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NEET & IIT-JEE

# THE WORLD

TOP OF THE  
WORLD



Pandas in Shenshuping panda base. Reuters

CHINA

Beijing to send more bears to US in renewed era of panda diplomacy

*Beijing:* China's Wildlife Conservation Association is working with the National Zoo in Washington in an arrangement that could bring more pandas back to the United States, signalling improving diplomatic relations between the two superpowers. China has lent its beloved bears to zoos in various countries over the years as goodwill animal ambassadors and also fostered a modern Sino-U.S. "panda diplomacy" with the gesture. Back in November, the National Zoo in Washington returned three pandas to China as part of a more than 50-year-old legacy. **REUTERS**

IRAN

Poll campaigns begin: first after 2022 unrest

*Tehran:* Candidates for Iran's parliament began campaigning on Thursday in the country's first election since the bloody crackdown on the 2022 nationwide protests that followed the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody. State television said 15,200 candidates will compete for a four-year term in the 290-seat chamber that hardliners have controlled for two decades. That is a record number and more than twice the candidates who contested the 2020 election, when voter turnout was just over 42 per cent, the lowest since 1979. **AP**

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban carry out double public execution

*Ghazni:* The Taliban carried out a double public execution at a stadium in southeastern Afghanistan on Thursday as thousands watched the killing of two convicted men as their victims' relatives fired the gunshot. The Taliban's Supreme Court had ruled that the pair were responsible for the stabbing deaths of two victims in separate attacks, according to a court statement. It identified the two as Syed Jamal from central Wardak and Gul Khan from Ghazni, though it was unclear who did the crime. **AP**

EUROPEAN UNION

Farmers from 10

countries join to protest policies

*Prague:* Czech farmers were driving their tractors and other vehicles to several border crossings on Thursday to meet their colleagues from neighboring countries and join forces in their protests against European Union agriculture policies, bureaucracy and overall conditions for their business. Farmers complain that environmental policies, such as the Green Deal, which calls for limits on the use of chemicals and on greenhouse gas emissions, limit their business. **AP**

TEL AVIV NOT INTERESTED IN REACHING AGREEMENTS, SAYS HAMAS OFFICIAL

## Israel flattens Rafah buildings, Hamas chief reaches Cairo amid truce talks

Rafah residents say bombing heaviest since IDF raid 10 days ago

REUTERS

RAFAH, CAIRO, FEBRUARY 22

*ISRAELI BOMBS* on Rafah flattened a mosque and destroyed homes in what residents called one of their worst nights yet, while the Hamas chief was in Cairo for talks Gazans hope could bring a truce in time to head off a full-blown assault on the city.

Mourners wept over at least seven corpses in body bags, laid on cobblestones outside a morgue in the city hard against the Egyptian border, where over half of Gaza's 2.3 million people are now huddled, mostly in tents.

Rafah's al-Farouk mosque was flattened. Residents said the bombing was the heaviest since an Israeli raid on the city ten days ago that freed two hostages and killed scores of civilians.

The arrival of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Cairo this week for his first publicly announced visit since December was the strongest sign for weeks that negotiations remain alive. Haniyeh has met Egyptian mediators, but so far little has been said in public.

Sami Abu Zuhri, senior Hamas official, said Israel was now backtracking on terms it had accepted weeks ago in a truce offer made with US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators. They are "not interested in achieving any agreement," he said, accusing Israel of ignoring the issue of freeing prisoner in a swap.

There was no immediate response from Israeli officials.



Site of an Israeli strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Thursday. Reuters

## Houthis to escalate Red Sea strikes, use 'submarine weapons', says leader

REUTERS

DUBAI, ADEN, FEBRUARY 22

*YEMEN'S IRAN-BACKED* Houthis will escalate their attacks on ships in the Red Sea and other waters and has introduced "submarine weapons", in continued solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza war, the group's leader said on Thursday.

Iran-aligned Houthi militants in Yemen have launched repeated

drones and missile strikes in the Red Sea, Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and Gulf of Aden since November in support of Palestinians, as the war continues and the Gaza death toll reaches almost 30,000.

"Operations in the Red and Arabian Seas, Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden are continuing, escalating, and effective," Abdulmalik al-Houthi added in a televised speech. He gave no details of the submarine weapons.

The group's strikes are dis-

rupting a route accounting for about 12% of global maritime traffic and forcing firms to take a longer, more expensive route around Africa.

The leader's speech came the same day the Houthis sent shippers and insurers formal notice of what they termed a ban on vessels linked to Israel, the US, and Britain from sailing in surrounding seas, seeking to reinforce their military campaign in support of Palestinians.

### U.N. BODIES JOINTLY PLEAD FOR CEASEFIRE

*Rafah:* The heads of the main UN relief agencies, including UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the WHO, released a letter pleading for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and warning that further escalation into Rafah would cause mass casualties. "Diseases are rampant. Famine is looming. Water is at a trickle. Basic infrastructure has been decimated. Food production has come to a halt." **REUTERS**

## US cop who mowed down Indian student Kandula won't face criminal charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 22

*THE SEATTLE* police officer who struck and killed Indian student Jaahnavi Kandula while responding to an overdose call, will not face any criminal charges due to lack of "sufficient" evidence, authorities said.

On Wednesday, the King County Prosecutor's Office said they will not move forward with criminal charges against Seattle Police Officer Kevin Dave, FOX13 Seattle reported.

In a statement released Wednesday, the King County Prosecuting Attorney said, "Kandula's death is heartbreaking and impacted communities in King County and across the world." Kandula, 23, was struck by a police vehicle driven by Officer Dave when she was crossing a street in Seattle on January 23. He was driving at around 120 km/h on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.

In bodycam footage released by the Seattle Police Department,



Jaahnavi Kandula. File photo

Officer Daniel Auderer laughed about the deadly crash and dismissed any implication Dave might be at fault or that a criminal investigation was necessary.

Prosecuting Attorney Leesa Manion said that she believes they lack the evidence to prove a criminal case beyond a reasonable doubt, the report added.

"After staffing this case with senior deputy prosecuting attorneys... I have determined that we lack sufficient evidence under Washington State law to prove a criminal case". The statement also said that it finds the comments made by Daniel Auderer, recorded on his body-worn video, "appalling and deeply troubling."

## Ukraine's Zelenskyy plays down loss of Avdiivka, seeks faster aid

REUTERS  
FEBRUARY 22

*PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR* Zelenskyy downplayed Ukraine's loss of the eastern town of Avdiivka to Russian forces and called for faster support from allies as the war against Russia neared the two-year mark, in comments broadcast on Wednesday.

Russian troops took control of Avdiivka last week in Moscow's biggest battlefield gain since its forces captured Bakhmut last May. Vladimir Putin says Russia will press on with its drive through eastern Ukraine.

But he pointed to earlier gains,



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

particularly in the northeastern Kharkiv, where the Fox interview took place. "...we got (back) part of the Kharkiv region... There are grain routes and we destroyed a lot of their ships of the Russian fleet," Zelenskyy said.

In his comments, Zelenskyy expressed new discontent with the slowdown in Western aid for Ukraine's war effort. "We have to be more quick... Otherwise we will not have any chance," he said.

EXPLAINED  
**E** Kyiv faces at least 2-week wait for aid

*THE US House* is unlikely to consider security assistance before mid-March. Republican House members say they do not want to take up the broad \$95 billion national security supplemental as it is, although members of both parties acknowledge it would pass easily if the Republican Speaker Mike Johnson allowed a vote.

## BBC gets first Indian-origin chairman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, FEBRUARY 22

*INDIA-BORN MEDIA* executive Dr Samir Shah was on Thursday confirmed as the new BBC chairman after his selection cleared the stages of scrutiny to be approved by King Charles III this week.

Shah, who has worked in UK broadcasting for over 40 years, was picked as the government's preferred candidate in December last year and went on to be quizzed by

cross-party MPs of the House of Commons Media Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee for his pre-appointment scrutiny.

The 72-year-old has now been confirmed in the 160,000 pounds per year and four-year

term role to take charge as the public broadcaster's first Indian-origin Chair from March 4, running until March 2028.

"With a career spanning more than 40 years in TV production and journalism, Dr Shah has a wealth of experience to bring to the position of BBC Chair," said UK Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer as she declared his selection.

"He will provide the support and scrutiny that the BBC needs to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future," she said.

AT LEAST 33 INJURED, BUILDINGS DAMAGED

INDONESIA STRUCK BY 1ST LARGE-SCALE TORNADO

Indonesia was struck by a tornado of a scale previously unrecorded in the country that injured at least 33 people and damaged buildings, government officials said. After the violent wind swept the town of Sumedang in West Java province on Wednesday, a climatologist at government research body BRIN Erma Yulihastini, said the agency would "reconstruct and investigate the tornado".

**Maryam Nawaz** set to become first woman CM of Pak Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LAHORE, FEBRUARY 22

**MARYAM NAWAZ**, the daughter of three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, is set to become the first woman chief minister of Pakistan's Punjab province following the summoning of the provincial legislature on Friday.

Out of five assemblies in Pakistan that went to the polls on February 8, the Punjab Assembly is the first house convening its opening session.

"Punjab Governor Balighur Rahman has called the Punjab Assembly session for Friday, in which newly elected members of the assembly will swear in," a spokesperson for the Governor's House said on Thursday.

Maryam, 50, is also senior vice president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party. She is considered to be the political heir of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, who surprisingly nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif as his party's prime ministerial candidate.

The PML-N has nominated Maryam as the chief ministerial candidate of the party in Punjab, a province of over 120 million people. The PML-N won 137 seats while independents backed by former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won 113 in the Punjab Assembly. Separately, 20 odd independents, not PTI-backed, have already joined the PML-N.



Maryam Nawaz, 50. AP file

**PAKTO PROBE TROLLING OF OFFICIALS OVER 'RIGGING' IN FEB 8 POLLS**

*Islamabad:* Pakistan's caretaker government has constituted a joint investigation team, including from the ISI, following a massive social media campaign against officials and functionaries of the top poll body alleging their involvement in the reported rigging of elections, according to media reports on Thursday. The report is to be submitted in 15 days. **PTI**

The PTI-backed independent candidates have joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) to get reserved seats for women and minorities besides saving their elected members from being forced to change their loyalty by the military establishment.

However, the SIC may not get reserved seats for women and minorities, leaving the PML-N with a simple majority in Punjab.

**FLEW IN A MODIFIED TU-160M**

**Putin** sends signal to West with flight on nuke-capable bomber

REUTERS  
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 22

*RUSSIAN PRESIDENT* Vladimir Putin flew on a modernised Tu-160M nuclear-capable strategic bomber on Thursday, in a move likely to be seen in the West as a pointed reminder of Moscow's nuclear capabilities.

The giant swing-wing plane, codenamed "Blackjacks" by military alliance NATO, is a modernised version of a Cold War-era bomber that the former Soviet Union would have deployed in the event of nuclear war to deliver weapons at long distances.

State TV showed Putin clambering down a ladder from the plane after the flight and telling reporters it was a reliable and modernised aircraft that could be accepted by the Russian Air Force.

"It's a new machine, a lot about it is new. It's easier to control. It's reliable," said Putin.

The Russian leader, who is expected to easily win another six-year term next month, made the flight at a time when Moscow and the West are at odds over Russia's war in Ukraine and the death in prison of opposition politician Alexei Navalny, which it rejects. **REUTERS**

**NAVALNY TEAM: DEATH CERTIFICATE SAYS HE DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES**

*Moscow:* Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's team said on X on Thursday that the opposition politician's death certificate says he died of natural causes. Navalny, 47, died last week in an Arctic penal colony. His team and family have alleged that the Kremlin killed him, which it rejects. **REUTERS**

ONCE HEART OF BRUTAL CONFLICTS, MEDELLIN STARTED ATTRACTING TOURISTS AFTER DIP IN VIOLENCE

## Sex trafficking, killing of tourists: New dark side of Colombia's tourist hotspot

ASTRID SÁUREZ  
MEDELLIN, FEBRUARY 22

*THE LUSH* valley enveloping Medellin was once the heart of a brutal war involving the Colombian government, drug cartels and a smattering of other armed groups.

But a sharp dip in violence in the country's second-biggest city has attracted a flood of tourists to its vivid colors, busy cafes and booming nightlife. About 1.4 million visited last year, many of them American.

Now the tourism boom has presented officials with a new set of dark challenges, including



Sex and drug tourism has long been a problem in Medellin, but the dangers came to a head late last year. AP

January that some tourists had been slipped drugs and were later robbed or killed. American officials cautioned men against using dating apps. The apps offer a way to seek out sex workers, whose business is not criminalized in Colombia.

Medellin lead prosecutor Yiri Milena Amado Sanchez said most of the recent killings followed similar scripts: A tourist contacts a local woman through social media or a dating app. When they meet, the man is handed a drink spiked with a substance such as scopolamine, which can cause people to fall unconscious and block their memories. The victims lose their belongings and, in

some cases, their lives.

Of the killings, the most is known about the death of Tou Ger Xiong, an activist and comedian from Minnesota who went on a date with a Medellin woman, police say. After meeting the woman, Xiong was kidnapped on Dec. 10, tortured, beaten and robbed. Despite his family paying a ransom for his release, he was taken to a nearby wooded area and thrown down a 250-foot cliff. He was found dead the next day.

Colombian authorities have not suggested that he was involved in prostitution. They said Xiong went out several times with the woman, who has been charged in the case, along with two men. The rise in tourism has also coincided with an uptick in sexual exploitation and trafficking in a place where rates of violence against women are already sky-high. In 2023, the city documented 1,259 cases of possible sexual exploitation of minors, a nearly 60% increase from the year before, according to city's data.

Much of the city's sex work is also fueled by poverty and a migration crisis from neighboring Venezuela. Vulnerable women often sell sex to make ends meet. Despite a rise in sex tourism, many visitors to Medellin are pulled in by its vibrant culture, stunning natural beauty of the



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**PROBE INTO KIRU PROJECT IN KISHTWAR**

## CBI searches premises of ex-Governor Malik in J&K hydel project case

In 2023, India hit target towards eliminating Kala Azar, first time

ANONNA DUTT  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

IN A significant step forward towards eliminating Kala Azar – the second deadliest parasitic disease after malaria in the country – India has achieved the target of reporting less than one case per 10,000 population across all blocks in 2023.

