, Gabriel Martinelli and Kai Havertz, who sometimes plays in the middle, or as a false nine. They have got two good leaders in Declan Rice, who is very good defensively, and Martin Odegaard, who gives a lot of attacking options. Their next game against City is vital."

Kuldeep met former England football captain David Beckham during the Cricket World Cup last year, and claims 'in five seconds he realised that I have decent knowledge about the game.'

"I spoke to him for five minutes. I told him that I used to play football when I was young and then I broke my feet. Tactically, I have good knowledge. I understand the game very well. In future, I would like to get into something related to football."

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

[SPORTS BAR]

Infantino's pay package increased to $4.67 mn

Geneva: FIFA raised president **Gianni Infantino's** base salary 33% last year to lift his total pay package to more than 4.13 million Swiss francs (USD 4.67 million), football's governing body said in its financial report. Infantino was re-elected unopposed in 2023 to extend his presidency to 11 years. Infantino's pre-tax base salary payment rose by more than 500,000 Swiss francs (USD 565,000) last year to reach more than 2.46 million Swiss francs (USD 2.78 million). His annual bonus was 1.65 million Swiss francs (USD 1.87 million), the same as in 2022 when the men's World Cup was played in Qatar. **AP**

Krishna-Pratheek pair bows out in Orleans

Orleans: Indian pair of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K suffered a straight-game loss in the men's doubles quarterfinals to bow out of the Orleans Masters badminton tournament here. The world No. 70 Indian pair lost 17-21 16-21 in 40 minutes against seventh-seeded Danish combination of Andreas Sondergaard and Jesper Toft, ranked 46th in the BWF chart, on Friday night. It ended India's campaign at the Super 300 event. The Indian pair was the only one from the country to reach the last-eight following its 21-14 21-9 win over the local combination of Lucas Renoir and Mael Cattoen. In women's singles, eighth seed Malvika Bansod, Tanya Hemanth and Imad Farooqui Samiya lost early in the tournament. Men's singles players also made early exits. **PTI**

Lifter Sheuli expelled from national camp, Olympic hopes end

New Delhi: Commonwealth Games gold medallist weightlifter Achinta Sheuli has been expelled from the Paris Olympics preparatory camp after he was caught entering the women's hostel at night at NIS Patiala. The disciplinary breach occurred on Thursday night. The 22-year-old, who competes in the men's 73kg weight class, was caught by security personnel, who made a video of the lifter. Following his expulsion, Sheuli's chances of qualifying for the Olympics have also ended as he will not be travelling for this month's IWF World Cup in Phuket, Thailand, which is a mandatory event for Paris Games qualification. **PTI**

Achinta Sheuli allegedly entered the women's hostel late in the night.

Sanjna sizzles again as Bengal seal QF berth

Pune: Sanjna Horo continued her rich vein of form, registering yet another hat-trick as Hockey Bengal thrashed Telangana Hockey 11-0 to qualify for the quarterfinals of the Senior Women National Championship here on Saturday. In a lopsided contest, Sanjna (4th, 20th, 21st, 38th, 44th minutes) scored five goals, while Susmita Panna (6th, 10th, 42nd) also slammed a hat-trick for Bengal. Monika Nag (7th, 40th) struck a brace, while skipper Anjna Dungdung (5th) also found the back of the net at the Major Dhyanchand Hockey Stadium.

However, it was the end of the road for Uttar Pradesh Hockey despite registering a dominating 11-2 win over Hockey Andhra Pradesh in a Pool C match. **PTI**

Chouksey finishes second in Polish GP

New Delhi: Asian Games medallist **Ashi Chouksey** finished an impressive second in the women's 50m rifle 3 Positions (3P) event at the on-going Grand Prix Wroclawia and Dolnego Slaska international shooting competition in Wroclaw. Chouksey, who won three medals at the Asian Games last year, shot 464.7 in the final to finish behind local favourite Julia Piotrowska. Two other Indians in the field, Sift Kaur Samra and Anjum Moudgil, also entered the final, and finished fourth and seventh respectively. Chouksey topped the qualification round earlier in the day with a solid 593. **PTI**

Baboo breaches Paris Games qualification mark in Slovakia

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MARCH 16

INDIA'S ASIAN Games bronze medallist Ram Baboo on Saturday finished third at the Dudinska 50 Meet in Slovakia and in doing so, achieved the Paris Olympics men's 20km race qualification standard.

The 24-year-old Baboo, who won bronze in the 35km walk race at the Hangzhou Asiad, gave a good account of himself, becoming the first Indian athlete to finish on the podium in this Race Walking Tour Gold-Level event.

He clocked one hour and 20 minutes (1:20:00) to meet the Paris Olympics qualifying standard for the event, set at 1:20:10.

Peru's Cesar Augusto Rodriguez clinched the gold medal with a time of 1:19:41 while Ecuador's Brian Daniel Pintado clocked 1:19:44 to secure the silver.

Baboo also set a new personal best record at Dudinska 50. His previous personal best in the 20km race walk category - 1:21:04 - was set at the 2024 South Asian and Indian Race Walking Championships in Chandigarh in January this year.

Baboo is the seventh male walker from the country to breach the Olympic qualification mark, while the others are: Akshdeep Singh, Suraj Panwar, Servin Sebastian, Arshpreet Singh, Pramjeet Bisht and Vikas Singh.

Priyanka Goswami remains the lone female walker to have qualified for the quadrennial extravaganza, having achieved the feat at last year's National Open Race Walking Championships in Jharkhand.

A country can send only three athletes in an individual track and field event in the Olympics and it will now be up to the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) to determine who makes the cut for the Paris Games out of the seven race walkers.

Ram Baboo clocked 1:20:00, which was also his personal best. *File*

Lakshya runs out of gas in semis

Too many long matches take a toll on young Indian shuttler in three-game defeat to Christie at All England

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
MARCH 16

TAKING THE scenic route to a destination is not the worst of things. The journey can be beautiful. But in sports, sometimes, it can prove costly. Lakshya Sen would know that all too well after his exertions of the last two weeks in Europe.

On Saturday, the 22-year-old from Almora in the hill-state of Uttarakhand gave himself another uphill task after a slow start. He recovered, briefly threatening to pull off another fabulous comeback, but ran out of steam against Indonesia's former World No 2 Jonatan Christie. Lakshya bowed out of the All England Open Badminton Championships after a 12-21, 21-10, 15-21 defeat in 68 minutes.

That's now back-to-back semifinal defeats for Lakshya over a fortnight when he played 9 hours and 19 minutes of badminton over eight matches, spending an average of nearly 70 minutes per match on the court. Only one of his eight matches was a straight-game affair, when he eased past Magnus Johannesen of Denmark in the first round in Birmingham.

The good news, as Lakshya's team has been insisting, is that it shows how much his physical fitness and endurance have improved. That he won five of those deciding games is also an aspect he has improved from last year.

Looking forward, as a once-seemingly distant dream of Paris 2024 becomes a reality, the primary area of concern to address is starting matches better. That he dropped the opening game in five of those matches points to Lakshya getting off the blocks slowly, as he did against Christie. It is a problem he is aware of as he admitted fatigue played its part.

"All the matches that I've played were really long and I could feel it in the recovery, in the next day's match preparation," Lakshya said in the BWF mixed zone after the defeat. "Some matches, I started really slow in the first set, even having a good lead and then not being able to convert those first-setters that then went on to three games. I won some of those but I know this is one thing that I want to improve: close matches in two games. So that I'm a bit fresher."

At his best, Lakshya usually plays net shots that just clear the top of the tape, making it difficult for opponents to counter him. Against Christie – who also has a solid net game – the shuttle was going a few inches higher than he'd have liked in the opening game. It gave Christie the chance to repeatedly punish him with close kills. It could well have been a case of the muscles being a bit too tight, and the shots being a tad loose. Those are the margins he had to improve, as he lost a glut of points from 6-6.

Lakshya Sen's 12-21, 21-10, 15-21 loss to Jonatan Christie was his second semifinal loss over a fortnight. *File*

Comeback

The course-correction happened quickly enough though. There was more tempo in the first six shots of the second game from Lakshya than most of the opener. And it wasn't just all about pushing the pace, he varied it effectively as well to race to a 11-3 lead at the interval. Christie did find some rhythm after that break and as it did for Lakshya against Lee Zii Jia the night before, it gave him a foothold into the match.

The decider was off to a fantastic start in terms of quality from both players. But in an attempt to take control, Lakshya seemed to be over-exerting with his smashes, while Christie by default has a more energy-efficient stroke-play, A 325 kph winner from the Indian World No 19 for a 5-3 lead offered hope that he would carry on the momentum from the second game. Then came a potential decisive 63-shot rally, where the exchanges went down to walking pace, that Christie sealed with a brilliant slow drop for a winner. From there on, the match started to slip away from Lakshya, who managed to stave off a few match points but the damage was already done.

Christie, not long ago, missed out on a World Championships medal after being 20-15 up in the third game. But he calmed himself down, overcame a few jittery moments, and lifted his arm up. The result meant a first all-Indonesian men's singles final in three decades at the All England.

"As of now, I'm pretty disappointed with the result. But overall, the way I played the last two weeks, surely I have the level to be up there and win in the big tournaments," Lakshya said.

The dream of going one better than he did in 2022 and matching the achievement of his mentor Prakash Padukone wasn't to be realised this time.

"I'll definitely sit back, and discuss with my coaches, try to analyse the two weeks much better because as of now I was just focusing on the next match after every game. Now it's time to reflect, and watch those matches again. Take good things and keep learning from the mistakes that happen," Lakshya signed off.

He couldn't pull a rabbit out of the hat against JoJo, but the good news for Indian badminton is that Lakshya is most definitely on his way back and now knows what the next step is to level up further.

Dominant Real Madrid claim 4-2 win at Osasuna

AGENCIES
MARCH 16

RUNAWAY LALIGA leaders Real Madrid continued their march towards the title with an easy 4-2 victory away at Osasuna on Saturday, with Vinicius Jr scoring a brace.

Real are alone at the league summit with 72 points, 10 ahead of second-placed Girona.

Osasuna are 10th with 36 points.

Vinicius put the visitors ahead after four minutes but Osasuna's Ante Budimir levelled the score three minutes later by slotting in a close-range shot following a corner.

Dani Carvajal restored Real's lead after 18 minutes, using the outside of his foot to steer a curving shot into the far corner.

Brahim Diaz scored the third goal for the visitors in the 61st minute, before Vinicius got his second three minutes later with a low finish from a tight angle inside the box. In stoppage time, Osasuna got their second goal when Iker Munoz received a cutback inside the box and sent a powerful shot into the net.

Luton secure late draw

Luton Town salvaged a point against Nottingham Forest in a 1-1 draw in the Premier League on Saturday after substitute Luke Berry scored an 89th-minute equaliser to cancel out Chris Wood's first-half goal.

Forest looked set to move up to 15th with three valuable points but Berry equalised four minutes after coming on to secure Luton's first point at Kenilworth Road since January, sparking wild celebrations from the home fans.

Visitors Forest remained 17th in the standings with 25 points from 29 matches. Luton are three points behind in 18th place.

Coventry stun Wolves

Coventry City stunned Wolverhampton Wanderers 3-2 with two injury-time goals in a rollercoaster FA Cup tie at Molineux Stadium on Saturday as the Championship side reached the semi-finals for only the second time in the club's history.

Wolves had looked set for a trip to Wembley after Rayan Ait-Nouri cancelled out Ellis Simms' second-half opener, and Hugo Bueno then put the home side ahead in the 88th minute. But Simms grabbed a second in the seventh minute of added time before team mate Haji Wright scored the winner in the 10th minute of injury time, curling his shot into the corner to send the Coventry fans, team and staff alike wild with delight.

WPL Final: Delhi, Bangalore have history on the line

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

THE SECOND Women's Premier League final on Sunday will end a long wait, either way. For starters, neither a Delhi franchise nor Royal Challengers Bangalore have won a title in the Indian Premier League. That will change at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, but it also remains a point of trivia as the teams involved in the title clash have very little to do with that history. It is the here and now that both Smriti Mandhana and Meg Lanning chose to focus on.

After qualifying for the playoffs, Mandhana came up with a statement that reminded one of David Fincher's Fight Club. The only goal was to not talk about the goal, she'd say. Before the final, she elaborated: "It was very important for us to not connect anything with the men's side because it brings a lot of pressure with it. The idea was to focus on what was happening now and not on the 15 years gone by with the men's side. So we're not really correlating anything that's happened with the men."

On the other side of the equation is Meg Lanning. Going by the sheer number of trophies she won in international cricket leading Australia, she is arguably the greatest captain the game has seen. But the story has been different in the T20 leagues, where success has eluded her in the WBBL.

In 2023, Lanning's Delhi Capitals came close to the title but were beaten by an all-rounder-heavy Mumbai unit. This season, though, from the word go DC have appeared to be the strongest team on paper. If even 2-3 deliveries had gone their way, they could have gone through the league phase unbeaten, with both defeats coming off the final delivery. The Aussie star, who has led from the front once again, could end a long personal wait for glory away from international cricket but true to form, played it down.

"I don't think we've thought too much about what happened last year. Even the events of this season don't matter, it's how you play on the day, preparing, and adapting on your feet. The experience of last year doesn't drive us in any different way. We don't feel we need to get one back," Lanning said.

That is also perhaps why Lanning nodded in overwhelming approval when Mandhana uttered the words 'a captain is only as good as their team. Both teams have matchwinners in their ranks, but RCB – in their last two wins to reach the final – have been largely dependent on one name: Ellyse Perry. DC on the other hand, have more players in form, fewer holes to be plugged, and better role clarity across the overseas and Indian contingent. Mandhana's own form will be crucial for RCB's hopes, and the star batter has struggled in the Delhi leg after lighting up the Chinnaswamy with her fireworks.

Which brings us to a moment from last season. Mandhana couldn't strike any rhythm with the bat, looking like a shadow of her elegant self. But after the second DC vs RCB match, Lanning walked up to Mandhana post-match and struck up a conversation. The words 'Are you OK?' might be simple, but can be powerful for someone going through a rough patch. It moved Mandhana, who said such a loss of form wasn't something she had ever experienced before in her career.

"That was really cool because sometimes, no matter how much experience you have when you are going through something like that, a conversation with someone who knows so much about batting and has the experience she does helps. It was an amazing thing she did," Mandhana recalled.

It would make for a fascinating narrative then if Mandhana comes out of her mini-slump on the big night against Lanning's side. She has admired the Australian ever since she saw a flicked six she hit off a pacer in 2016 on a tour to Australia. But that will all be set aside on Sunday. "We'll just try and play our best cricket and beat them," she quipped.

Lanning – joking that she was left with no option after hearing Mandhana's praise for her than to return the favour – said Mandhana is starting to sound like she's starting to understand the ins and outs of leadership as well now. "Whenever we came up against India, we always spoke about how to get Smriti out early because we know just how dangerous she can be. She's a proven matchwinner."

Often, these press conferences before a final can be ridden with cliches as captains tend to keep things simple, stick to the processes. But Lanning and Mandhana shared laughs, were at ease with mutual admiration and articulated their differing journeys to get here. Come Sunday night though, only one thing will matter: who gets to lead their side to a famous win, a title that two fanbases have been craving.

PLAYING TODAY: Delhi vs RCB, Live on: Sports 18 Network, 7.30pm

Captains of Delhi Capitals and RCB, Meg Lanning (left) and Smriti Mandhana on the eve of the final. *Sportzpics*

Djoko pulls out of Miami Open, says he wants to limit events

REUTERS
MARCH 16

WORLD NUMBER one Novak Djokovic will not compete in the Miami Open as he tries limit the number of events he plays this year, the 36-year-old Serb said on Saturday.

"At this stage of my career, I'm balancing my private and professional schedule," Djokovic posted on X.

"I'm sorry that I won't experience some of the best and most passionate fans in the world."

Djokovic has won the Miami Open six times with his most recent title coming in 2016. The 24-times Grand Slam champion suffered a shock third- round loss to 123rd-ranked Italian Luka Nardi at Indian Wells on Monday.

Djokovic will bid to capture his first trophy of the year during the ATP Tour's clay-court swing. Miami Open main draw action kicks off on Wednesday.

Sakkari weathers Gauff storm

Maria Sakkari endured a spirited fightback from Coco Gauff to stun the third seed 6-4 6-7(5) 6-2 in a rain-interrupted Indian Wells semi-final on Friday and set up an intriguing rematch of the 2022 title clash with Iga Swiatek.

U.S. Open champion Gauff looked far from her best early in the match as Sakkari draw first blood after a short rain delay by breaking the American third seed in the ninth game, before securing the opening set with ease.

The players were forced off the court for a longer spell as the showers returned at the start of the second set, but Sakkari picked up from where she left off when the action resumed and tightened her grip on the contest with a double break.