Data from the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme showed that there were 595 cases and four deaths of Kala Azar reported nationwide last year compared to 891 cases and three deaths in 2022.

The Indian Express has learned that the Centre has apprised the World Health

Agency claims irregularities in Rs 2,200-crore contract award

**Malik from hospital bed: I was the whistleblower in scam, raid to silence critics**



I have hidden the manuscript of my tell-all Kashmir book: Malik

RITU SARIN  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

complainant" in the Kiru Hydro Electric Power Project case.

The former Governor was admitted to the hospital four days ago but said that the CBI probably was not aware of this fact and went and searched his Delhi residence as well as those of many of his relatives and associates.

"This is the same Kiru case in which I had said there was an offer of Rs 150 crore as bribe but I had refused to sign the file. But instead of taking action against the culprits whom I had named, the CBI has decided to raid and harass the whistleblower himself."

Questioned about the timing of the raids at his residence,

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SPEAKING FROM his bed in a New Delhi hospital – he is being treated for a foot infection – former Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik told The Indian Express that the raids carried out at his residence Thursday by the CBI were "uncalled for" since he was actually the "whistleblower and

X reveals Delhi asked it to block handles; most pro-farm protests

SOUMYARENDR BARIK  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

BILLIONAIRE ELON Musk's social media company X (formerly Twitter) has said it has received orders from the Indian government to block certain accounts and links, failing which the platform and its employees could face potential penalties including significant fines and imprisonment.

The Indian Express has learnt that a majority of these accounts were tweeting in support of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



A road blocked by protesting farmers near Ludhiana toll plaza in Ludhiana on Thursday. Gurmeet Singh

FULL COVERAGE, P8

Sandeshkhali: Fresh protests and arson, prohibitory orders invoked

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA & ATRI MITRA  
SANDESHKHALI (WB), FEBRUARY 22

TENSION GRIPPED Sandeshkhali again Thursday after a group of residents staged fresh protests and allegedly set fire to an 'alaghār' (guard room) of a fishery that they claimed had been built on land grabbed by local TMC leaders.

Following the incident, the administration invoked prohibitory orders under CrPC Section 144 in nine areas under five gram panchayats of Sandeshkhali.

A small island in the Sundarbans delta in West Bengal's North 24-Parganas district, Sandeshkhali has been at the centre of BJP-TMC politics ever since January 5 when Enforcement Directorate officers were assaulted while conducting a search at the home of local strongman and TMC leader Shahjahan Sheikh. The ED team had gone there in connection with an investigation into alleged irregularities in the state's public distribution system.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

BY UNNY



THE CITY

DELHI LS SEATS: AAP FROM 4, CONG 3 P4

**Michael Sandel, political philosopher-professor, is guest at today's Adda**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

AS ONE of the world's most influential public intellectuals, Michael J Sandel has engaged with the urgent moral issues of our times, his work taking on contemporary subjects with an eye on history. The political philosopher and Harvard

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## FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORT ON  
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

## CBI searches premises of Malik

various cities were recovered, a CBI spokesperson said.

The agency, CBI officials said, had registered two separate cases in April 2022 following a request by the Jammu & Kashmir government on the allegations of malpractices. These were: i) an award of contract of J&K Employees' Health Care Insurance Scheme to private company & release of about Rs 60 crore in 2017-18, and ii) award of a Rs 2,200 crore civil works contract for Kiru Hydro Electric Power Project to a private firm in 2019. "So far, he was examined in the case as a witness in the cases," a CBI official said.

In October 2021, two years after he moved out as J&K Governor, Satya Pal Malik claimed he was offered Rs 300 crore in bribes to clear two files, including one related to a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader. Based on this allegation, the CBI registered two cases in the matter and conducted searches at 14 locations. The agency booked Anil Ambani's Reliance General Insurance Company and officials of Chenab Valley Power Projects Pvt Ltd (CVPPPL), among others, in the two cases.

Since 2021, Malik has consistently spoken against the Modi government. It began with claims of corruption in the Kashmir hydel project and then sensational claims of the Centre deliberately failing to fix accountability in the Pulwama attack.

"I told the Prime Minister in



CBI officials searched former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik's residence in New Delhi's Som Vihar on Thursday. Amit Mehra

the evening that this has happened due to our fault. Had we given the aircraft, this wouldn't have happened. To which he told me that I should keep quiet now," Malik said in an interview to Karan Thapar when asked about lapses in the 2019 Pulwama attack.

Malik also accused the Modi government of wanting to make Sajad Lone the CM of J&K in 2018 when he dissolved the Assembly in November that year.

Without naming the person, Malik also accused a senior RSS leader of being involved in the Kashmir hydel project case. In January 2022, he attacked the Prime Minister in a speech at Dadri in western UP over farmers' protests.

"When I went to meet the Prime Minister to discuss the farmer issue, I ended up fighting with him within five minutes. He was very arrogant. When I told him that 500 of our own (farmers) had died... he said, 'Did they die for me?'" he was heard saying in a video clip from the function.

Following Malik's allegations, J&K Lieutenant General Manoj Sinha had said these were serious and that the administration had decided to hand over the probe in the case to the CBI. In the case of Kiru Hydel Project, the CBI FIR said an investigation had been conducted by the J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Department of Power in the matter.

"Perusal of these reports re-

veals that in the award of civil works package of Kiru Hydroelectric Power Project, guidelines regarding e-tendering were not followed and though a decision was taken in the 47th Board Meeting of CVPPPL for re-tender through e-tendering with reverse auction, after cancellation of ongoing tendering process, the same was not implemented and the tender was finally awarded to Patel Engineering," the CBI said in its FIR.

The project, whose cost is estimated to be Rs 4,287 crore, has been marred by allegations of sub-standard work and its failure to provide jobs to local unemployed youth, officials claimed. The ACB probe into the matter observed that the project's tender had been cancelled in the 47th Board Meeting of the CVPPPL, but was revived in the 48th Board Meeting and awarded to Patel Engineering.

"The coordinated raids were conducted in eight States/UTs: Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, UP, Haryana, Mumbai, Patna, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer, Nagaur and Chandigarh. Three places in Delhi, Gurugram and Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat belong to Malik. Some other places belong to his associates, and some others to the associates of the accused include IAS officer Naveen Choudhary, the then chairman of CVPPPL; MD MS Babu; Directors MK Mittal and Arun Mishra," another source said.

## ● X reveals Delhi asked it to block handles; most pro-farm protests

ongoing farmers' protests. Earlier this month, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, had ordered blocking of hundreds of accounts and links on various social media platforms – Facebook, X, and Instagram.

"In compliance with the orders, we will withhold these accounts and posts in India alone; however, we disagree with these actions and maintain that freedom of expression should extend to these posts."

A senior IT Ministry official said the government is reviewing X's statement and will soon respond to it.

The company said it has sent a notice to users whose account was impacted due to the government's orders: "Consistent with our position, a writ appeal challenging the Indian government's blocking orders remains pending. We have also provided the impacted users with notice of these actions in accordance with our policies."

In the last five years, the platform has had a troubled history with wide ranging stakeholders – from the Centre to the Opposition, conservative groups to civil society. India is a key market for the microblogging platform where it has close to 30 million users.

The reply, however, did not go down well with the government, which said that the platform could not possibly "assume the role of a court and justify non-compliance".

Under pressure, X had relented and blocked a number of accounts including that of sitting Rajya Sabha MP and SP leader Sukhram Singh Yadav. At the time, Yadav's Twitter account had 244 followers, and he had been vocal about the farmer protests in his posts, using hashtags such as #kisanektajdab and #singhuborder.

After Musk acquired the company, he had called Indian regulations "strict", and said he would rather comply with the government's blocking orders than risk sending Twitter employees to jail. He was alluding to the IT Rules, 2021, under which a senior representative of social media companies – the chief compliance officer – can be potentially jailed for violating norms.

The reply, however, did not go down well with the government, which said that the platform could not possibly "assume the role of a court and justify non-compliance".

The latest tiff is reminiscent of escalating tensions between the social media platform and the Indian government during the earlier farmers' protest in 2021. At the height of those protests, the Centre had asked the company to take down nearly 1,200 accounts for alleged "Khalistan" links. Before that, it had asked the platform to take down more than 250 accounts, including those of journalists reporting on the protests.

At the time, X had responded by blocking some of the accounts but subsequently unblocked them, which irked the IT ministry. Later, Twitter told the government that it will not restrict accounts belonging to journalists, activists, and politicians in India citing freedom of speech on its platform.

## ● In 2023, India hit target towards eliminating Kala Azar, first time

Organization (WHO) of this data. Although this marks just the first step – India will need to sustain this momentum over the next three years to receive WHO certification – it's an important milestone, considering that India has missed at least four deadlines for Kala Azar elimination.

India's initial target year for Kala Azar elimination was 2010, which was later extended to 2015, 2017, and then 2020.

Elimination for Kala Azar is defined as no block in the country reporting more than one case per 10,000 people. Kala Azar (or visceral leishmaniasis) is a parasitic infection transmitted by sandflies. It causes fever, weight loss, spleen and liver enlargement. Left untreated, it can be fatal in 95% of cases.

In October 2023, Bangladesh became the first country in the world to be officially validated by the WHO for eliminating Kala Azar as a public health problem.

In India, there were 633 blocks, mainly in four states Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, where the disease was endemic. And a few of these blocks were reporting more than one case per 10,000 over the last few years resulting

in India missing the four deadlines.

"While we have reached the required numbers of less than one case per 10,000 population in all districts, we cannot say we have eliminated the disease. That is for WHO to verify and certify. A team of experts are doing that," said a senior government official.

Another official added: "We have reached the numbers, now it has to be sustained for India to be declared Kala Azar free."

For that to happen, WHO experts will verify the data, assess the mechanisms in place to sustain the success, and then, after three years, issue the certification.

Said Dr Neeraj Dhingra, former head of the NVBDCP who has also worked on the Kala Azar elimination programme: "The team of experts will look at all records, check if there is proper surveillance and other mechanisms in place to ensure that low for three years, India can achieve it.

In India, there is a history of sustaining low levels of cases -- West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh had reached the elimination levels years ago and have maintained the numbers."

**EXPLAINED** E Needed: 2 yrs of low case count

INDIA HAS missed four deadlines so this is the first but significant step towards eradicating the parasitic disease. India has to keep case count below 1 per 10,000 population in all blocks for two more years. What has helped is spraying, sealing and using ASHA network to track treatment.

week course of Miltefosine. PKDL or Post Kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis, is a well-recognised complication which causes scaly skin patches and nodular lesions in people who have been apparently cured of Kala Azar up to two years of the initial infection.

"The problem with PKDL is that it can be a reservoir for the parasite and can lead to the spread of the infection again. The challenge is to track the Kala Azar patients and detect PKDL cases as many people might not go to health centres on their own for it," said Dr Dhingra. There were 314 cases of PKDL in 2023, according to data.

Dr Dhingra explained that the availability of point-of-care quick diagnostic kits that can be used at the primary health centre or sub-centre level has helped in early diagnosis of cases in recent years.

"The treatment has also improved as compared to what it was a decade ago. Patients only need an IV drip of the medicine, which takes about two hours, for the infection to be cured. Earlier drugs had to be taken over a longer period and there were side effects."

## Child rights body seeks action over 'anti-India' fatwa on website of Darul Uloom

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Thursday sought legal action and FIR against an "anti-India" fatwa published on Darul Uloom Deoband's website.

In a letter addressed to the District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police of Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur, the child rights body has asked the authorities of the district to investigate and register an FIR. The Indian Express has seen the copy of the letter.

Darul Uloom Deoband is an Islamic school or madrasa in India where the Deobandi Islamic movement began. According to the NCPCR's letter, the fatwa issued on "Ghazwa-e-Hind" or "invasion of India" will lead to hatred against the country.

"The Commission has come across another objectionable content on the website of Darul Uloom Deoband madrasa. The fatwa talks about the invasion of India (Ghazwa-e-Hind) and how whoever will be martyred in it is a great martyr. Darul Uloom Deoband, a madrasa is an academic body of Islamic education and affiliating Madrasas across South Asia. Such kind of fatwas is exposing children to hatred against one's own country and eventually causing them unnecessary mental or physical suffering," the letter states.

The fatwa issued on the website is in response to a query posted on the website whether Hadith talks about invasion of India or the Ghazwa-e-Hind, said NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanongo.

"We received a complaint about this particular fatwa and we have taken suo moto cognizance of the issue. We have issued the letter and we have given them three days to take action. If no action is taken, then we will plan our next step accordingly," Kanongo told The Indian Express. The fatwa, the letter said, is "violation of Section 75 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015".

## ● Sandeshkhali: Fresh protests and arson

Earlier this month, local residents went on a rampage seeking the arrest of Sheikh and his associates Uttam Sardar and Shibaprasad Hazra – the residents accused the TMC leaders of sexually harassing women and land grab. While Sardar and Hazra have been arrested, Sheikh remains at large.

On Thursday, a large group of Sandeshkhali residents, including women, ransacked the guard room of a fishery in the Jhupkhali area and set it ablaze around 10 am, police said.

The residents also staged a protest at the spot. They alleged that Sheikh and his supporters had forcibly grabbed their agricultural fields and set up fisheries on the land.

One of the protesters, Jagadish Bhuiyan (28), said, "Sheikh's brother Sirajuddin grabbed my three bighas of land. Then, he leased the land to another man. After that, they set up fisheries on the farm land. They did not allow us to pass through the land and tortured us when we objected."

The residents also claimed that most of the fields grabbed by the TMC leaders belonged to tribal communities.

Kalpana Sardar (42) said, "They (TMC leaders) grabbed my 7.5 bighas at gunpoint and then started fisheries on the land."

The DGP, sources said, sub-

mitted a report to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about the situation in Sandeshkhali after reaching Nabanna Thursday morning.

Meanwhile, BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar protested outside the Sandeshkhali police station Thursday to demand the arrest of absconding Shahjahan Sheikh.

Majumdar and other BJP leaders sat on a dharna in the evening. After around an hour, police picked up the BJP leaders and took them to Dhamakhal on a boat and later let them go.