But Gauff was not done and the 20-year-old rediscovered her rhythm in the high-octane second set to save three match points and go level at 5-5, eventually forcing a tie break which she dominated to set up a decider.

Ninth seed Sakkari regrouped and showed her quality in the decisive points after swapping breaks with Gauff early in the third set to prevail in the late-night thriller. "I don't want to disrespect Coco, but it would have been amazing if this match was over an hour ago," Sakkari said after the epic battle.

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THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

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Dot among the Skyscrapers

SH Raza's solo in Dubai presents work from his student days to one of his last canvases

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- Review of Madhav Gadgil's *A Walk up the Hill*

ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

MURSHIDABAD TO SEOUL

How small towns and villages in India are trying to live their K-pop dream

Neha Banka

"WE RAN away to become K-pop idols. Not to become back-up dancers." It's a distinction the 15-year-old makes with force, a rare moment of assertion in the conversation, as she sits down in the verandah of her house, under the strict gaze of her family, to talk of why she and two other girls ran away from their villages in Murshidabad six months ago.

That September afternoon, while her father was working in the betel vineyard on the outskirts of the village, the girl, along with her 13-year-old cousin and a 16-year-old school friend, paid Rs 15 for a *toto* (a local four-wheeler) to take them to the *ghat* by the Hooghly. There, they paid Rs 10 for a ferry ride to Murshidabad, where they went to the nearest railway station and sat in a train to Sealdah. Minutes before the train pulled out of the platform, the 15-year-old sent her father a text from her friend's mobile phone: "Don't search for us. We are going to fulfil our dreams of K-pop. We will contact you". And switched off the device.

What followed was a frantic search by the family and the police. The girls had planned to go to Mumbai and from there to Seoul — the mecca of Korean pop culture. But 48 hours later, they were traced to Shalimar station near Kolkata and brought home to Murshidabad. "Our school is full of BTS fans," the 15-year-old says, referring to the Korean boy band that has managed to achieve unprecedented global recognition.

Using a rarely witnessed soft power, *Hallyu*, the cultural phenomenon called "Korean Wave", which has popularised South Korean cultural products, has introduced fans across the world to everything Korean, from food and music to Korean dramas. And then, fuelled by cheap mobile phones and cheaper data, *Hallyu* reached some of the remotest parts of the country — from Murshidabad in West Bengal to Karur in Tamil Nadu.

In January 2024, three 13-year-olds from Karur decided to set sail from Visakhapatnam to Seoul. Around the same time, three teenagers from Pakistan also tried to run away from home to meet BTS. Both sets of teenagers were rescued by their respective state's police officials and taken home.

So you want to be a K-pop idol?

Back in the teenager's Murshidabad house that's surrounded by moringa, coconut and jujube trees, the 15-year-old's father talks of the text message he got hours after the girls fled home. When the family realised the girls were missing, it assumed the worst since sex trafficking is quite common in Murshidabad and most missing girls never return home. "It's only when we got the text message that we realised they had run away... Until then, I did not know about BTS or that South Korea was a country," he says.

The message saw his wife, 38, rushing to the nearest police station, 5 km away. Within hours, a state-wide alert was issued on the missing girls and the local police started tracking the friend's phone. Unaware of the storm they had triggered, four hours later, at nightfall, the girls reached Sealdah station. They had among themselves one mobile phone, Rs 1,500, their ID cards, some clothes, loads of gumption and their dream of making it big in K-pop.

"At Sealdah, the girls went to a hotel near the station. The hotel allowed them to rent a room for a night though they were minors," says the girls' uncle, 30, who runs a travel booking centre in the village.

The next day, nearly 24 hours after they left home, the girls checked out of the hotel and switched on the phone. The uncle says, "The phone's location showed they were headed towards Shalimar station. The local police informed the Railway Protection Force (RPF) at Shalimar station. When the girls got off the train, the RPF was waiting for them."

Once they were brought back home to Murshidabad, the girls were taken to the local police station for questioning and ended up staying in a government shelter home for over a week, as per rules, while the police quizzed them on their "motive".

Then, just as now, they struggled to explain why they had run away — or how they planned to get to Korea. The younger girl says she was unaware that she needed a passport, a visa and a guardian to board a flight to Korea.

"They didn't plan to go to South Korea directly. They wanted to go to Mumbai first to learn singing and dancing, and then get selected to become K-pop stars. They had searched all this information on the cellphone. They said becoming a K-pop idol would help them earn lots of money," says the 15-year-old girl's mother, adding the family has since cracked down on the girls' access to K-pop. "Half the girls in our school hostel are ARMY," softly pipes in the 13-year-old, referring to the group's worldwide fandom or ARMY, which is an acronym for 'Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth'.

The girls studied in a residential school in a nearby village. They ensured they were all home on a break at the same time so they could run away to Mumbai to achieve their K-pop dreams. When the girls ran away, it didn't take long for the news to spread in their village of nearly 2,600 residents. Offensive comments by relatives and neighbours followed. "People thought they had run away with a man. We asked them several times if a man was involved but they kept saying they had left to pursue K-pop. Music and dance is *haram* (forbidden) in Islam. I also have to get my daughters married," says the 15-year-old's mother. The aunt says, "During the little time they spent at home from boarding school, they would only watch BTS videos. If I said BTS was rubbish, they would get angry. But we never imagined that they would run away from home one day because of BTS."

The 15-year-old says she discovered the band while scrolling through the family phone in 2020. "The first BTS song I heard was *Dynamite*. I listen to other K-pop groups too," she says, adding that soon, her younger cousin, too, was hooked.

Korean ramyun that tasted like chowmein

For rural fans like the Murshidabad cousins, nothing — not even the lack of merchandise and Korean food, an access that fans in cities and towns thrive on — will take the sheen off their Korean pop culture universe.

"We are fine with whatever we get. We don't discuss Korean food. Even if we want to try the food, where will we get it here?" says the 15-year-old, adding that while they are not a part of any official fan club, they have their social groups in the village and at school where they discuss their love for BTS. Her uncle interjects, "Of course they want to eat Korean food. But their desire is of no use here..."

Some 150 km away, in Katakhali village that skirts West Bengal's Sundarbans biosphere, lives 13-year-old Subarna Aria Alo. It was a phone advertisement that launched Subarna into the BTS universe in 2018. While searching for the phone online, she discovered BTS member Kim Tae-hyung, better known as V. "My friend told me that V looked cute," says Subarna, unapologetic about her love for BTS and K-pop.

"They teach us all nice things. That we must love our own self before loving others. They also tell us that if elders ask us not to like them (BTS), then we should listen to our elders. I like their messages. They have inspired me to study hard so I can get a good job," she says. Her mother Sakila Khatun isn't worried about BTS. In these parts, she says, there are vices far worse than a faraway boy band. A social worker who has monitored cases of trafficking in southern West Bengal for years, Khatun says, "I would much rather my daughter be obsessed with some K-pop idols than a good-for-nothing fellow who lures her into sex trafficking using sweet words."

Like many rural parents who don't fully understand the K-pop world, Khatun says she learns about BTS from her daughter each day. Khatun has promised to take Subarna to a Korean restaurant in Kolkata one day "so she can eat the food she sees BTS cook".

A few months ago, Subarna gave her pocket money (Rs 1,000) to a friend visiting a village fair in Basirhat town, around 50 km away. "I asked her to buy me BTS merchandise like stationery, colourful pens and stickers. BTS merchandise is available online, but costs a lot. It takes me nearly a year to save Rs 1,000," says Subarna.

She has heard of youngsters like her leaving their homes, hoping to meet their heroes in Seoul, but has no plans of doing so. "I will wait for opportunities that may come my way and travel with my parents' consent," she says.

Just like Subarna, 21-year-old Simran Bhatti's K-pop world is limited to a 15-inch screen. The college student, who lives in Haryana's Kurali village, about 70 km from New Delhi, says, "I discovered Korean dramas in 2017 and then I heard BTS's song *DNA*. But no one in my area knew much about K-pop or K-dramas. Friends in school or the village would make fun of my love for BTS. That has changed a little now."

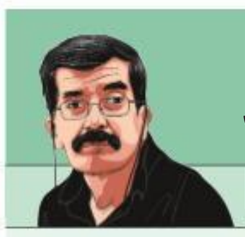
A few months ago, she was elated to discover two more BTS fans in her neighbourhood. "One is 16, the other 12. We don't meet often, but when we do, we behave like typical fangirls," said Simran.

Like Subarna, Simran wishes she had better access to BTS merchandise and Korean food. "BTS merchandise is expensive. I don't think my parents would like it if I spent money on it. They are okay with me liking K-pop, but I didn't think I will be allowed to have posters of young men around the house… Anyway, I share a room with my mother," she says.

Simran says she understands what drives youngsters in small towns and rural areas to leave home in pursuit of Korean pop culture. "Maybe it is because we only have access to online content unlike urban fans, who have opportunities to attend K-pop events. I don't think any event has been held in rural areas to attract K-pop fans," she says.

She then talks about a story every BTS fan has grown up on — how its members rose from humble beginnings to achieve unprecedented global stardom. It is a story that has fostered dreams among fans of a similar fairytale. But not all dreams have ended badly. In 2021, Sriya Lenka from Odisha's Rourkela became the first Indian to join Blackswan, a K-pop band, after months of rigorous training and auditions. These days, Sriya, 20, posts photos of herself in Seoul, looking every inch the manicured K-pop artist that she is now.

Though for many others, Seoul remains too far away.



DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

RANJIT LAL *Author, environmentalist and bird watcher*

AVIAN LOVE

By February and March, peacocks are dragging their enormous tasselled trains behind them, trying to prevent them from getting entangled in branches or razor wires

RANJIT LAL

Wooing the Ladies

Be it the peacock or the polar bear – they all have to pass the endurance test of their lady loves

IF SPRING is in the air, can romance be far behind? And in the animal kingdom, it's mostly the ladies that dictate the moves. As I am most familiar with birds, let's start with them. Take our peacock. By February and March, they are already dragging their enormous tasselled trains behind them, trying to prevent them from getting entangled in branches, razor wire, or the claws of a leaping tiger or leopard. No bird with any commonsense would encumber itself with this extravagance, no matter how gorgeous it might be. But ah, the ladies, in their dull dun shawls, love it.

Not only that, they want the dude to dance for them, while they pretend to be more interested in picking up grubs from the ground. So he has to fan out this huge bejewelled satellite dish over his head, waggle his bottom non-stop and mewl away through the day. One performance I watched went on from 9 am till 7 pm.

Another local bird that has to put in a performance is the magpie-robin, all decked up in a shiny tuxedo first thing in the morning. He has genuine talent as a flautist, but so does every other tuxedoed fellow. So he has to break off his Mozart compositions, and, incoherent with rage, chase the intruder away, his coat-tails flying, which leaves you in splits and the lady he's playing for looking on with wide, innocent eyes. I once watched a pair of gentlemen koels, all silky greeny-black, with glaring ruby eyes, yodel manically into each other's faces, while the dappled brown lady they were interested in, watched them – and then slunk off with a third gentleman, who suddenly materialised behind her and spirited her away.

This kind of thing happens with mammals too: A pair of rhesus dons (or baboons) will fly at each other hammer and tongs, fangs bared ferociously, while the lady at the centre will sidle off behind the bushes with the cute wimp that has suddenly taken her hand. (He decamps very quickly afterwards). This happens even in patriarchal set-ups that antelope, zebra and buffalo have: The herd boss has a hard time ensuring all the girls in his harem are accounted for – and only by him. Roving-eyed bachelors are always hanging around at the edges and the ladies are not about to blow the whistle on them! Well, you could say, good for them, harems are not what should be happening nowadays anyway. What's a bit upsetting is when a boss male victoriously defends his harem from a succession of challengers, but then, totally exhausted, can't match a final challenger, who has been coolly biding his time just for this. Thankfully, the ladies are not always so fickle. In one moving episode, I saw a dada baboon had got beaten up by a challenger, but his bevy of wives stuck by him nevertheless, massaging his bruised ego and telling him they still loved him.

Some ladies test their paramours in different ways. I once watched a documentary where a lady polar bear led her prospective partner on a stamina-testing endurance trail up and down an ice-covered mountain. Well, if she could do it, he jolly well ought to even if he were twice or thrice her weight. Other ladies are more interested in accommodation: the baya weaver is one such species, where the ladies make a thorough examination of the graceful vase-like residences the gentlemen have made, ensuring they are up to their seven-star standards. No gold-plated faucets? Well, no, thank you then, cheapskate!

> They want the dude to dance for them, while they pretend to be interested in picking up grubs

It seems like this kind of picky-choosy behaviour on the ladies' part has made the gents of many species manically paranoid. Male dragonflies after the honeymoon will escort their ladies to the plant stalks in the water where she lays her eggs, ensuring he is the father of their progeny. Many males behave in an even more reprehensible fashion: They will hunt and kill the young of the females by other males, usually those they have bested in battle. No foster-daddy business, here. Of course, scientists will tell you this is all the machinations of genetics, and which is why the ladies, too, resignedly accept the brute that has butchered their babies.

But yes, thankfully there are genuine life-long love stories, too. Birds like albatrosses and cranes, pair for life. The seabirds lovingly meet again after months of separation over the oceans. In most cases though, especially where there are single-mom families, it's the ladies who pick and choose whom they want to be with. But occasionally you can't help but feel sorry for the dumbass beefcake they're taking for a royal ride... ladies please, desist — he's an idiot.

A Dot Among The Skyscrapers

An exhibition of SH Raza in Dubai represents the vast oeuvre of the modernist through works that span from his days as a student to one of his last canvases

Vandana Kalra

IT'S THE country that became home to his lifelong friend MF Husain when he left India on a self-imposed exile in 2006. Though SH Raza never visited Husain in Dubai or the UAE, now a significant exhibition of his works being held in the city of skyscrapers signifies a serendipitous meeting between the two late artists.

Among the few solo shows of Raza to be held in Dubai, "Raza: The Other Modern", at Progressive Art Gallery, represents the vast oeuvre of the modernist through select works that span from his days as a student in the 1930s to one of his very last canvases — *Swasti* (2016) — with the veteran's celebrated *bindu* at its centre.

Carrying forward his birth centenary celebrations — that included his first monographic exhibition in France at the prestigious Center Pompidou in Paris from February to May 2023 — Ashok Vajpeyi, managing trustee of The Raza Foundation, notes that the exhibition in Dubai continues from the Parisian showcase. "The Pompidou show stopped at the end of the century but here we combine the earlier works with the last decades to give an expression to the continued creativity, also showing the significant last phase that hasn't yet received adequate attention... When he was with the brush, he was in full command to his last," he says.

Entering the calm of the gallery located a few blocks from the bustling City Walk neighbourhood in Dubai on the peaceful Al Wasl Road — with magnificent views of the landmark Burj Khalifa through its glass windows — viewers are welcomed with a detailed timeline of the artist. It introduces them to the art, life and times of the modernist who remains one of India's most significant artists. "It is part of our effort to inform the audience of his varied influences and inspirations," says RN Singh, founder of the gallery. On exhibiting Raza in Dubai, he adds that the show dominated by the gallery collection was planned over several years to include works from different periods.

The exhibition does not open directly to his trademark *bindus*. Instead, a more chronological approach is followed as viewers are guided through the years that led to it. Known to be a master colourist, among the more seldom-seen works are Raza's sketches that Vajpeyi says were discovered by The Raza Foundation after his death in 2016. The diaristic depictions range from the bucolic bullock cart to life studies, abstract landscapes and never-ending concentric circles. Appearing as insights into his mind, Vajpeyi notes, "Unlike FN Souza or Krishen Khanna, Raza did not really pursue drawings as an autonomous medium. These were more in the form of thoughts he felt were important to jot down. Many of them did not necessarily result in paintings."

PHOTO COURTESY: THE RAZA FOUNDATION

DEEP STUDIES

(Top) SH Raza's *Swasti* (2016), acrylic on canvas; *Gol Gumbaz* (1943), watercolour on paper

Son of a forest officer in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh, who grew up near the quietude of Kanha National Park and Narmada river, Raza's engagement with art began at the behest of his art teacher in Damoh, who noticed his talent and asked him to illustrate a hand-written magazine, *Pushpanjali*. It was also on his suggestion that Raza enrolled for formal training at the Nagpur School of Art in the late 1930s. For example, the showcase features a 1941 pencil portrait of a man, done when he was still a student in Nagpur. *In a Forest* alludes to his childhood. The 1943 translucent watercolour *Gol Gumbaz* proves his prowess with the brush as also his ability to play between light and form even during his early artistic career.