"All of us, including women, were dragged out and put on a boat. I was arrested and then released on a personal bond," Majumdar told media persons after being released in Dhamakhal.

A team of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) also visited Sandeshkhali in the wake of allegations of sexual harassment of women and land grab.

NCST vice-chairman Ananta Nayak said, "We came here after receiving some specific complaints. We saw the ground reality and met the complainants. As per rule, we also sought a report from the DGP and the Chief Secretary. We have given them three days."

## ● Michael Sandel is guest at Adda today

University Professor will be the guest at Express Adda in New Delhi Friday.

Having delved into some of the most difficult socio-political questions of our times, he has drawn from various disciplines to pen books such as *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good, and What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*. His Harvard course, *Justice*, launched at the university more than 20 years ago, has involved thousands of students and was released as a free online course in 2009. Still viewed by millions around the world, it has a 12-episode television version and a companion book, *Justice: What's the Right Thing To Do?*

At the Adda, Sandel will be in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group.

Sandel has travelled the globe to instruct and debate. He is part of the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Case Against Perfection: Ethics in the*

*Age of Genetic Engineering, Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy, and Liberalism and the Limits of Justice.*

The Express Adda is a series of interactions organised by The Indian Express Group and features those at the centre of change. Previous guests at the Adda include Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari, oncologist and author Siddhartha Mukherjee, Union Minister of Railways, Electronics & IT and Communications Ashwini Vaishnaw, filmmakers Karan Johar and Meghna Gulzar, actors Kareena Kapoor Khan and Vicky Kaushal, policymaker, economist and politician NKSingh and Charles W Eliot University Professor Lawrence H Summers and election strategist Prashant Kishor.

The letter said, "We have issued the letter and we have given them three days to take action. If no action is taken, then we will plan our next step accordingly," Kanongo told The Indian Express.

To register, SMS - IEEXP <space> "IE" <space> "Your name and email ID" to 56161

Confirmation SMS will be your registration

**NUH VIOLENCE**  
Haryana Police slaps UAPA charges on Congress MLA Mamman Khan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NUH, FEBRUARY 22

THE HARYANA Police has slapped charges under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act on Congress MLA Mamman Khan in connection with the Nuh violence last year. According to the Nuh Police's final report, submitted on Tuesday (February 20), the legislator from Ferozpur Jhirka was charged under UAPA sections 3, 10, and 11 (for inciting violence) among others.

According to court documents, the action by the Nuh Police comes nearly six months after six persons were killed in communal clashes that erupted in Nuh and adjoining areas following a yatra by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal on July 31 last year.

The police report said that one of the accused told the investigators that Khan had arranged money (Rs 500 each) to pay the miscreants via local sarpanches ahead of the riots, adding that WhatsApp groups with the legislator's name – IT Cell Mamman Khan or Youth Team Mamman Khan – were also formed for disseminating inflammatory posts.

The report, with the names of Khan and 42 others, also mentioned different social media posts, including the one by an accused said that "Khan's mission was complete as Monu's (Monu Manesar) team was defeated".

After Monu had posted a video stating that he and his team will attend the yatra, Khan took to social media to post "inflammatory content", inciting people to commit violence.

"He conspired, by sharing posts about the murder of Junaid and Nasir, inciting people to team up against Monu Manesar and his group. On July 31, the rioters had initially attacked the yatra with sticks and stones and later fired at police and set many vehicles on fire..." read the report.

FULL REPORT ON  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

**WILL BE BUILT AT A COST OF RS 10,000 CRORE**

# NBCC to develop 13,250 flats in 5 ongoing Amrapali projects

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

OVER 13,000 additional flats will be built in five ongoing Amrapali residential projects in Greater Noida, said NBCC (India) Ltd – appointed by the Supreme Court to complete the construction – on Thursday.

Attorney-General of India R Venkataramani, who is the Supreme Court-appointed court receiver in the matter, said that the Greater Noida Authority (GNA) had agreed to allow NBCC, a public sector construction company, to use the additional floor area ratio (FAR).

This would enable NBCC to construct 13,250 additional units across 80 towers spread over 75 acres, said NBCC chairman-cum-managing director K P Mahadeva Swamy during a press conference conducted at Venkataramani's residence in Delhi. Though the additional flats were part of the plans, the authority had not allowed the usage of the additional FAR till now as Amrapali is yet to clear its dues, said officials.

According to Swamy, NBCC would pay a due of Rs 590 crore for the additional 3.5 FAR. The current FAR – which is the ratio of the building's floor area to the area of the land plot it is situated on – is 2.75.

The cost for the construction of these new flats would be around Rs 10,000 crore, and they are likely to generate Rs 15,000 crore in revenue for the NBCC, said Swamy.

In 2019, the Supreme Court had appointed the public sector company to complete the construction work of around 38,000 housing units pending across 26 projects in the national capital region (NCR).

So far, NBCC has completed 16,000 of the total units, and the remaining 22,000 units would be completed by March 2025, Swamy said.



In 2019, the SC had appointed NBCC, a public sector construction company, to complete the construction work of nearly 38,000 housing units pending across 26 projects in NCR. Express

## NEED INNOVATIVE LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN REAL ESTATE SECTOR: A-G

New Delhi: At a time when homebuyers have been facing difficulties including stalled and delayed projects, there is a need for "innovative" and "path-breaking" legislative solutions to the issues faced by the real estate sector, said Attorney-General of India R Venkataramani on Thursday.

On the stalled Amrapali projects in Noida and Greater Noida, Venkataramani, the Supreme Court-appointed court receiver in the case, said during a press conference on Thursday that time had come for innovative solutions to the real estate issues.

"We live in a globalised world... Every part of our life is full of technology... In the midst of that, if India needs to look for an innovative real estate solution, I think it is time... We still copy the way England frames legislation, I think time has come that India moves away from that, and real estate is a very important area where path-breaking innovative solutions need to be found and can be found," he said.

He said different ways of planning smart cities could be a solution, adding that legislations on "town and country planning have also failed". ENS

flats have been handed over to the buyers.

The additional flats would be constructed in five housing projects – Centurian Park, Golf Homes, Leisure Park, Leisure Valley, and Dream Valley in Greater Noida – said Swamy, adding that the new 2BHK, 3BHK, and 4BHK flats would have a cost of around Rs 6,000 per square feet.

"By diligently completing these projects, NBCC is not just constructing buildings, but fulfilling the dreams of thousands of homebuyers who have invested their hard-earned money and aspirations into these projects. The company is confident that through its dedicated efforts and continued support from stakeholders, it will achieve this ambitious target and deliver justice to the Amrapali homebuyers," Swamy said.

NBCC, meanwhile, said in a statement that the new flats would cover a total of 1.6 crore square feet, and range between four and eight units per floor.

He said that 21,000 of the units would be completed by December 2024, with the remaining 1,000 likely to be done by March 2025.

Swamy said that the revenue

generated from the sale of the additional flats would be used for paying back loans and completing the construction of the 22,000 units pending as of now.

So far, 6,000 of the completed

**GREATER NOIDA WEST**

## 19-year-old jumps to death from 22nd floor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NOIDA, FEBRUARY 22

A 19-YEAR-OLD student died by suicide on Thursday by jumping off the 22nd floor of a high-rise housing complex in Greater Noida West.

The deceased was a resident of Mahagun Mywoods, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Bisrakh police station.

The incident took place around 4.20 pm on Thursday after the student, who was appearing for his Class 12 boards, returned home after his English exam, according to police.

The parents of the deceased told police that their son had returned home today (Thursday) after appearing for his Class 12 English Core examination. Later,

The incident took place when the boy returned home after his Class 12 board exam on Thursday: Police

he went to the terrace on the 22nd floor of the building..., said a police officer.

"The boy had failed in Class 12 the previous year as well. A FSL (forensic science laboratory) team visited the spot, and necessary legal action is underway after taking possession of the body," said the officer.

Hirdesh Katheriya, additional deputy commissioner police (Central Noida), said that the boy's family has not filed any complaint yet.

L-G visits Burari, calls for urgent sanitation drive across NE Delhi

New Delhi: After witnessing the poor condition of unauthorised colonies in Northeast Delhi's Burari, Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena directed the department concerned to fix and clean the roads and sewer line soon.

According to the L-G House, Saxena visited several colonies such as Sam Nagar, Nathu Pura, Burari village, Baba Colony, and Laxmi Vihar among others and found the roads in poor shape, with "open sewer" and "poor" civic infrastructure. "It was apparent that no concrete efforts have been undertaken by the DJB and the I&FC Department to address these issues. Similarly, under the PWD and the MCD, roads that need to be repaired are in poor condition, with the civic agency neglecting the garbage disposal as well," it said. ENS

## Nithari case: CBI to approach SC against acquittal of Pandher, Koli

MAHENDER SINGH  
MANRAL  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE CBI is set to challenge the Allahabad High Court's acquittal of the Nithari killings prime accused Surinder Koli and his former employer Moninder Singh Pandher in the Supreme Court.

The probe agency is learnt to have obtained all related documents from the Ghaziabad court for the purpose.

On October 17, 2023, the Allahabad HC acquitted the duo in the 2006 case, saying the prosecution had failed to prove their guilt. Their acquittal came almost 17 years after human skulls, skeletal remains, and belongings of missing girls were discovered from a drain outside businessman Pandher's D-5 residence in Nithari village bordering Delhi. Koli used to work as a domestic help and lived in his home. The CBI took over the probe from the Uttar Pradesh Police in January 2007.

According to sources, after studying case documents and tak-



Accused Moninder Singh Pandher (L), Surinder Koli

among other charges by a CBI court in Ghaziabad in 2009.

While acquiring Koli and Pandher in a case in which they were sentenced to death, the HC bench of Justices Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Syed Aftab Husain Rizvi had in 2023 pulled up the investigators. "Upon evaluation of the evidence..., on the touchstone of fair trial guaranteed to an accused under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, we hold that prosecution has failed to prove the guilt of the accused... beyond reasonable doubt," it had said.

The investigation otherwise is botched up and basic norms of collecting evidence have been brazenly violated. It appears to us that the investigation opted for the easy course of implicating a poor servant of the house by demonising him, without taking due care of probing more serious aspects of possible involvement of organised activity of organ trading."

While Pandher walked out of a Noida jail last year, Koli remains in prison as he is serving a life sentence in another case related to the killings.

## At Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat Dilli Gharana Invites you to the Biggest Musical Celebration

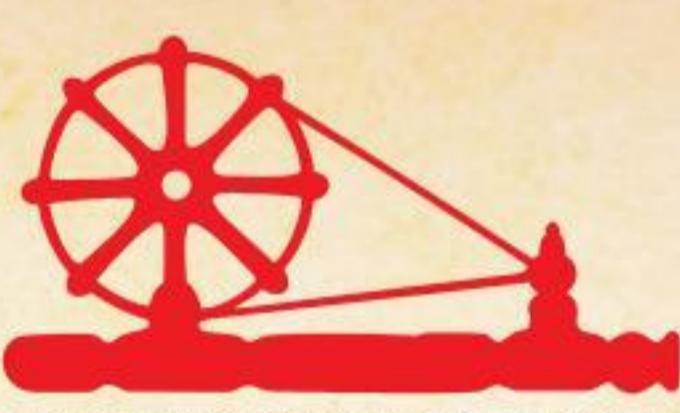


**CHIEF GUEST**  
**SHRI VIJAY GOEL**  
VICE CHAIRMAN - GANDHI DARSHAN

### Dilli Durbar 2024 - Schedule

23-24-25 February 2024, 12 PM Onwards

**Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan's**  
**दिल्ली Durbar**  
CELEBRATING LOVE & SPIRITUALITY 2024



**ENTRY FREE**

POWERED BY :