The Bombay of the 1940s opened a new world to him. Working as a designer at Express Block Studio, Raza enrolled for lessons at the Sir JJ School of Art, and was introduced to the trends in European art by the likes of German art critic Rudolf von Leyden and Austrian painter Walter Langhammer. Choosing to stay in India when his family moved to Pakistan during Partition, the motherland was to become an integral part of his art. It was also the common purpose of finding a distinct modern vocabulary for Indian art that led to the formation of the formidable Progressive Artists' Group in 1947, with Raza as one of its six founding members. In a book accompanying the exhibition, we find paintings representing his initial impressions of the urban metropolis, where he often wandered in the populated neighbourhoods to paint cityscapes as subjects. Among others is a 1945 view of Princess Street, which was also the address of the then Chemould Frames and where Kekoo Gandhy also famously allowed artists to exhibit their works.

> The ethereal dot denotes the boundless contemplations of its creator

When Raza went to Paris in 1950 on a French government scholarship to study at the École Nationale Supérieure de Beaux-Arts, at 28, he carried India with him. Though he continued to live there for almost six decades, following his marriage to French artist Janine Mongillat, he retained his Indian nationality, choosing to return to Delhi in 2010. "He used to say he learnt how to paint from France and what to paint from India," says Vajpeyi. Visiting its museums and art galleries, he acquainted himself with works of Western masters. "There was so much I wanted to learn," he had said in a 2015 interview to *The Indian Express*. Though his impressionist landscapes were already veering towards abstraction, in Paris the lyrical brush strokes became more fluid and the palette more vibrant. He also began working more often with mediums such as oil and later acrylic.

While he continued to receive critical acclaim and commercial success, the quest to find new directions constantly pulled him to his roots, and in the 1970s, he found an answer in the dot that his primary school teacher in Mandla had drawn on a blackboard to contain his restlessness. Taking the form of a *bindu*, it became the centre of his universe that he described as the source of energy and life. Initially appearing as the black sun in works from the late 1960s, the leitmotif gained more prominence in the 1970s and continued to find different meanings and forms over the decades. "Like people do Ram *jap*, I do the same with the *bindu*, going deeper into the subject," he had said in the 2015 interview. In Dubai now, the ethereal dot denotes the boundless contemplations of its creator. Incidentally, it shares the gallery with Husain's horses sculpted in Murano glass on view in a glass enclosure.

'At best, life is a satire'

Director Homi Adajania on his latest murder mystery and how he infuses comedy into tragic scenes

Udbhav Seth

ADAPTED FROM Anuja Chauhan's novel, *Club You to Death* (HarperCollins, 2021), Homi Adajania's latest, *Murder Mubarak*, released this weekend on Netflix. On the sidelines of a set visit, we spoke to the director on his collaboration with the ensemble cast that includes Pankaj Tripathi, Vijay Varma, Dimple Kapadia and Sara Ali Khan, and how he experimented with the genre via unique soundscapes. Excerpts:

Did you want your next project to be a murder mystery, or were you interested in Anuja Chauhan's work?

Neither. With due respect to her work, I wasn't aware of it. I was told the story of *Murder Mubarak* and it appealed to me. It was very unique because of the backdrop in an elite Delhi club. It's a convoluted murder mystery and the credit goes to her for that. My writers adapted it into a juicy script.

Were you involved in the writing?

Credit goes to the writers, Gazal Dhaliwal and Suprotim Sengupta, but I definitely put certain Homi-isms into it, be it certain character traits or arcs or things within scenes. They evolve once you're on the set and stuff starts breathing into it.

Tell us about directing this ensemble.

With Pankaj Tripathi, it's been fabulous. Most of us live life and give importance to the memories we create, to things that you can't really put a value to — he's one of those things. I'm happy he's become part of my journey. I'm going to get out of this (movie) being a better person than who I was when I jumped in... The others are an eclectic bunch. It's a great honour when actors trust you 300 per cent and say, take me wherever, I'm not going to question you.

To depict this country club, you literally had to shoot at multiple hotels to make it seem big and fancy. How did you approach depicting the unimaginable privilege of these characters?

I think it's beautifully balanced in how you see these characters in their privileged setup — the club — and then you see them outside it. You see their loneliness, their aspirations and their need for validation. That humanises them. When they're at the club, they're all putting on a facade. That ensures they're not a caricature or just over-the-top.

JOKE'S ON YOU

(Left) Karisma Kapoor and Pankaj Tripathi in a still from *Murder Mubarak*; director Homi Adajania

> For me, it's very important that I can see humour in everything. And strangely that sort of seeps into the stories I tell

How does this compare to your previous work?

The last one I did was a mad web series, *Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo* (2023-), based in a fictitious place called the Borderlands with harsh terrains and gypsies — this is completely removed from that. It's so refreshing to jump into it. You're like a kid in a candy store.

There's always an undercurrent of satire or comedy in your projects. Why?

Because I look at life like that. I think life is a satire, at best. I love looking for humour in the darkest spaces because I feel that's the way to navigate through life. You spend too much time giving importance to the past rather than just learning from it. We tend to look at the negativity in people rather than the goodness.

For me, it's very important that I can see humour in everything. And strangely that sort of seeps into the stories I tell. You end up having the darkest characters being humorous or laughing at the most tragic situations in a tongue-in-cheek way. I think they just come very naturally to me, because I live my life like that.

What's been the most challenging and satisfying part of the shoot?

I think it's all been satisfying, there's nothing challenging in shoots. It's been challenging for the production to balance the dates of such a big ensemble because they're all busy actors... My actors are an extremely talented bunch of people who come very well-prepped. The joy of seeing all that materialise distracts you from anything that could be a weight. I go home with a big grin on my face.

Tell us about the music of the film.

Sachin-Jigar have done the music. I worked with them on my last project, where I took them out of their comfort zone. With this one, I wanted to go extremely discordant and play around with tunes which unsettle the viewer a bit. I didn't want to go with the typical suspense, I wanted to flip it on its head and contrast it with the visual.

So you get this strange tempo and melody. I might want very light, beautiful, pretty music playing while a murder is happening, and you (the viewer) wonders what exactly is going on. Let's see how that pans out.

'The past can be a weapon for populist politicians'

Bulgarian novelist Georgi Gospodinov on his International Booker Prize 2023-winning *Time Shelter*, how art can undo propaganda, and why he likes writing slowly

Udbhav Seth

BOOKER PRIZE

A WRITER of novels, short stories, plays and poetry — sometimes in the same book — Georgi Gospodinov has always been concerned with sadness, with contradictory stories, with memories solidifying into history. Translated by Angela Rodel, his International Booker Prize-winning *Time Shelter* is in a similar vein, about a clinic that stores artefacts from various decades to provide relief to Alzheimer's patients. In this interview at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2024, he speaks of getting over writer's block and whether he wants to be prolific. Excerpts:

You've often mentioned that the 'story falling apart' was central to *Time Shelter*'s (2020) development. Why did you decide that was an opportunity instead of a crisis?

I had this idea for 'clinics of the past' more than 15 years ago. And it was a very positive idea, that they could help take care of people with Alzheimers or dementia. But then, in 2016, when I started to think about the novel, I realised that the past also has a dark side. It could be dangerous, and could be a weapon for politicians who are populists. They will use it, they will try to sell it to us, they will try to reinvent the past, re-enact the past.

That's why the second part of the novel became more and more dystopic. There are referendums for the past in European countries, for the happiest decade people want to live in. It's connected with the general absence of a future, with the general deficit of the future that we are feeling. I don't know if it's true or not, but our anxiety is that nothing good can happen in the near future. When you have this deficit, the only direction to move is back to the past.

But the past could be a trap, because no one can live in the past. Our children can't live in our past. I'm not interested in the faraway future. I think the future has the face of a child. We should go (into it) step-by-step, metre-by-metre, minute-by-minute.

Did you have any activist tendencies while writing this story?

No, I'm a writer and interested in the human perspective much more than the political one. I think literature is a real antidote to politics and propaganda. As a normal person, as a citizen, of course, I have anxiety about this. As a person who has kids. And that's enough.

Your citizenry plays into what you write?

My citizenry, let's say, is maybe connected. I'm not part of any movement. What I can do is tell stories and give hints that we're one minute away from twelve. Of course, with true literature, it's much more important to tell stories, not to make propaganda.

Are you excited about the return to oral stories that we're having with audiobooks and podcasts?

My writing has connections with the oral tradition. In Bulgaria, we have different words for 'oral stories' and 'written short stories'. I named my first book, *Natural Novel* (1999), after the oral word.

Why do I believe in oral stories? Because they have memory about the person, the lips, the voice, the person who tells them. It's a very alive, short-term memory. What I'm interested in is memory about the things that will disappear soon. I'm not so interested in the memory of big monuments. I'm interested in the things that will disappear. We are one of these things.