Timings	Friday 23 February, 2024	Timings	Saturday 24 February, 2024	Timings	Saturday 24 February, 2024	Timings	Sunday 25 February, 2024	Timings	Sunday 25 February, 2024
DAY - 1	Birsia Munda Lawn	DAY - 2	Birsia Munda Lawn	DAY - 2	Satyagrah Lawn	DAY - 3	Birsia Munda Lawn	DAY - 3	Satyagrah Lawn
		12:00 - 12:30 PM	Hazari Hindustani Classical Recital by Kokab Rashid	12:00 - 12:45 PM	Meditation Workshop by Anika Singh	12:00 - 12:30 PM	Hazari Hindustani Classical Recital by Azam Shahid Nizami	12:00 - 12:45 PM	Yoga Workshop by Yogacharya Sandeep
		12:45 - 1:15 PM	Shiv Stuti Dhrupad Performance by Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar	1:00 - 1:45 PM	Mandala Workshop by Surabhi Baranwal	12:45 - 1:30 PM	Preyasi Bharatnatyam Performance by Padmapriya Janakiraman	1:00 - 1:45 PM	Zikr Workshop by Hazrat Riyazuddin Chishty
		1:30 - 2:15 PM	*Bhakti Ras* - Talish Ray in conversation with Padma Shri Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar & Padma Shri Prahlad Singh Tipanya	2:00 - 2:15 PM	Introducing Child Artists Anaya & Shanaya	1:45 - 2:30 PM	*Lady Saints of India* Padmapriya Janakiraman in conversation with Rana Safvi, Rama Sundar Ranganathan	3:00 - 3:45 PM	Sarod Tabla Jugalbandi by Pt. Biswajit Roy Chowdhury & Shri Sabir Hussain
		2:30 - 3:15 PM	Kabir Wani Performance by Padma Shri Prahlad Singh Tipanya	2:15 - 3:00 PM	Tribute to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan - Sufi Performance by Aditi	2:45 - 3:30 PM	*Deha Tattva* - Baul Performance by Padma Shri Parvathy Baul	4:00 - 4:45 PM	Buddhism Chanting Session by Ven Lama Loga & Others
5:00 - 5:30 PM	Shubh Aarambh Sacred Beats by Shri Nathual Solanki & Troupe	3:30 - 4:15 PM	*Women & Spirituality* Yusaf Iqbal Khan in conversation with Rekha Bhardwaj	3:15 - 4:00 PM	Raqs Workshop by Sufi Akshay Dutta & Maana Ahmed (Vocals)	3:45 - 4:30 PM	*Sur Sadhana, Finding God through Music* Sadhu Shravastava in Conversation with Usha Uthup & Shubha Mudgal	5:00 - 5:45 PM	Rajasthani Sufi Performance by Sawai Khan
5:30 - 6:00 PM	Welcome Speeches & Lighting of the Lamp	4:30 - 5:15 PM	Ram Kathak Production by Padma Shri Guru Shovana Narayan & Troupe	4:15 - 4:30 PM	Introducing Child Artists Aalif Iqbal & Bilal Khan	4:45 - 5:30 PM	Alam-e-Ishq - Performance of Sufi Bhakti Repertoire by Padma Shri Shubha Mudgal	6:00 - 6:45 PM	Ardaas - Punjabi Sufi by Rza Heer
6:30 - 7:15 PM	*Ishwar Allah Tero Naam, Love is the Universal Religion* - Shobha Rana in conversation with Acharya Prashant	5:30 - 6:15 PM	Faqeer Ki Dilli - A Dastangoi Production by Danish Hilal Khan, Syed Muiz Chishty & Sufi Akshay Dutta	4:30 - 5:15 PM	Basant - Hindustani Classical Recital by Vivek Prajapati (Voice)	5:45 - 6:30 PM	*The Practical Spiritualist* - Azhar Iqbal in Conversation with Hans Raj Hans	7:00 - 7:45 PM	*The Divine Light* Book Launch & Discussion with author Syed Adil Chishty
7:30 - 8:15 PM	Sufi Strings Violin Performance by Aghash Hussain & Troupe	6:30 - 7:15 PM	*Comedy as Service* Anika Singh in Conversation with RJ Naved	5:30 - 6:15 PM	Forms of Durga - Dhrupad Performance by Prashant Nishant	6:45 - 7:30 PM	Bhajans with a Difference - Performance by Padma Bhushan Usha Uthup		
8:30 - 9:15 PM	Naghma-e-Khusro Sufi Performance by Yusaf Iqbal Khan	7:30 - 8:15 PM	*The Last Mughal, An Evening of Music & Poetry* - Performance by Vidya Shah & William Dalrymple	6:45 - 7:30 PM	*Sunflowers* Book Launch & Discussion with author Sujata Parashar	7:45 - 8:30 PM	*The Evergreen Rumi* Khurafati Nitin in Conversation with Imtiaz Ali		
		8:30 - 8:45 PM	Introducing Haider Ali Sabri (Sufi)			8:45 - 9:30 PM	Call to God - Qawwali Performance by Rais Anis Sabri		
		8:45 - 9:30 PM	M.A.D (Music & Donate) Rockstar - Performance by Baabarr Mudacer						





DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

## THE FLIP SIDE

RASHTRIYA LOK Dal chief Jayant Chaudhary has crossed over to the ruling NDA, but not without ambiguity. His X handle shows the contrast – the pinned post at the top is “Dil Jeet Liya”, which he wrote after the Union government announced Bharat Ratna for his grandfather Chaudhary Charan Singh, while his latest post says he can “understand the anger” of Bengal-cadre IPS officer Jaspreet Singh, who the Bengal police alleged, was called “Khalistani” by BJP protesters at Sandeshkhali. Though BJP leaders have denied the allegations levelled by the Bengal police, they have avoided making any comment on Jayant’s post.

## CACTUS CALLING

UNION MINISTER Giriraj Singh, who is known for his controversial remarks, is promoting two things these days – jhatka meat and cactus. The minister is so enthusiastic about cactus promotion that he recently asked his ministry officials to explore the possibility of cactus cultivation in India. On Wednesday, when Nishant Pitti, CEO & Co-founder of EaseMyTrip, came to meet Singh at his Krishibhawan office, the minister gifted him a jacket made of cactus. Singh said cactus would emerge as an energy crop and a vegan leather option for clothes in the future.

## DHARNA & BAITHAK

AMID THE ‘Dilli Chalo’ march by farmers of Punjab, the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh – the farmers’ wing of the RSS – will host 1,500 farmer representatives from across the country beginning Friday at Kishangarh in Rajasthan. The BKS is holding its annual Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha that will see the participation of all its top leaders apart from the farmer representatives. The meeting will discuss issues related to farmers, including MSP, said sources. On Thursday, the BKS held its Akhil Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal Baithak at the same venue to discuss “the current situation in the country”.

## ₹19k-cr deal cleared for 200 BrahMos missiles for Navy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

IN A significant move, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has accorded approval for procurement of more than 200 BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and associated equipment for the Indian Navy at a cost of around ₹19,000 crore, people familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

The missiles will largely be deployed on various warships to enhance overall combat capabilities of the Navy, they said.

The IAF has already integrated the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile on some Sukhoi fighter jets. India has been focusing on bolstering its overall combat capabilities in the last few years.

Last week, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved acquisition projects worth ₹84,560 crore that included procurement of mid-air refuellers, heavy weight-torpedoes, air defence radars and new generation anti-tank mines.

The DAC also accorded initial approval for procurement of medium range maritime reconnaissance and multi-mission aircraft for strengthening the surveillance capabilities of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard.

In January 2022, India sealed

Kerala BJP playlist gets shuffled: Plays promo song on ‘Centre’s graft’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
TIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEBRUARY 22

THE KERALA BJP, which is conducting a statewide pre-election padayatra highlighting the “guarantees” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, landed in an embarrassing situation when a promotional song for the event referred to the Centre’s “corrupt regime”.

The song in Malayalam, which surfaced on social media Wednesday, urged “people to marshal to demolish the Union government, which is famous for corruption”. After the gaffe became vi-

# Cong guilty of creating tussle between vikas, virasat: PM in Gujarat

PARMAL DABHI  
TARABH (MEHSANA), FEBRUARY 22

TARGETING THE Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that in post-Independence India, if anyone was “guilty of creating a tussle and enmity between vikas (development) and virasat (heritage), it was the Congress”.

Speaking at the consecration festival of a temple revered by the cattle-rearing community of Rabaris on Thursday at Tarabah village in Mehsana – during his day-long-tour of Gujarat – Modi said that the Congress continues to live with negativity and is not ready to leave the path of enmity even when a grand Ram Temple has been built in Ayodhya and the entire country is happy about it.

Addressing a public function after performing puja at Valinath Mahadev temple, Modi added that a country can progress only by protecting its heritage. Valinath Dham is a major religious centre of Rabari (Maldhari) community in Gujarat. It has re-

Day after pact, Akhilesh agrees to join Rahul yatra in Agra on Sunday

MAULSHREE SETH  
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 22

SAMAJWADI PARTY president Akhilesh Yadav agreed to join Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Agra on Sunday. This comes a day after the two parties announced their seat-sharing pact for the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh as part of the INDIA bloc.

The Congress will contest 17 out of the 80 parliamentary seats in the state.

Congress leaders led by state president Ajay Rai and veteran leader PL Punia, in-charge of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in UP, on Thursday visited the SP office in the state capital to hand an invite by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge to Akhilesh Yadav to join the yatra and address a public meet in Agra.

SP national secretary Rajendra Chaudhury said: “I received the letter as Akhilesh Yadav is not in Lucknow. He asked me to inform the Congress leaders that he will join the yatra in Agra at 2 pm on February 25.”

Congress leaders said Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who could not participate in the yatra in eastern UP, will join its second phase from Saturday in Moradabad.

The proposal approved by the CCS entails acquisition of a mix of BrahMos missiles having a range of around 290 km and the latest extended range variant of the weapon with a range of around 450 km.

BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd, an India-Russian joint venture, produces the supersonic cruise missiles that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or land platforms.

BrahMos missile flies at a speed of 2.8 Mach or almost three times the speed of sound.

The formal contract for acquisition of the missiles is expected to be sealed in the next few months. India is also exporting the BrahMos missiles.

In January 2022, India sealed



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Valinath Mahadev temple in Tarabah on Thursday. ANI

cently built a new temple of Valinath Mahadev, Lord Dattatreya and Goddess Hinglaj.

At Mehsana, Modi inaugurated projects worth ₹13,000 crore, including the Gujarat Fibre Grid Network across 35,264 km covering 8,030 gram panchayats.

“In the last two decades, along with development, we have also worked for the grandeur of heritage sites in Gujarat,” Modi said.

He said: “Unfortunately, in Independent India, a tussle and enmity was created between

vikas (development) and virasat (heritage) for a long period. If there is anyone guilty of doing so, it is Congress, which ruled the country for decades.”

“These are the same people, who made a pious place like Somnath a reason of controversy... Today, when a grand temple has been built at Ram Janmabhoomi and entire country is happy with it, people living with negativity are not leaving the path of enmity. A country can progress only while protecting its heritage,” he said.

“Our candidates will contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls on

## Kharge gets Z-plus cover in poll run-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

AHEAD OF the Lok Sabha elections, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has been granted Z-plus security across the country by the Union home ministry, official sources said Thursday.

The decision was taken by the Home Ministry earlier this month based on the threat perception of Kharge, they said.

Commandos of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will provide the Z-plus security to Kharge across India basis, the sources said. As president of the principal opposition party, Kharge is expected to tour across the country extensively in the run-up to the general elections as well as during the polls and the decision to enhance his security cover was taken keeping in view this fact, the sources said.

Kharge will now be covered by a security blanket of about 30

CRPF commandos round the clock in three shifts. This cover also includes a bulletproof vehicle, pilot and escort.

The Z-plus is the highest category security provided to a person of high threat perception in India. There are four categories of VIP security Z plus, Z, Y and X – depending on the threat perception analysis by the Intelligence Bureau.

The prime minister is provided the highest security cover by the Special Protection Group.

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh, former Congress presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi are covered under the Z-plus security with CRPF commandos.

After a major security review by the Modi government in 2019, 1,300 commandos were freed as the Centre removed or scaled down the security cover of as many as 350 politicians and former and present lawmakers.

**IRCON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED**  
NAVARTINA COMPANY  
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
Website: www.ircon.org, CIN - L45203DL1976G0008171  
e-Procurement Notice (National Competitive Bidding)  
e-Tender No.: IRCON/ELECTC/5021/RE/Pending Works Dated 22.02.2024  
e-Tenders are invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the following work:  
Name of Work : Pending Railway Electrification works in the Banihal-Baramulla section of the RE USBRL Project in Jammu & Kashmir.  
Estimated cost of the work ₹ 1,41,43,497.54  
Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission 14.03.2024 upto 15.00 hrs.  
For further details, visit website <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. Addl. General Manager/Electrical, Holiday Home, Behind Bakshi Stadium, Tuli Baagh, Srinagar-190008

## Sharmila detained over protest, calls brother Jagan dictatorial

ENS & PTI  
HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 22

ANDHRA PRADESH Congress Committee (APCC) president YS Sharmila was Thursday detained by police in Vijayawada while trying to lead a protest march to the Secretariat in Guntur district. She was later released.

As women constables dragged her into a police vehicle, Sharmila suffered slight bruises on her hands. She started the ‘Chalo Secretariat’ protest march Thursday morning after spending the previous night at the Congress office in Vijayawada over fears of being placed on house arrest. The march was in support of unemployed youth.

Guntur SP Tushar Dudi said Sharmila was briefly detained. “Sharmila and other Congress



YS Sharmila being detained in Vijayawada, Thursday. PTI

leaders were detained for about three hours and let off. Police detained us near Undavalli at the entrance of the riverside road leading to the Secretariat, APCC vice-president K Sivaji said.

“The CM and his government feel threatened by me, though I just want to go to the Secretariat and submit a representation over rising unemployment among

youth. It is highly condemnable how a woman political leader is being treated by this government. I am Rajashkara Reddy’s daughter, and I will continue to fight,” Sharmila said earlier outside the Mangalagiri Police Station where she had been taken.

Sharmila, the daughter of the late YS Rajashkara Reddy and sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, had been appointed APCC president on January 16. She has been targeting the ruling YSRCP government and CM Reddy, alleging that there was rising unemployment, financial crisis, and lawlessness in the state under the YSRCP rule.

“Arrests are being made if we stand on the side of the unemployed. You are the dictator who wants to stop us. Your actions are proof of this,” Sharmila said, targeting her brother.

## Sharad-led NCP gets poll symbol

PRESS TRUST INDIA  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 22



arrival of important persons.

“The Tutari in the form of great valour of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had once deafened the emperor of Delhi. It is a great honour for our party to get Tutari (man blowing Turba) as our symbol for upcoming elections. Our Tutari is now ready to shake Delhi’s throne under the leadership of Sharadchandra Pawar,” the party said in a post on social media site X.

this symbol,” he told PTI.