I believe that like *Arabian Nights*'s Scheherazade, till you tell your story, you're still alive. When I was a child, I used to read books written in first person because I knew that the narrator, the character, will never die as long as he tells the story. He couldn't just say, 'And then I died'.

TIME SHELTER
BY GEORGI GOSPODINOV
W&N
304 pages
₹699

> Our anxiety is that nothing good can happen in the near future. When you have this deficit, the only direction to move is back to the past. But the past could be a trap.

Do you ever feel like the characters in *Time Shelter*, or your previous works, became your best or worst self?

Yes, I think writing can be emotional only this way, when you are part of what you write. Even in *Time Shelter* sometimes, I don't know if I am the narrator or the ghost. That's part of the book's structure, how these twisted voices take on each other and you don't know who invented who.

When you reach a roadblock in writing, how do you get over it?

I like afternoons. I like just sitting and gazing. I like to watch people walking. I like to read poetry. I started as a poet, and still write poetry. I think it's important for skill development, even for novelists, because it deals very closely with the language, with the shortness of language.

Do you feel forced to categorise yourself as the novelist or the screenwriter or the libretto writer?

I don't like the division. I believe that I write one and the same work, even if I write poetry, scripts, plays, graphic novels, short stories, essays. The narrator in my previous book, *Physics of Sorrow*, says, "I don't believe in pure-bred genres. The novel is no Aryan." I think voice and the topic are much more important for me. I love to write about memory, dying, mortality, the things that never happened. We are full of never-happened things, personally and nationally.

Have you ever had an urge to write prolifically or faster?

No, I'm quite a lazy novelist. I have written only three, one every 10 years. But of course, I write short stories and other genres. I like to be slow. Language is like a wild animal, a deer or antelope. You must be very careful and friendly, because if they realise you are chasing, they will just run away. You should give them time. They should come to you, not you to them.

The Final Countdown

Bureaucrat Amarjeet Sinha's expert take on policy's last-mile challenges

Ashok Pankaj

WHILE INDIA has come a long way since 1947, there are miles to go to secure a life of well-being for all, an opportunity for every Indian to develop their fullest human potential through access to good health, education and skills…" *The Last Mile* is written by Amarjeet Sinha, a civil servant who has played an important role formulating social sector programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and National Rural Health Mission. It draws on the author's 35-plus years of experience that includes visiting more than 95 percent of India's districts.

Sinha raises a fundamental question of public policy: should Amrit Kaal India grow by a GDP number, the "5 trillion dollar economy", or by the well-being of her people by investing in education, health, skills, basic amenities, and transparent governance? He chooses the latter.

A relevant issue is public versus private provision of education, health, water, and sanitation, especially post-liberalisation. Sinha asks to drop the "binary of public and private" and create "community institutions". He supports decentralisation and devolution of power to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and Urban Local Bodies.

The book highlights massive poverty reduction, especially since 2004-05, and the challenge of lifting the remaining 24 crore people out of poverty. Sinha envisages a clear role for the Indian state, as the market may not invest in poor people: to harness the resources of women collectives and self-help groups (SHGs); community institutions and resources; PRIs; and Corporate Social Responsibility.

Sinha analyses how women collectives and SHGs under the National Rural Livelihood Mission have changed the face of rural poverty across Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat and Assam. About 100 million women are organised into 8 million SHGs carrying out vibrant economic activities. An example is the flow of bank credit to women's SHGs. It grew to Rs 6.5 lakh crore between 2014 and 2022, at a 30 per cent annual credit growth rate. The non-performing assets of bank loans to SHGs have come down notably from 7.1 per cent in 2012-13 to 2 percent in 2021-22. This is much lower than that of the corporate sector. Yet, banks and industrial policy favour big corporates over micro-enterprises.

THE LAST MILE: TURNING PUBLIC POLICY UPSIDE DOWN
BY AMARJEET SINHA
Routledge
310 pages
₹1295

Women's SHGs have used bank credit to run 24,520 custom hiring centres, rent out agricultural implements and pump sets, provide 2165 transport services in remote areas, and run bio-fertiliser units, shops, horticulture, animal husbandry. About 600 SHG products are on Amazon and Flipkart and 1080 products on the government e-market. The flow of bank credit to women's SHGs is no longer confined to Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka (which cornered 85 per cent of the total bank credit to SHGs in 2013-14). It has grown in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam — states with higher rural poverty.

The power of clear policy goals is also exemplified. In 1986, the year of the National Policy on Education (NEP), 69.2 percent of rural females aged six-plus were never enrolled in a school; all the SC girls in Bihar and ST girls in Andhra Pradesh dropped out. NEP and SSA made a difference. Now there's almost complete enrolment of boys and girls at the primary level. The drop-out rate has come down dramatically, almost negligible at the lower primary level. But there are challenges in ensuring total transition from lower to upper primary, upper primary to secondary, and from secondary to higher secondary levels.

Sinha highlights the period since 2014-15, though 2004-05 may be considered the real departure in New Welfarism in India. Legislations like the right to work (MGNREGA, 2005), the Right to Forest Act (2006), Right to Education Act (2009), Right to Food (NFSA, 2013), and right to rehabilitations (land compensation Act, 2013) were enacted to give development opportunities. An analysis of this New Welfarism is the only missing point of discussion.

The author is Professor, Council for Social Development

Second Nature

Madhav Gadgil, one of India's finest ecologists, shows how empathy must lie at the heart of policy solutions

Kaushik Das Gupta

IN THE annals of science, there are rare scholars whose names are synonymous with their disciplines. Among them is Madhav Gadgil. For five decades, his scholarship has expanded the frontiers of ecological sciences and made the discipline sensitive to Indian – and Third World – idiosyncrasies. Gadgil's illustrious career arc, in more ways than one, tells us the story of Indian ecology of the past 50 years. His autobiography, *A Walk Up the Hill*, is also an extraordinary account of the country trying to reconcile economic development with the protection of wildlife, forests, mountains, rivers and aquifers.

An ecologist's affiliations are multi-disciplinary — they encompass sensitivity to social mores, economics, history, along with an understanding of the natural world. Compassion and empathy are central to such research. As a teacher, field researcher, scientist, author, member of policy-making bodies and institution builder, Gadgil has not just exemplified his discipline's credo, he has also shaped it.

This sensitivity came very early — from progressive parents, the distinguished economist DR Gadgil and Pramila, who counted Babasaheb Ambedkar and Irawati Karve as their friends and inspired the young Madhav to be inquisitive. An early interest in the workings of nature was sparked by a letter — the future doyen of Indian ecology would write to the naturalist Salim Ali about a bird shedding its feather. Ali wrote back and gave an appointment to the young Madhav, who was "captivated by his wit, knowledge and wisdom". At the age of 14, Gadgil decided that ecology would be his calling.

Gadgil's childhood was steeped in humanism. His parents rejected caste and questioned its hierarchical basis. Religion had very little place in their lives, but DR Gadgil and Pramila encouraged Madhav to take a keen interest in people and their cultures. "I am interested in the manifold representations of culture and, being proficient in Sanskrit, have read parts of the Rig Veda, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Gita in the original. I enjoy listening to music, a great deal of which involves Hindu *bhajans*," he writes.

Among the several fascinating sections is Gadgil's retelling of Maharshi Karve's interpretation of "the transition period in history involving struggle (between) Pandavas and the original inhabitants of the forests, the Nagas, that is described in the Mahabharata".

ABHINAV SAHA

THE SKY AND THE SOIL
(Above) Madhav Gadgil; Gadgil holds that honest environmental impact assessments have to be a significant ingredient of sustainable pro-people development

A WALK UP THE HILL: LIVING WITH PEOPLE AND NATURE
BY MADHAV GADGIL
Allen Lane
336 pages
₹999

He talks of Karve's *Yuganta* as a major influence — the *Khandava vanadahna* as a tale of agricultural expansion and tales of *mrigasvapnabhaya*, the fear of the dream of animals, as ecological prudence. The contradiction between the human capacity of moderation in harvesting living resources and the profligacy of human societies is a recurrent theme in the autobiography.

Gadgil's research stint in the US gave him a ringside view of the intellectual currents and political tendencies during a seminal period in the country's history. McCarthyism posed challenges to its institutions and those at the helm of prominent universities, the Vietnam War stirred the passions of faculty and students, and the academia couldn't be aloof to the race question. They embroiled Gadgil's peers and teachers — Harvard President, Nathan Pusey, "not the most respected academic but admired for standing up to the political establishment", George Wald, the Nobel Prize-winner for elucidating the role of Vitamin A in eyesight who campaigned against the American War in Vietnam, the philosopher and mathematician Putnam, a champion of the civil rights movement.