The turba, also called tutari in Marathi, is sounded to signal the

ZONAL OFFICE, PATNA ZONE			
1st Floor, Chanakya Place, R-Block, Patna-800001			
Tel.: 0612-2506932, Fax: 0612-2223178, E-mail: patna.zon@bankofindia.co.in			
To, Uday Shankar Prasad S/O Late Sarju Prasad At Satyadeo Oil Mill, Buxar-802101 Sir,			
NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002			
At the request made by you, the Bank has granted to you various credit facilities aggregating to an amount of Rs. 9,00,000/- (Nine Lakh). We give hereunder details of various credit facilities granted by us and the outstanding dues thereunder as on the date of this notice:-			
1. The aforesaid credit facilities granted by the Bank are secured by the following assets/securities (particulars of properties/assets charged to Bank):- (a) Hypothecation of four wheeler Vehicle of KIA Seltos G1 5 6MT HTK PLUS 1.5 LP Registration No. BR01 FD8504, Engine No. G4FLMV156529, Chasis No. MZBEP812LMN233117	2. The aforesaid credit facilities granted by the Bank are secured by the following assets/securities (particulars of properties/assets charged to Bank):- (a) Hypothecation of four wheeler Vehicle of KIA Seltos G1 5 6MT HTK PLUS 1.5 LP Registration No. BR01 FD8504, Engine No. G4FLMV156529, Chasis No. MZBEP812LMN233117	Sanction Limit Rs. 11,55,000/-	Present Outstanding Rs. 8,66,796/-
3. As you have defaulted in repayment of your dues to the Bank under the said credit facilities, we have classified your account as Non-Performing Asset with effect from 07-05-2023 in accordance with the directions/guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India.			
4. For the reasons stated above, we hereby give you notice under Section 13(2) of the above noted Act and call upon you to discharge in full your liabilities by paying to the Bank Sum of Rs. 8,31,454/- + 35,241/- (contractual dues up to the date of notice) with further interest thereon @ 10.20% p.a. compounded with monthly rests, and all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank, till repayment by you within a period of 60 days from the date of this notice, failing which please note that we will entirely at your risks as to costs and consequences exercise the powers vested with the Bank under Section 13 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, against the secured assets mentioned above.			
5. While we call upon you to discharge your liability as above by payment of the entire dues to the Bank together with applicable interest, all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank till repayment and redeem the secured assets, within the period mentioned above, please take important note that as per section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, the right of redemption of secured assets will be available to you only till the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets.			
6. The amounts realized from exercising the powers mentioned above, will firstly be applied in payment of all costs, charges and expenses which are incurred by us and/or any expenses incidental thereto, and secondly in discharge of the Bank's dues as mentioned above with contractual interest from the date of this notice till the date of actual realization and the residue of the money, if any, after the Bank's entire dues (including under any of your other dues to the Bank whether as borrower or guarantor) are fully recovered, shall be paid to you.			
7. If the said dues are not fully recovered from the proceeds realized in the course of exercise of the said powers against the secured assets, we reserve our right to proceed against you and your other assets including by filing legal/recovery actions before Debts Recovery Tribunal/Courts, for recovery of the balance amount due along with all costs etc. incidental thereto from you.			
8. Please take note that as per Sub-section (13) of the aforesaid Act, after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise.			
9. The undersigned is a duly authorized officer of the Bank to issue this notice and exercise powers under Section 13 of aforesaid Act.			
10. Needless to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other right or remedy available to the Bank.			
Date: 22.02.2024 Place: Buxar			
Authorized Officer Bank of India			



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses Yatra Karyakarta Sammelan in Odisha's Mayurbhanj, Thursday.

**Modi will return as PM third time, says Rajnath**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BARIPADA (ODISHA), FEB 22

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Thursday expressed confidence that the NDA will secure over 400 seats in Lok Sabha elections.

He articulated his desire to see Narendra Modi elected as PM for a fourth consecutive term while addressing a workers' meeting encompassing four Lok Sabha constituencies Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, and Bhadrak.

"I can say with confidence that Modi will return as prime minister for the third time. I sincerely hope that with the blessings of Lord Jagannath, Modi will return as PM for the fourth time," he said.

He highlighted Modi's efforts in enhancing India's global standing, noting the increased recognition the country receives on the international stage.

In his address, Singh wooed tribal voters by acknowledging the tribal-dominated nature of Mayurbhanj and highlighting the fact that it is the home of President Droupadi Murmu.

He criticised Congress for failing to support her during the presidential election. He also mentioned the inauguration of the Ram Temple, noting that the Opposition had often criticised BJP over this issue but was silenced when Modi inaugurated the temple on January 22.



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, Thursday. PTI

## EAM: Took Kashmir issue to UN, others gave it accession colour

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

INDIA PUT ITS trust in multilateralism and took the Kashmir "aggression issue" to the United Nations but others made it a matter of "accession" for geopolitical reasons, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday.

He made the remarks while elaborating on need for having coexistence between national interests and multilateralism at a session of the Raisina Dialogue.

"That was always the case. Look at our own example. Very literally in our first year of Independence, we put our trust in multilateralism and took the Kashmir aggression issue to UN and others made it into an accession issue and they did it for geopolitical reasons," Jaishankar said.

He was asked whether values are looking less important in the current geopolitical landscape as countries compromise on principles but never on interests.

"If you say people are playing multilateralism, they always did. We have grown up. It is not that we should be against multilateralism," he said.

Responding to a question on reform of UN, Jaishankar, citing globalisation, said "the fact is the world trading rules have been gamed".

"If you look at the last 5 years, all big issues, in a way, we

have not been able to find a multilateral solution. So, the results or lack of results demonstrates the case for reform," he said.

"But I think there is a larger global conversation and global rebalancing as well which is bigger than the UN, which is really (about) whose rules, how does it work because what has also happened in many cases is the rules have been gamed," he said.

"We speak about globalisation

for example. The fact is world trading rules have been gamed. And we have a lot of our challenges today that also emanate from how countries have used that for their benefit at the expense of the international system," he said.

He suggested that the "short-sighted" approach of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council is holding back forward movement in the long-pending reform of the global body.

He said the "biggest" opponent for reform of UNSC is not a Western country, in remarks seen as an oblique reference to China.

He said sentiments for changes in UN system is "very strong, but the challenge has been to get the concurrence for it from certain quarters". "If you are going to ask 5 countries saying would you mind changing the rules that you would have less power, guess what the answer is going to be," he said. "If they are wise, the answer would be something else. If they are short-sighted, the answer is what it is today," he said.

## Post: Chinese firm hacked Indian immigration data

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

INDIA IS one of the targets of China's intelligence and cyber-surveillance and Beijing's hackers appeared to have successfully breached 95.2 gigabytes of immigration data from the Indian government, an investigation by The Washington Post has revealed.

The Post, in a report published Thursday, said that a trove of leaked documents from a "Chinese state-linked hacking group shows that Beijing's intelligence and military groups are carrying out large-scale, systematic cyber intrusions against foreign governments, companies and infrastructure — exploiting what the hackers claim are vulnerabilities in software systems from companies including Microsoft, Apple and Google".

The cache — containing more than 570 files, images and chat logs — offers an unprecedented look inside the operations of one of the firms that Chinese government agencies hire for on-demand, mass data-collecting operations," it said.

It said the files — posted to GitHub last week and deemed credible by cybersecurity experts, although the source remains unknown — detail contracts to extract foreign data over eight years and describe targets within at least 20 foreign govern-

ments and territories including India, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Taiwan and Malaysia.

The documents come from iSpoon, also known as Auxun, a Chinese firm headquartered in Shanghai that sells third-party services to Chinese government bureaus, security groups and state-owned enterprises.

"One spreadsheet listed 80 overseas targets that iSpoon hackers appeared to have successfully breached. The haul included 95.2 gigabytes of immigration data from India and a 3 terabyte collection of call logs from South Korea's LG U Plus telecom provider," the Post reported.

The group also targeted other telecommunications firms in Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal and Taiwan.

U.S. intelligence officials see China as the greatest long-term threat to American security and have raised alarm about its targeted hacking campaigns.

New Delhi has also taken coercive action, especially since the Galwan incident in June 2020, against Chinese mobile applications, citing possible surveillance by Beijing.

In September 2020, The Indian Express had published a series which revealed how a Shenzhen-based information technology firm, Zhenhua Data, the Indian Express had revealed.

with links to the Chinese government and military, is monitoring over 2.5 million individuals across the world, including at least 10,000 Indians. The investigation has elicited a range of responses.

The Government of India had decided to set up an "expert committee" under the National Cyber Security Coordinator in the National Security Council Secretariat following a three-part investigative series by The Indian Express.

From the accused in the AgustaWestland bribery case to a ring of juveniles who stole mobile phones, hundreds accused of financial crime, corruption, terror, organised crime, smuggling of narcotics, gold and wildlife form a significant chunk, as many as 6,000, of the Indian individuals monitored by Zhenhua Data, the investigation by The Indian Express had revealed.

Among the high-profile entries logged in Zhenhua's Overseas Key Individual DataBase (OKIDB) are income-tax evasion cases against 19 companies founded by friends or relatives of former Satyam Group chairman Ramalinga Raju; the fodder scam corruption scandal where officials and suppliers conspired to fraudulently drain the Jharkhand treasury; and the Vyapam scam involving the Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board.

## Fund pool Bill: BJP says Karnataka govt 'stealing' from temple collection boxes

SANTANU CHOWDHURY

JU student accuses professor of sexual harassment, he denies charge

KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 22

A FIRST-YEAR Jadavpur University PG student accused a professor of "mental and sexual harassment". Denying the charges, the professor asked the university authorities to conduct an investigation.

INTENSIFYING ITS attack against CM Siddaramaiah-led Karnataka government over a Bill, passed in the Assembly Wednesday, proposing a common fund pool for various amenities for temples and staff welfare, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka accused the CM of "stealing from collection boxes of temples", and alleged that the government was looking to collect "10% commission from the income of temples".

Slamming the move Wednesday evening, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra had posted on X that the Congress government is "turning its evil eye" to the incomes of "Hindu temples to fill its coffers". "Crores of devotees are questioning why the government is eyeing the incomes of Hindu temples when it is not interested in the revenue of other religions," he said.

In a fresh salvo, he told mediapersons rather than taking money from temples, "the government should keep a collection box in front of Vidhana Soudha with a sign saying 'we cannot run the government and have a financial problem'". Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said, "... Now the case they're making to fund their corrupt

politics is that the Hindu devotees in Karnataka must give money to the Karnataka Congress ATM machine..."

Calling the BJP allegations baseless, Siddaramaiah said there "has always been a mandate to create a common pool since 1997... It is administered solely for religious purposes connected with the Hindu religion. The fund has been used only for religious purposes of Hindu institutions since the Act came into force, and it will continue to be used for the same purposes".

Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy, introducing the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments (Amendment) Bill, said temples with revenue above ₹1 crore have to contribute 10% to the common fund pool and 5% for those with revenue in the range of ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore. Temples with revenue below ₹10 lakh do not have to contribute, Reddy said.

There are around 35,000 temples under the Muzrai Department. Of them, 205 are Group A (revenue above ₹25 lakh), 193 are Group B (between ₹5 lakh and ₹25 lakh) and around 34,000 are Group C (below ₹5 lakh). Till date, Group A temples contributed 10% of the revenue generated from collection boxes to a central fund and Group B 5%. Group C temples did not contribute.

## Ramnath Goenka bust among 17 unveiled in Mumbai garden as city honours its illustrious

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 22

THE BUSTS of 17 eminent personalities who contributed to the development of Mumbai, including that of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, V D Savarkar, Lata Mangeshkar and Ramnath Goenka, founder of The Indian Express Group, were unveiled at Kilachand Garden in Girgaon on Thursday. From left: Ramnath Goenka, founder of The Indian Express Group, Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, and social reformer Savitribai Phule. Sankhadeep Banerjee



At the 'Heroes of Mumbai' event, busts of 17 distinguished citizens were unveiled at Kilachand Garden in Girgaon by BJP national president J P Nadda on Thursday. From left: Ramnath Goenka, founder of The Indian Express Group, Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, and social reformer Savitribai Phule. Sankhadeep Banerjee

of inspiration for Mumbai, other icons honoured were: Dadasaheb Phalke, Savitribai Phule, Kusumagraj, Homi

Bhabha, JRD Tata, Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Annabhai Sathe, Balasaheb Thackeray, Dhirubhai Ambani, Seth Moti Shah, Babu Genu, Ashok Kumar Jain and Sachin Tendulkar. It also includes a representative bust of the Koli community. A statue of

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was also unveiled.

Initiated by Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha, the aim of "Heroes of Mumbai Program" is to honour individuals who contributed to the city in various fields such as economic prosperity, safety and cultural enrichment.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who was present at the event, emphasised on the park's potential to serve as a ray of hope and inspiration for generations to come.

The event was also attended by Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar, state BJP state president Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Cabinet Minister Chandrakant Patil, Mumbai City guardian minister Deepak Kesarkar, BJP Mumbai president Ashish Shelar, The Indian Express Group Executive Director Anant Goenka and Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal among others.

The event was also attended by Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar, state BJP state president Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Cabinet Minister Chandrakant Patil, Mumbai City guardian minister Deepak Kesarkar, BJP Mumbai president Ashish Shelar, The Indian Express Group Executive Director Anant Goenka and Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal among others.

She forwarded a copy of the mail to JADAVPUR Police Station, UGC Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar and West Bengal Commission for Women Chairperson Leena Gangopadhyay.

On February 21, she alleged

the invigilator told her she had

been summoned by the profes-

sor to his chamber, where she

was given the indecent proposal.

The professor said: "This is

completely a baseless allegation.

I was not on invigilation duty

that day (February 21)...."

dant in a hospital. "I want her to stay busy, but she is mentally broken. It's a daily battle to push her to go to work everyday. I cry in the bathroom, sometimes in the hostel corridor where the 17-year-old was allegedly abused.

"I have lost everything, my world is shattered... For everyone else, my son's death was a topic of discussion for a few months, after which they have all forgotten about him. I am now left all alone fighting this battle. My wife is on anti-depres-

sant pills. My younger son some-

how managed to complete his

exams this month. But now I

don't want him to score great

marks and see big dreams. I have

paid a price for all that already.

My son was a science student

whose love for Bengali literature

brought him to Jadavpur. But

then it all ended," he says.

A few kilometres from the tea

shack where the father sat

hunched, at Jadavpur University,

the uproar triggered by the 17-

year-old's death is now largely subdued. While CCTV cameras were installed at nine spots on the campus, there is still none in the hostel corridor where the 17-year-old was allegedly abused.

**VC: Will be wrong to say ragging has stopped**

In his office in Jadavpur University, Interim Vice Chancellor Dr Bhubaneswar Kumar admits that he continues to receive complaints of ragging from students.

"As per the UGC's guidelines, after the incident, we even moved the fresher's to a separate building, away from the seniors. But ragging happens in many forms – from something as serious as what happened in this case to seemingly innocuous ones, like a senior asking a junior to fetch something. In fact, you need separate buildings, year-wise, to tackle ragging and for that, you need a permanent VC, funds etc. I still receive complaints from junior students... If

I say ragging has completely stopped in the university, it would be wrong," said The Indian Express.

Back in the courtroom, the father believes his son died to fulfil a larger purpose. His phone rings, the ring tone is a shloka from the Bhagavad Gita – Yada yada hi dharmasya guna bhavata/ Abhyudayanam dharmasya tadatmanam srijamayam.

"This verse gives me the power to fight this battle. It means, whenever evil flourishes, God takes the human form to destroy it. This happens in every yuga... My son's death was for a purpose – it will end the ragging culture in the institute. I will keep coming back to the courts to make sure that the accused get the highest level of punishment, not only for killing my son but for killing the dreams of so many other boys like him who move out of their homes to study."

CLUTCHING A cellphone, its shattered screen lighting up occasionally to reveal his son's photograph, and a bag of case documents, the 56-year-old walks into the courtroom of the Calcutta High Court. He doesn't sit on any of the benches, instead shuffles along to the far end, within earshot of the judges, craning his neck to listen every time the Bench passes on a decision to the lawyers.

Six months after his 17-year-old son died by suicide at Jadavpur University after being allegedly ragged by seniors, he is a broken father, but is determined not to give up. "I can't sleep properly, eat properly, my life is surrounded by lawyers, courts and papers. But I am not tired. I will keep coming back until I get justice," he says, his hands clasped and his eyes clouded

with tears.

**What was the Jadavpur ragging case?**

On the night of August 9, 2023, the 17-year-old fell to his death from a balcony of one of the hostel buildings in Jadavpur University. A police investigation revealed that minutes earlier, the boy was "disrobed, bullied and abused with homosexual slurs".

According to the police investigation, around 9 pm on August 9, the boy was summoned from his room to another room on a floor of the hostel building by his seniors, who then asked him to walk down the corridor.

While he was walking, he was allegedly disrobed. In a bid to escape, the boy had run from one room to the other and tried to lock himself in one of these, but couldn't as his seniors chased him. This continued until 11 pm.

According to the investigators, the boy fell from a balcony



**Hopeful issues will be resolved before procurement season: Food secy**

HARIKISHAN SHARMA & DIVYA A  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

STRESSING ON "constant" communication to bridge "communication gap", Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said Thursday that the government is willing to hold further talks with the protesting farmer unions to explain "what's actually intended".

Chopra said, "It's communication, it's dialogue which is going on, and the government has made an offer which was to address the concerns raised by the unions themselves as the water table is going down and soil quality is deteriorating. So, to address those concerns of the farmer unions, the government has given this proposal which we all are aware of."

Asked about the possible impact of protests on wheat procurement in Punjab during the ensuing Rabi marketing season, Chopra said, "I am hopeful that the issues will be resolved much in advance of the procurement season."

Asked about the wheat procurement target for the upcoming RMS 2024-25, Chopra said, "We will fix the target on February 20 when we are meeting the food secretaries (of states)." He added that the government is talking to states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar to increase wheat procurement.

"We have been planning now for the past three to four months, we are talking to states, particularly those which have a huge potential for wheat procurement but somehow it's not happening – like UP, Rajasthan, Bihar – where we've been talking to the farmers also, talking to the state governments and ensuring a proper action plan for these 3 states," Chopra said.



Commuters walk on as protesting farmers block traffic near Ladowal toll plaza in Ludhiana on Thursday. Gurmeet Singh

## As anger grows over youth's death, key player of '20-21 farm protest back in fray

KANCHAN VASDEV & RAKHI JAGGA  
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 22

### ACTION UNDER NSA

**Chandigarh:** Haryana Police in Ambala district late Thursday initiated action against farmer leaders, part of ongoing protests at state's border with Punjab, under the provisions of National Security Act (NSA), 1980. In an official statement shared on X, the Ambala police said it has started the process to detain the farmer leaders "to maintain law and order."

to declare Singh a "martyr", and appealed to people to hoist black flags atop their homes, shops and vehicles as a mark of protest against his "murder".

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which had led the 2020-21 farm agitation on the Delhi border, also demanded that an FIR under murder charges be lodged against Haryana government officials

and the state Home Minister.

Avik Saha, a member of SKM's national coordination committee, sought a compensation of Rs 1 crore for Singh's family, a judicial inquiry into his death, and for Haryana to beat the cost for tractors damaged during the agitation.

A meeting convened by the SKM on Thursday was attended by more than 100 farm union leaders from across the country, including 37 from Punjab. A decision was made to declare a nationwide black day on February 23 in collaboration with the central trade unions, whose members will wear black badges to work.

Rakesh Tikait, leader of Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), announced a tractor march on highways leading to Delhi on February 26, and a one-day event at the Ramila ground in Delhi on March 14. "Let us see if the government stops us," he said.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar association meanwhile decided to abstain from work on Friday to "condemn the tragic incident in which a young farmer tragically lost his life due to police excesses".

The state government has assigned ADGP Intelligence Jaskaran Singh to hold meetings with the agitating farmers' leaders.

Gurdeep Singh Chahal, spokesperson of BKU (Sidhpur), said, "We are sticking to our stand. The meetings are on since 11 am. Had Sidhu Moosewala's body not been cremated without getting justice for him, his parents would not have needed to run around. We have learnt from that. We will get our demands fulfilled."

A Punjab government official said: "The state government's view is sympathetic... His family will be given financial help. But a decision will not be taken under pressure. I can say there is a soft corner... That is why Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann addressed the state via video after the death."

The rule necessitating that

This comes after the Supreme Court last year allowed a woman with Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome – a rare congenital disorder that affects the reproductive system and can cause infertility – to undergo surrogacy with a donor egg.

The woman's counsel argued that her client could not get married earlier in her life and now wants to have a child through surrogacy because of her age, it is medically not advisable to use her own eggs.

"Sperm donations are hardly needed these days, with techniques where the sperm can directly be taken from the testicles and injected directly into the

egg," she said.

The rule change, however, is not applicable for widowed or divorced women. It reads: "Single woman (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self eggs and donor sperms to avail surrogacy procedure."

A 44-year-old unmarried woman wanting to undergo surrogacy challenged not only the provisions of the Surrogacy Regulation Act that do not allow the procedure for single women, but also the fact that "single women" as per the Act also need to use their own eggs.

The woman's counsel argued that her client could not get married earlier in her life and now wants to have a child through surrogacy because of her age, it is medically not advisable to use her own eggs.

"There are many single women who want to have children and it should be allowed."

Dr Malpani said: "There are

## CAG flags faults in rollout of PM Awas Yojana in MP

ANAND MOHAN J  
Bhopal, February 22

THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA HAS FLAGGED IRREGULARITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA – GRAMIN (PMAY-G) IN MADHYA PRADESH – WITH ALLEGATIONS RANGING FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT REHANDLING RS 15 CRORE IN ASSISTANCE TO OVER 1,500 INELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES TO MORE THAN 8,000 BENEFICIARIES.

"WE FURTHER NOTICED THAT CEO, JP (JANPAD PARISHAD) RELEASED PMAY-G ASSISTANCE OF RS 15.66 CRORE TO 1,555 OUT OF 2,037 INELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES," THE REPORT STATES.

THE REPORT FLAGGED THAT HOUSES WERE "SANCTIONED TWICE TO THE SAME BENEFICIARY IN 64 CASES. IN 98 CASES, ONE HOUSE WAS SANCTIONED TO THE ACTUAL BENEFICIARY AND ANOTHER TO HIS/HER FAMILY MEMBERS WHO WERE NOT IDENTIFIED FOR THE SCHEM

EES ARE TO BE GIVEN PRIORITY IN THE BENEFICIARY LIST, BUT THE CAG, WHICH AUDITED 60 GRAM PANCHAYATS, NOTICED THAT "OUT OF TOTAL 18,935 SANCTIONED CASES, 8,226 BENEFICIARIES SUPERSEDED THE MORE DEPRIVED BENEFICIARIES IN THE PRIORITY LIST AND WERE SANCTIONED IN HOUSE EARLIER THAN THEM".

THE CAG REPORT FLAGGED DELAYS IN DISBURSING INSTALMENTS TO BENEFICIARIES WHICH LED TO A DELAY IN CONSTRUCTING THE HOMES. THE AMOUNT IS USUALLY SENT TO THE BENEFICIARY IN FOUR INSTALMENTS BASED ON THE STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION.

THE CAG REPORT NOTED THAT "THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF ASSISTANCE AMOUNT WAS RELEASED WITH A DELAY RANGING BETWEEN ONE DAY AND FOUR YEARS TO 53 PER CENT (13,18,233) BENEFICIARIES". IT NOTED THAT THE FUNDS WERE NOT RELEASED TO 14 PER CENT (3,48,319) BENEFICIARIES, WHILE ONLY 33 PER CENT (8,38,324) BENEFICIARIES WERE PROVIDED THE FUNDS ON TIME.

THE CAG ALSO FLAGGED THAT A "PMAY-G HOUSE WAS SANCTIONED TO MINORS IN 90 CASES AND BENEFIT WAS PROVIDED TO THEIR RELATIVES", WHOSE NAMES WERE NOT IN THE LIST.

## I am a helpless farmer: UP man after immolation bid

DHEERAJ MISHRA  
MUZAFFARNAGAR, FEB 22

KAUN APNA shareer jalana chahta hai? Thodi si ungli jal jaaye thor insaan dard se karah uthata hai. Ye sabh accha nahi lagta hai, lekin hum maajboor hain, kyuki hum kisan hain (Who wants to set fire to his own body? Even a minor burn on the finger is so painful. It does not look good, but I am so helpless, because I am a farmer)," said 61-year-old farmer Brijpal Singh, a

day after he tried to immolate himself in Muzaffarnagar during a daylong protest called by the Bhartiya Kisan Union.

A teary-eyed Singh, while covering his face to avoid the sun on his burn injuries, said he took the extreme step because of the bank loan burden. Singh said that he was duped by a person and despite paying Rs 5.63 lakh, he has been getting notices from the bank of "pending dues".

"In October 2016, I came in contact with one Amar Pal, a resident of Baghpat, who introduced



Brijpal Singh, 61, had taken a tractor loan.  
Gajendra Yadav

himself as a 'Field Officer' of PNB. He promised me to get the tractor on loan as I was short of some money. The cost of the tractor was Rs 7.50 lakh, so I paid him Rs 5.63 lakh and asked him to get Rs 2.50 lakh financed by the bank. I was happy

to get the tractor as it made things easier. In the meantime, I paid the remaining Rs 2.50 lakh. But everything turned upside down, when I received a notice from the bank to pay the installments on Rs 5.63 lakh loan," said Singh, alleging Pal took his money and did not pay the bank.

"I got to know that I have been defrauded was when I visited the PNB branch in Budhana in 2017 where they showed me the papers with my signatures and personal documents. In the meantime, Pal committed an

other fraud. He collected documents of nine women from the village for 'Kalyani Card' and said that each one of them would get Rs 1 lakh loan to start their own small business. We kept asking what happened to the loan, but he kept on bypassing it and one day all the women received notice from the bank to pay the money. He siphoned off all the loan in the name of illiterate women," said Singh, while showing old newspaper clippings that it was his second attempt to set himself on fire.

ED searches Hiranandani group's premises

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 22

THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED) ON THURSDAY CONDUCTED SEARCHES ON THE PREMISES OF REAL ESTATE MAJOR HIRANANDANI GROUP IN AND AROUND MUMBAI IN CONNECTION WITH AN ALLEGED FOREIGN EXCHANGE VIOLATION CASE.

ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL, THE AGENCY IS CONDUCTING SEARCH OPERATIONS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN MUMBAI UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT (FEMA) IN THE CASE OF NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI, DARSHAN HIRANANDANI AND THEIR GROUP ENTITIES. SEARCH ACTION IS UNDERWAY AT FOUR PREMISES, INCLUDING THE RESIDENCE OF NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI, REGISTERED OFFICE AND CORPORATE OFFICE OF THE GROUP ENTITIES.

AS PER THE CASE, NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI AND HIS FAMILY MEMBERS WERE THE BENEFICIARIES OF AN OFF-SHORE TRUST, WHICH HAD ACCUMULATED ASSETS OF USD 60 MN. IT WAS NAMED IN THE PANDORA PAPERS PUBLISHED BY THE INDIAN EXPRESS.

## How to make Indian cities future-ready for citizens

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22



TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE ALL-ROUND INFRASTRUCTURE? HOW DO WE BRING TOGETHER TECHNOLOGY, POLICY AND PLANNING TO FULFIL THE GROWING NEEDS OF ITS CITIZENS?

THESE WILL BE SOME KEY QUESTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE SECOND EDITION OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS'S

HOW CAN INDIAN CITIES BECOME TRULY SMART? WHAT NEEDS

## Won't accept PMJAY patients from Feb 26-29 over dues: Gujarat hospitals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 22

WITH NO WRITTEN ASSURANCE THAT PENDING DUES WORTH AROUND RS 300 CRORE UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI JAYOGA YOJANA (PMJAY) WILL BE CLEARED, THE PMJAY EMPLOYED PRIVATE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION GUJARAT (PEPHAG) – UMBRELLA BODY COMPRISING 789 PRIVATE AND CHARITABLE HOSPITALS – ON THURSDAY SAID IT CANNOT ACCEPT PATIENTS UNDER THE SCHEME FROM FEBRUARY 26 TO 29, AS A "SYMBOLIC PROTEST".

THE ASSOCIATION HAD ON FEBRUARY 13 ADDRESSED A PRESS CONFERENCE IN AHMEDABAD, ALLEGING THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS YET TO

PAY DUES PENDING FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS AND SEVERAL PRIVATE AND TRUST-RUN HOSPITALS ARE "ON THE VERGE OF BANKRUPTCY" OWING TO THIS.

THE ASSOCIATION HAD ALSO CLAIMED THAT SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING THE ISSUE HAVE BEEN MADE TO VARIOUS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING UNION HEALTH MINISTER MANSUKH MANOHARIA, BUT RECEIVED NO RESPONSE.

THE ASSOCIATION'S MEDIA SPOKESPERSON, PALANPUR-BASED DR RAMESH CHAUDHARY, TOLD THE INDIAN EXPRESS: "FOLLOWING THE PRESS CONFERENCE, WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE OFFICE OF GUJARAT HEALTH MINISTER RUSHIKESH PATEL FOR A MEETING ON FEBRUARY 21. WE MET PRINCIPAL SECRETARY (HEALTH)

DHANANJAY DWIVEDI AND OTHER OFFICIALS BUT THEY ONLY ORALLY ASSURED US THAT OUR ISSUES WILL BE RESOLVED AND REFUSED TO GIVE US ANYTHING IN WRITING."