In the late Sixties, Harvard was also the centre of a lively debate on the evolution of human social behaviour triggered by Ed Wilson's seminal work on insect societies. A few years ago, the attention of the American public had been drawn to the impacts of human interference in the environment by the publication of Rachel Carson's seminal work, *Silent Spring*. It spurred a change in the US pesticide policy and "helped inspire an environmental movement that led to the creation of the US Environmental Agency".

India, though, had a greater attraction for Gadgil and two years after teaching at Harvard, he decided to move back home — to a country that was as much in ferment as the one of his alma mater. He joined the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, headed at that time by one of the country's ablest institution builders Satish Dhawan, who backed the young ecologist when, at the height of the Emergency, a letter arrived from the Forest Department ordering that nothing should be published without its approval. "This was a watershed moment that brought home to me the value of free speech," writes Gadgil.

On several occasions in the memoir, Gadgil criticises his peers in the scientific community for not being alive to the travails and sufferings of the poor, including during the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. At the same time, he finds signs of hope in the working of civil society groups that built up documentation "and brought out the deceptions that ICMR and CSIR" had engaged in during the tragedy. Gadgil also holds that "honest environmental impact assessments have to be a significant ingredient of sustainable pro-people development".

At a time when India faces many environmental challenges and its institutions often lack the resolve to take them, this autobiography offers several cues on the way forward.

'How I made my way through a cancer clinical trial'

Kamal Pundir, the first patient in the country to receive the groundbreaking CAR T-cell therapy in a government hospital, on his challenges and victories

Parul

TWENTY-TWO-YEAR-OLD Kamal Pundir loves the wind on his face when he runs and doesn't count the steps, he just goes on and on... It's something he has missed immensely ever since he was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) a year ago. Pundir is now back on his feet, raring to make up for the missed time at college, as he is now cancer-free with a novel therapy at a government hospital.

A resident of Saharanpur, he became the first clinical trial patient in the country to receive the ground-breaking CAR T-cell therapy, which genetically reprogrammes a patient's immune system to fight cancer, at a public hospital. Developed by Immuneel, co-founded by famed oncologist Dr Siddhartha Mukherjee, this novel therapy for ALL was trialled at PGIMER.

LIFE POSITIVE

Reflecting on his decision to opt for the trial, Pundir says he wanted to take a chance as chemotherapy wasn't working for him, had sapped the life out of him and he had nothing to lose. "I had lost 30 kg, my hair was gone, I had no energy to even sit up on bed. I could not eat or drink and threw up the entire day and night. No matter what people say about fighting back, quitting seems an easy relief from the pain. But my doctors pulled me out of the trough. The days of the trial were a bit tense but they were supportive and calm. There was no discomfort during the therapy but there was a lot of apprehension ," he recalls.

Says Prof Pankaj Malhotra, Head, Department of Clinical Haematology, PGIMER, "We chose three patients for the trials and used an existing technology developed in Spain. The chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy genetically modifies immune cells called T-cells in a laboratory and reinfuses them in the patient's body, thereby enabling the re-engineered cells to target and destroy cancer cells. Pundir is not only cancer-free, he is completely off therapy and drugs and is back in college. We have told him to get back to his exercise schedule, stay away from people with contagious infections and just be regular with follow-up scans. Everything else, including diet, is just normal."

The therapy modifies the patient's T-cells using an inactivated HIV virus to "weaponise" them to fight the cancer cells. "We extract T-cells from a cancer patient's body and use a virus — a modified version of HIV virus that has no risk of HIV — to deliver genes to the cells that weaponise the T-cells and can attack the cancer cells," Dr Mukherjee had said earlier while launching the trials in India.

Pundir recalls suffering persistent bouts of fever and constant weakness that made him consult a doctor in Saharanpur. "He suspected cancer as my bloodwork was deranged," says the college student, who is pursuing his graduation in history and biology. He was advised to seek treatment either at AIIMS, Delhi, or PGIMER, Chandigarh. "My family was completely shaken while I was in complete disbelief. I had always been a fitness fanatic — running, exercising, drinking milk and eating a very healthy diet. Why then did it happen to me? It was only later I realised that blood cancer happens when a trigger disrupts how your body makes blood cells and overwhelms normal cells. Nobody knows what that trigger is," he adds.

Once he was in PGIMER, doctors advised Pundir to undergo chemotherapy immediately as he had a 60 per cent chance of getting better. "My father just held my hand and never left me throughout my therapy. Family support is important to find the will to fight cancer," he says.

FACT OF THE MATTER

PGI can roll out therapy only after approval. It then needs to sign an MoU between the hospital and the product provider

Dr Charanpreet Singh, senior research associate in the department of clinical haematology, recalls that Pundir's response to conventional therapy for ALL wasn't positive. "The chances of cure were low with chemotherapy as his cancer was in the bone marrow. With his blood platelet counts too low, he was a high-risk patient for a bone marrow transplant. The trial had just opened and Pundir passed all tests required for the therapy. We admitted him for a month and gave him therapy through IV. We split the regime with a gap of three days," he says. Three months after the infusion, the doctors did a PET scan and the results were clean. Pundir cleared another review earlier this month. "After this, a yearly test is done to assess the patient," says Dr Charanpreet.

He was a bit tense about the post-therapy blood report but it showed his therapy had worked. "I was ecstatic as were my doctors, who have given me a new lease of life," says Pundir. He feels he is lucky as the cancer did return in another patient in the trial. That's rare but not unusual. Data from large-cohort follow-up studies indicate an incidence of secondary malignancies after CAR T-cell infusion of 4-16 per cent. The extensive chemotherapy exposure of advanced stage patients is known to increase the risk of secondary malignancies. Otherwise, secondary cancers can develop due to improper integration of genes in the T-cells when they are modified. The modified retrovirus vector used to introduce the receptors could cause genetic mutations that trigger the development of cancer. But then such cases are rare and the benefits far outweigh the risks.

That's why PGIMER doctors are keeping a close watch on Pundir and other test subjects as their continued cancer-free status will be key to approval of the therapy. Once that awaited approval comes, PGI can start using the therapy after signing an MoU between the hospital and the product provider. "The cost will be a fraction of what is charged abroad and allow more people to access a breakthrough therapy. In the US, this therapy is around Rs 2 crore, here we can offer it at Rs 30 to 40 lakh," adds Prof Malhotra.

As for Pundir, he has gone back to his original weight of 85 kg. His hair has grown, he's enjoying his runs and he's back to gorging on nuts and milk, his favourites. "I will complete my graduation as I lost a year to treatment and want to start my own business in finance. I feel like myself all over again," says Pundir, determined to fight back future challenges.

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ADVERTORIAL

How Dharamshala's Majestic Backdrop Bowled Over the World!

Dharamshala's appeal extends far beyond its geographical location. Rather, this place is a unique cultural melting pot where Tibetan, Himachali, and British influences converge

Last week, the cricketing world was treated to a spectacular view as the 5th test match between India and England unfolded against the breathtaking backdrop of the snow-capped Dhauladhar ranges in Dharamshala. I am already a huge fan of test cricket, but the backdrop of the mountains made this test match even more worth watching. With another emphatic series win under our belt, I wanted to talk about Dharamshala today. Because wherever Indian cricket goes, interest in that destination soon follows. At Veena World too, we saw a 400 percent jump in the number of daily searches for Dharamshala. Given this surge in interest, let's begin with the famous cricket stadium. Because after all, it is the main reason why we are discussing this in the first place.

The Dharamshala Cricket Stadium, officially known as the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, stands as one of the most picturesque cricket venues in the world. With views that rival the Newlands stadium in Cape Town, South Africa or the famous Adelaide Oval in Australia, this ground boasts a main stand that has been built in Tibetan architectural style. It was the first in India to pioneer the use of Ryegrass, which helps ensure grass survival in the chilly conditions of the north.