"WE WILL PROCEED WITH OUR SYMBOLIC PROTEST. THE HOSPITALS HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ACCEPT ANY PATIENT UNDER PMJAY FROM FEBRUARY 26 TO 29. IF OUR ISSUES REMAIN UNRESOLVED EVEN AFTER THAT, WE MAY PROCEED TO NOT ACCEPT PATIENTS UNDER PMJAY INDEFINITELY AND INTENSIFY OUR PROTEST."

THE PEPHAG MEMBERS HAVE ALSO COMPLAINED "UNEXPLAINED DEDUCTIONS AND REJECTION OF CLAIMS BY THE INSURANCE COMPANY BAJAJ ALLIANZ".

## A battle won, Kerala MLA to continue war for justice for husband against ruling CPM

SHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANTHAPURAM, FEBRUARY 22

ON MONDAY, AFTER THE KERALA HIGH COURT QUASHED THE ACQUITTAL OF TWO CPI(M) LEADERS WHO WERE ACCUSED IN THE MURDER OF HER HUSBAND T P CHANDRASEKHARAN, MLA K K RAMA SAID SHE WOULD "CONTINUE" HER "FIGHT AGAINST THE CPI(M) HIGHER UPS" AND UNCOVER THEIR "CONSPIRACY".

THE HIGH COURT RULING CAME ON AN APPEAL FILED BY RAMA IN 2014, CHALLENGING THE ACQUITTAL OF SOME OF THE ACCUSED IN THE 2012 MURDER OF CHANDRASEKHARAN. THAT FIGHT FOR JUSTICE FOR HER HUSBAND HAS COME TO JUSTICE FOR THE VADAKARA MLA OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PARTY OF INDIA (RMPI) – MAKING HER A FACE TAKING ON THE RULING CPI(M) IN THE KERALA ASSEMBLY AND OUTSIDE, ESPECIALLY OVER POLITICAL KILLINGS IN NORTH KERALA. A REBEL CPI(M) MEMBER

THE CAR AND HACKED HIM TO DEATH. CHANDRASEKHARAN'S BODY BORE 51 WOUNDS. RAMA THEN STEPPED INTO POLITICS AND TOOK OVER THE REINS OF THE FLEDGLING PARTY, HELPED BY THE HUGE SYMPATHY WAVE OVER CHANDRASEKHARAN'S MURDER AND AGAINST POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

IN THE 2016 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, RAMA CONTESTED AS AN RMPI CANDIDATE, BUT LOST, GETTING 15.82% OF THE VOTES. IN 2021, SHE CONTESTED AGAIN, WITH THE BACKING OF THE CONGRESS-LED UDF AND EMERGED THE WINNER, DEFEATING LEFT CANDIDATE MANOJATH CHANDRAN. ALL THROUGH THE CAMPAIGN, RAMA SAID "HER ELECTORAL FIGHT WAS AGAINST THE FASCISM OF VIJAYAN". BY THIS POINT, OTHER SPINTER COMMUNIST GROUPS HAD JOINED THE RMPI. RAMA'S VICTORY WAS A PERSONAL DEFEAT FOR CM PINARAYI VIJAYAN, WHO CAMPAIGNED FOR THE CPI(M) IN THE SEAT TWICE. THE WIN ALSO CAME AMID A CPI(M) SWEEP IN THE STATE, WINNING 99 OUT OF 140 SEATS.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE CONGRESS THURSDAY ACCUSED THE BJP-LED CENTRE OF INDULGING IN "FINANCIAL TERRORISM" AGAINST IT AND ALLEGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD "LOOTED" OVER RS 65 CRORE FROM ITS ACCOUNTS TO ECONOMICALLY CRIPPLE THE PARTY THROUGH LOK SABHA POLLS.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said an "autocratic Modigovernment" was capturing democracy through "extortion and financial terrorism". Kharge said the Narendra Modi government hoodwinked nationalised



AJAY MAKEN IN NEW DELHI ON THURSDAY ANIL SHARMA

I-T ETC TO GRAB LION'S SHARE OF DONATIONS!" KHARGE POSTED ON X.

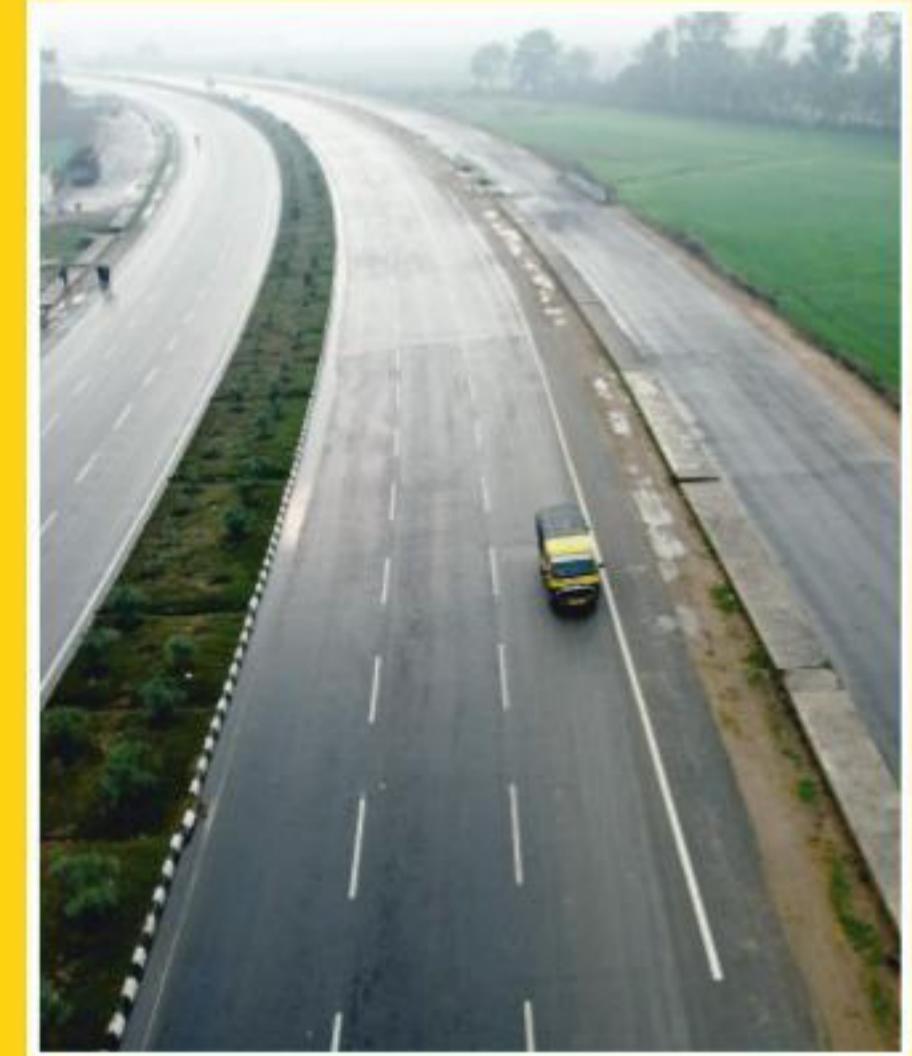
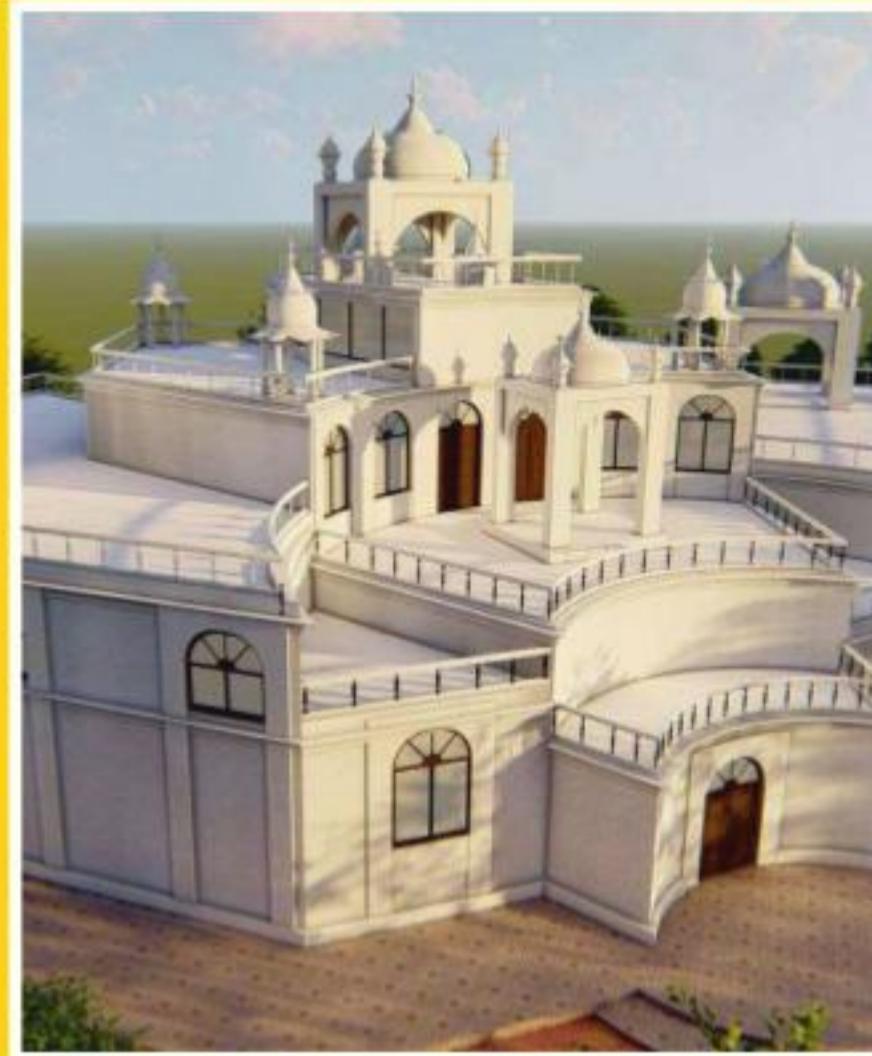
HE SAID LOOTING OPPosition AND BLACKMAILING DONORS TO FILL BJP'S COFFERS WAS A DARK PHASE FOR

THE CAR AND HACKED HIM TO DEATH. CHANDRASEKHARAN'S BODY BORE 51 WOUNDS. RAMA THEN STEPPED INTO POLITICS AND TOOK OVER THE REINS OF THE FLEDGLING PARTY, HELPED BY THE HUGE SYMPATHY WAVE OVER CHANDRASEKHARAN'S MURDER AND AGAINST POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

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# समृद्ध विरासत विकसित बनारस



₹101 करोड़ से सीर गोवर्धनपुर में संत रविदास मंदिर से संबंधित आध्यात्मिक पर्यटन विकास कार्यों का  
**लोकार्पण/शिलान्यास**

**दिनांक :** 23 फरवरी, 2024 | **समय :** पूर्वाह्न 10:30 बजे | **स्थान :** संत गुरु रविदास पार्क, सीर गोवर्धनपुर, वाराणसी

₹13,100 करोड़ से अधिक की 35 विकास परियोजनाओं का लोकार्पण/शिलान्यास

## लोकार्पण होने वाली प्रमुख परियोजनाएं

- एनएच-233 पर घाघरा ब्रिज खंड के पैकेज-2 का 4 लेन चौड़ीकरण • एनएच-56 सुलतानपुर-वाराणसी खंड के पैकेज-1 का 4 लेन चौड़ीकरण • एनएच-19 के वाराणसी-कर्मनाशा हेतु खंड के मध्य का 6 लेन चौड़ीकरण • एनएच-35 वाराणसी हनुमना खंड के पैकेज-1 का 4 लेन चौड़ीकरण • सिस वरुणा क्षेत्र में जलापूर्ति परियोजना का सुहृदीकरण • सिंगरा खेल स्टेडियम का फेज-1 • पंचकोसी परिक्रमा यात्रा के पांच पड़ाव (कंदवा, भीमचंडी रामेश्वर, शिवपुर एवं कपिलधारा) का पर्यटन विकास • 10 धार्मिक यात्रा हेतु पावन पथ का पर्यटन विकास

## शिलान्यास होने वाली प्रमुख परियोजनाएं

- भारतमाला परियोजना के अंतर्गत वाराणसी-रांची-कोलकाता 6 लेन एक्सप्रेसवे का पैकेज-1 • बड़ा लालपुर में नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ फैशन टेक्नोलॉजी (एनआईएफटी) का नवीन परिसर • पांडेयपुर में मेडिकल कॉलेज • काशी हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय में नेशनल सेंटर ऑफ एजिंग • सीर गोवर्धनपुर में संत रविदास पार्क एवं संग्रहालय
- भारतीय अंतर्देशीय जलमार्ग प्राधिकरण द्वारा वाराणसी, मथुरा एवं प्रयागराज में 13 सामुदायिक जेटी

एवं

सेवापुरी में हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड  
(एच.पी.सी.एल.) का

## एल.पी.जी. बॉटलिंग प्लांट

(लागत : ₹214.37 करोड़,  
उपभोक्ता : 20 लाख, रोजगार : 300)

नेशनल थर्मल पावर कॉर्पोरेशन  
(एन.टी.पी.सी.) लिमिटेड का

## वाराणसी हरित कोयला संयंत्र

(लागत : ₹200 करोड़, क्षमता : 600 टन प्रतिदिन,  
रोजगार : 150)

का

## शुभारंभ

बनास काशी संकुल में  
मेसर्स बनासकांठा  
जिला सहकारी दुग्ध उत्पादक संघ लिमिटेड की  
**दुग्ध प्रसंस्करण इकाई**  
(लागत : ₹622 करोड़, क्षमता : 8 लाख लीटर प्रतिदिन,  
रोजगार : 3,100)

सेवापुरी में हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड  
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**दिनांक :** 23 फरवरी, 2024 | **समय :** अपराह्न 12:30 बजे | **स्थान :** बनास काशी संकुल, यूपीसीडा एग्रो पार्क, करखियांव, वाराणसी

## नरेन्द्र मोदी

प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

## योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

केशव प्रसाद मौर्य

उप मुख्यमंत्री  
उत्तर प्रदेश

ब्रजेश पाठक

उप मुख्यमंत्री  
उत्तर प्रदेश

जयवीर सिंह

मंत्री, पर्यटन एवं संस्कृति  
उत्तर प्रदेश

अनिल राजभर

मंत्री, श्रम एवं सेवायोजन तथा  
समन्वय, उत्तर प्रदेश

रवीन्द्र जायसवाल

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार), स्टाम्प तथा  
न्यायालय शुल्क एवं पंजीयन, उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. दयाशंकर मिश्र 'दयाल'

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार), आयुष तथा खाद्य सुरक्षा  
एवं औषधि प्रशासन (एम.ओ.एस.), उत्तर प्रदेश

एवं अन्य गणमान्य महानुभाव

लाइव प्रसारण

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सूचना

एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

## CROWN OF THORNS

Pakistan's new PM faces economy in crisis, shaky alliance. For Delhi, new government is reason for cautious optimism

**I**T'S A CHRONICLE of a coalition foretold. Given the fractured mandate in the February 8 general elections in Pakistan, and widespread perceptions that the army "managed" the polls, it is no surprise that the constituents of the new government are the same players that made up the Pakistan Democratic Movement alliance, which took office after Imran Khan's ouster in 2022. Shehbaz Sharif of the PML(N) is set to be prime minister once more, while PPP president Asif Ali Zardari will be president, with Rawalpindi's invisible hand guiding the ship. The PPP also gets the Senate chairmanship and the Khyber-Pakhtunkwa and Punjab governorships while the chief ministers and Speaker of the National Assembly will be from the PML(N). Nawaz Sharif will play the grand elder to the alliance. Significantly, the PPP has chosen not to tell the government — reportedly, it will merely vote with the ruling party on no-confidence and spending bills. Given the fragile alliance and the challenges he faces in office, Shehbaz Sharif may not be celebrating his crown of thorns.