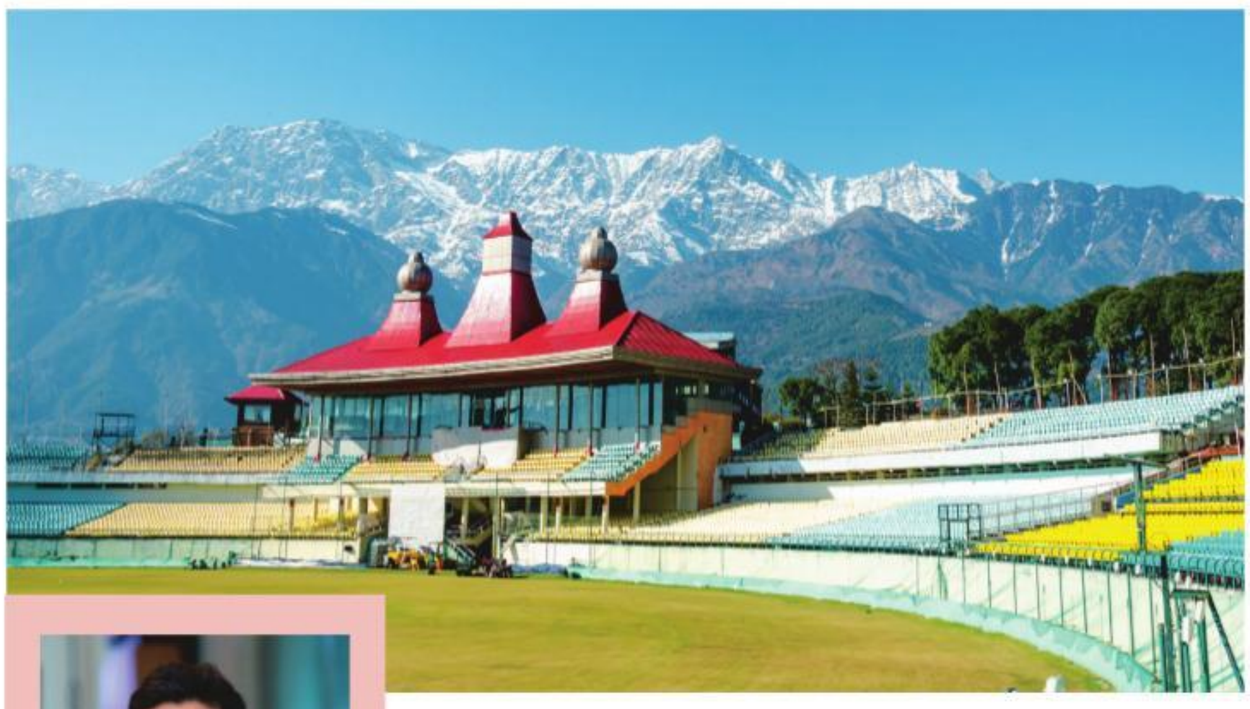
Some in the English fan contingent popularly known as the Barmy Army, called it one of the most beautiful sporting venues in the world. Located in the heart of Dharamshala, this stadium is not just a place for sports but a spectacle in itself, drawing visitors not only for its cricketing contests but also for its breathtaking beauty. On all Veena World tours to Dharamshala, this is an item that is always on everyone's bucket-list. For the record, of the 500+ products and itineraries that we have as a part of the Veena World portfolio, only 5 cricket stadium tours make an appearance (Lords London, Melbourne Cricket Ground, Sydney Cricket Ground, Kuala Lumpur Cricket Field and finally the Dharamshala Cricket Stadium).

At an elevation of 1,457 meters above sea level, it offers a unique experience where the thrill of cricket blends seamlessly with the backdrop of the surrounding landscape. The stadium, with its lush green outfield and state-of-the-art facilities, has truly become a symbol of pride for the state of Himachal Pradesh. Its captivating setting makes watching a game or even a visit here an unforgettable experience, as spectators can enjoy the sport while being enveloped by the natural grandeur of the mountain ranges.

Now that we have got the ball rolling, let's zoom out a bit and talk about Dharamshala. Draped in the shadow of the mighty Dhauladhar ranges, Dharamshala's geography is as dramatic as it is serene. Situated in the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, this town stretches across elevations from 1,250 meters (4,100 feet) in the lower reaches of the Kangra Valley to over 1,750 meters (5,740 feet) in McLeod Ganj and beyond. The geographical diversity of Dharamshala offers a canvas of lush valleys, dense forests, and high-altitude grasslands, crafting a landscape that is both a trekker's delight and a nature lover's paradise.

But Dharamshala's appeal extends far beyond its geographical location. Rather, this place is a unique cultural melting pot where Tibetan, Himachali, and British influences converge, creating a rich mix of traditions, architecture, and cuisine. It is also often known as the home-in-exile of the Dalai Lama. To understand how this came to be, let's dive into a little bit of history then. Initially, Dharamshala was just a quiet hill station, largely uninhabited and unknown to the world until the British Raj in India discovered its potential as a garrison town in the mid-19th century. The establishment of a military cantonment in 1849 marked the beginning of Dharamshala's transformation. The British were awed by its mild climate and the beauty of the surrounding nature, making it a summer retreat for officials seeking respite from the scorching Indian summers. The year 1959 stands as a pivotal moment in the annals of Dharamshala's history when it established its Dalai Lama connection.

The Dalai Lama's connection with Dharamshala is a profound chapter in the town's history, transforming it into a symbol of Tibetan culture and spirituality. Following his flight from Tibet in 1959, in the wake of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese occupation, the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, sought refuge in India. The Indian government offered him asylum, and Dharamshala was chosen as the site for his residence and the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This pivotal event marked the beginning of Dharamshala's evolution into a global centre for Tibetan Buddhism and the preservation of Tibetan culture.



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The Tsuglagkhang Complex, where the Dalai Lama resides, has become a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists and visitors from around the world, eager to seek wisdom and peace. The presence of the Dalai Lama has imbued Dharamshala with a sense of hope and spiritual renewal, making it a sanctuary for those seeking solace and enlightenment, and reinforcing the town's status as a bastion of Tibetan identity and resistance. Over the decades, Dharamshala has evolved from a colonial hill station and a refuge for Tibetan exiles into a vibrant, multicultural town that thrives on its diversity. It is because of this very Tibetan connection that Dharamshala today resonates with the echoes of Tibetan chants and the vibrancy of Buddhist flags fluttering in the breeze, creating an atmosphere of peace and contemplation.

A question then often pops up, apart from the Cricket Stadium, what is there to see in Dharamshala? So at the heart of its attractions is the Tsuglagkhang Complex, the Dalai Lama's residence. This sprawling complex, which we spoke about earlier is not only a spiritual centre for Tibetan Buddhism but also houses the Namgyal Monastery, Tibet Museum, and several stupas, temples, and libraries. Just outside, the streets of McLeod Ganj bustle with cafes, bookshops, and markets selling Tibetan handicrafts, offering a glimpse into the daily lives of the Tibetan diaspora.

Nature enthusiasts will find their haven in the majestic Dhauladhar ranges. The Triund trek, a popular trail, offers breathtaking views of the Kangra Valley and the snow-clad peaks of the Dhauladhars. For those looking for a less strenuous experience, a visit to the Bhagsunag Waterfall provides a setting, perfect for relaxation and nature walks. Dharamshala also boasts the Dal Lake – a small yet picturesque body of water surrounded by deodar forests, invoking a sense of calm and introspection.

Beyond natural beauty and spiritual exploration, Dharamshala is steeped in history and art. The Kangra Art Museum displays artifacts that trace the cultural and artistic history of the region, including miniature paintings, traditional costumes, and sculptures. The Norbulingka Institute is another gem, dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan art and crafts. Here, visitors can see artisans at work, creating intricate thangkas, woodcarvings, and metalworks. For a taste of local life and history, the Kangra Fort, one of the oldest forts in India, offers a glimpse into the region's rich past through its ruins and museum. Near Dharamshala, the Masroor Rock Cut Temples are an archaeological wonder, often referred to as the "Ellora of Himachal Pradesh," dating back to the 8th century. Each of these sites in Dharamshala serves as a window into the soul of this enchanting town, making it a destination that captures the essence of nature, spirituality, and human creativity.

How can we end this discussion without a mention of the food here? The local cuisine of Dharamshala is a delightful fusion that blends Tibetan flavours with traditional Himachali fare. Tibetan dishes, such as momos (steamed or fried dumplings) and thukpa (a hearty noodle soup), are famous here. These dishes, known for their simplicity and warmth, are perfectly suited to the cool climate of the hills. Meanwhile, the Himachali cuisine offers its own rustic and robust flavours, with dishes like Dham (a traditional festive meal consisting of rice, lentils, and curries made from local ingredients) and Siddu (steamed bread filled with local ingredients) being favourites. The use of locally sourced herbs and spices in both cuisines adds a unique touch to the food, making it a flavourful journey into the region's culinary traditions.

All in all, each of these sites and experiences, serve as a window into the soul of this enchanting town, making it a destination where you will truly celebrate life. Have you been to Dharamshala? What was your experience like? I would love to know, so write to me at neil@veenaworld.com That's it from me today, see you next week, but until then... keep Celebrating Life!

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