Pakistan is suffering from a prolonged economic crisis — since 2011, its external debt has nearly doubled and its domestic debt has increased six-fold, while growth has slowed. It is on the way to a default on its debts, which will take the country even deeper into the abyss. Another IMF bailout, and even the economy's medium-term viability requires hard choices and serious reform. The PM-elect will face the brunt of the ire against this inevitable belt-tightening even as the PPP — historically against pro-market reforms — will likely sidestep responsibility. Pakistan also faces a severe security challenge on its western frontier with Afghanistan and insurrections in Balochistan. Then there's the elephant that isn't in the room. Despite Imran Khan being jailed and his party being disbanded, independents contesting with the former PM's support have emerged as the single-largest block. Already, they are pointing to the "stolen mandate" and are likely to keep alive the new government's crisis of legitimacy. General Asim Munir and the army's support will be crucial for the government — both to manage internal differences as well as to govern.

For India, the new government in Pakistan may provide occasion for cautious optimism. Limited bilateral engagement could help strengthen the security gains of the past few years. For one, the 2021 ceasefire along the Line of Control in Kashmir has held, barring a few stray incidents. There has also been a drop in terrorist activity and support to terror from across the border. While Pakistan took a maximalist diplomatic position in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370, it is possible to open channels on specific issues. Given the unrest on its western flank, the army too has an incentive to work towards stability on the eastern front. The Sharifs, particularly Nawaz Sharif, have often displayed a willingness to engage with India. There was considerable personal warmth between Nawaz and PM Modi during the latter's swearing-in in 2014 and the surprise 2015 visit to Lahore. If Islamabad and Rawalpindi are willing to begin a conversation in good faith, New Delhi should be open to the opportunity.

## NO BAIL FOR MR SISODIA

Nearly year-long incarceration of former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister invites questions that need answers

**O**N FEBRUARY 26 last year, the CBI arrested then Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia, in a case related to alleged irregularities in a now-scraped liquor policy. Two weeks later, the ED formally charged the senior AAP leader under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Since then, on more than one occasion, the Supreme Court has told the two agencies that they cannot keep Sisodia "in jail indefinitely". Yet in the past year, the judiciary has apparently stopped short of applying its impressive jurisprudence on civil liberties to Sisodia's case. His bail applications have been rejected by lower courts, Delhi High Court, as well as the Supreme Court itself. On Thursday, a Delhi court extended the AAP leader's judicial custody till March 12 and deferred, till March 2, a decision on whether it will take up Sisodia's "regular bail application". It cited a procedural complication: A review petition challenging the SC's October 2023 decision to deny Sisodia bail is pending before the apex court.

The CBI is examining the criminal aspect of the liquor policy case and the ED is probing the money laundering dimension. Certainly, the two agencies must investigate all allegations of wrongdoing, and the law must take its course. However, the courts' reluctance to apply the SC's well-stated position that "bail is rule, and jail is exception" — underlined eloquently as late as 2018 in *Dataram Singh vs State of Uttar Pradesh* — to Sisodia's case invites questions. This is especially so given that, during hearings, a two-judge bench had come down heavily on the investigating agencies for not producing enough evidence against the former Delhi Deputy CM. On October 6 last year, it asked the ED if it had any proof other than the statement of a co-accused-turned-approver. The Court had reminded the agency, then, of the stringent evidence-related requirements under PMLA and observed that the case would "fall flat in two hearings". Yet, less than a month later, on October 30, the apex court denied bail to Sisodia.

On December 14, the SC dismissed the AAP leader's petition to review its bail verdict. However, on February 5, the Court admitted a new curative petition filed by Sisodia. When it hears the case again, the SC must keep in mind its own powerful words in *Gurbaksh Singh Sibia vs the State of Punjab* (1980): "The act of arrest directly affects freedom of movement of the person, and... an order of bail gives back to the accused that freedom on condition that he will appear to take his trial."

## LOVE'S NO GAME

A class action lawsuit against dating apps may end up underlining this: There's more to love than swiping right

**S**EEN FROM ONE angle, it might seem like one of those love-turned-sour thrillers, like *Fatal Attraction* and *Sleeping with the Enemy*. Just consider the words being used in the class action lawsuit against Match Group, which owns popular dating apps like Tinder and Hinge: "Psychologically manipulative", "addictive", "predatory". The six users dragging the company to court for "gamifying" the dating experience and "prioritising profits over marketing promises and customer's relationship goals", view these apps as the obstacle that keeps them from getting their romantic afterglow and teary reconciliation before the happily-ever-after.

It's easy to villainise the "heartless corporations" even when they promise to help users make love connections and find The One. Because as it turns out, when Cupid puts on a suit and tie and begins considering the bottomline, it is in his/her interest to keep users coming back and paying for the option of swiping their way through a seemingly endless carousel of choices. After all, a match that ends up at the altar means the exit of two paying customers. Keeping the profits rolling in means ensuring that, as the late Amy Winehouse sang, love is a losing game — for the user.

Whether or not the lawsuit against Match Group ends up being a losing game too, dating app users might find it helpful to consider two things. Romantic love is only one of the many loves that enrich lives. And fairytales and rom-coms have propagated a very misleading idea about romance. Finding a connection — as these apps promise to help users do — is actually the easiest part. The real challenge is nurturing it and building it into a relationship. No app can help with that — or take the blame when things don't work out as hoped.

## THE EDITORIAL PAGE



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

TWO RECENT DECISIONS by the Supreme Court, declaring the electoral bonds scheme unconstitutional and pronouncing AAP the winner in the mayoral race in Chandigarh, seem to strike a welcome blow on behalf of electoral democracy. They also raise the expectation of some resistance from what had been, at least in relation to executive power, a more or less comatose Supreme Court.

It is a measure of how low the Court had sunk that two straightforward decisions come as something of a relief. It will be heartening if this trend continues, and if other institutions feel similarly empowered to do their constitutional duties. But there is also a danger of premature celebration. Decisions like these may, at best, be a tactical reprieve. They do not portend a pathway to regeneration just yet.

How should one think of these interventions in the context of the larger degradation of institutions? One has to keep two features of political legitimisation in mind. The first is that any institution, particularly the Court, has to often balance not antagonising the executive with considerations of its own legitimacy. If its own legitimacy collapses, it poses a threat to the existence of the institution. Or, in some cases one can put it even more strongly.

The ability of an institution like the Court to legitimise its seal of approval on many of the Executive's more dubious decisions depends on it acquiring some shallow reservoir of legitimacy elsewhere. It has to give something to keep the game going, and keep us interested enough in the current institutional structure. So even in circumstances where the Courts have a track record of facilitating the Executive's authoritarian or repressive agenda, it should not come as a surprise that there are decisions that do not favour the government's positions. Often these decisions will be in areas which actually do not attack the government's core ideological project, such as Hindutva-related issues or a civil liberties issue, where the government has a serious rather than a peripheral political stake.

The test of standing up might, on this view, be cases like upholding the Places of Worship Act, something the Court has already diluted; or granting a hearing to Umar Khalid, where clearly the state has made its

SC decisions in electoral bonds and Chandigarh mayor cases shore up constitutionalism — or just its facade

political stakes clear. Taken individually, and on their merit, the two decisions referred to above need to be applauded. But considered from a systemic point of view, they do not yet amount to a refutation of the thesis that the Courts may end up doing the Executive's legitimising work for it. In fact, they might make it easier.

Second, even a brazen Executive might sometimes benefit from being reminded that in so far as it claims legitimacy based on democracy and the façade of constitutional principles, the façade will need to be maintained. In a way the Chandigarh election case, or arguably the electoral bonds case, are those where even the façade is so blatantly violated that the system cannot claim legitimacy even on its own terms. Or arguably, the reversal of the decision to release the perpetrators in the Bilkis Bano case was about signalling that the lines that maintain the façade of the system have moved the system to genuine accountability, is an open question.

The reason to be a little sceptical that these decisions might signal a systemic regeneration is this. For one thing, the Court's broad-based acquiescence in the Executive's agenda and undermining of secularism is still too extensive to be reassuring. But more importantly, the broader political culture is not receiving even these decisions as something that brings deep shame on the ruling party. You would have thought that a week in which an initiative by the government like electoral bonds was declared unconstitutional, or an election officer was blatantly fixing a mayoral poll, would embarrass the BJP. But these actions are not seen as a sign of the moral inadequacy, institutional untrustworthiness or threat to democracy posed by the ruling BJP. They are, at most, considered tactical mistakes, or minor stupidities, of no consequence electorally.

Somehow in a democracy, these democracy-undermining actions are not seen as deal-breakers or signs of corruption. The political culture is no longer able to mobilise a sense of outrage or mobilisation. In fact, it is

a mark of a kind of aestheticisation of politics that the videos of the Chandigarh case are seen as a sort of entertainment: What fascinates us about them is their bumbling quality, not the fact that they portend a ruling dispensation potentially unwilling to let go of power by any means. It is not the Court's fault that there is no serious political outrage or mobilisation on issues of electoral integrity; there is little sense that the ruling party will pay a price.

The Opposition is still too fragmented to politically leverage decisions like this. But this does suggest a kind of normalisation of institutional perfidy, which is only occasionally punctured by an odd good decision or two. The Court's own consistent delays in not treating constitutional malfeasance as being urgent contribute to this sense of normalisation. Even if it occasionally produces a good judgment on behalf of democracy, as it did in the electoral bonds case, it has helped create a culture where a good institutional decision is a surprise, not something we routinely expect.

In the current political atmosphere, the norms of institutional propriety are being breached extensively. There is also, with some rare exceptions, a palpable lack of civic courage, critical thinking and willingness to hold the government to account. It is almost as if each breach of propriety, over-reaching, repression or communalisation not only does not stick to the government; it almost adds to its perverse power. In such a context, any half-correct decision provides a sliver of hope to hang on to. But one swallow does not a summer make.

Perhaps this point of view is too cynical or graceless. For the sake of Indian democracy, I hope this point of view is wrong. But in the current context, we should not fall prey to the comfort of easy victories. The public reception of the judgments must send this signal. While they are welcome, they ought not to merely be an episodic legitimisation of the façade of constitutionalism. They need to be part of a pattern that challenges the consolidation of authoritarianism and communalism wherever it matters.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

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VIJAYALAKSHMI CHHABRA

THE LEGENDARY BROADCASTER, the grand old man of Indian radio, Ameen Sayani passed away at 91 on February 20. I had met him in December at his Mumbai residence before his 91st birthday. He looked a little frail and seemed to have a delicate memory but we still had a long and endearing conversation with him that day. We were very touched when he recognised us — my husband and me and our friends who had accompanied us — and reminisced about incidents from the past. Since his old memories had almost faded away, I was happy I was able to make new ones that day — but little did I know that they would be my last with him.

I am going to hold on to the last few words he said to me. He looked straight into my eyes and said, "Vijaya, I remember... How can I forget you? We did such good work in Mumbai AIR & DD."

Losing him is like losing someone who has been an integral part of your life since childhood. Very few people are fortunate enough to get to work with their heroes. I have been listening to him since I was in primary school and he is one of the reasons I wanted to join All India Radio (AIR).

I finally met him for the first time in 1987 in Vividh Bharati, Mumbai, and I clearly remember my first interaction with him. From the moment he started talking, I could only

## A VOICE TO REMEMBER

Ameen Sayani's voice was a gift that he shared with the nation

He was always immaculately dressed, utterly charming and, to top it off, incredibly humble. Radio was everything for him. Some of us inherited that love from him and his influence on broadcasters stretched far and wide. In small towns, during stage programmes, most announcers tried to speak like him.

Interestingly, he once shared with me that his unique style of speaking on air was developed as a result of the poor acoustics and limitations of his studio. He said it was necessary for him to be able to speak over the street noise that would seep into the studio while recording. But people fell in love with this new and dynamic voice as it was so different from the restrained style of broadcasting prevalent in those days.

Slowly, we built an amazing professional relationship. I soon discovered that besides being a great broadcaster, he was a loving and caring human being. I am blessed to have known him personally and interacted with him professionally for the last 30 years.

He was very appreciative of my work as head of sales and marketing at Doordarshan

— though always a little sad that I had moved on from radio to television. He was so proud when I was eventually appointed the director general (DG) of Doordarshan. He especially visited my office in Mandi House to congratulate me and see me on that chair.

I am glad that during my tenure as DG, we managed to record a special programme with him (for the archives of Prasar Bharati) where he spoke extensively about his life, his work and the golden years of Indian broadcasting, of which he was an integral part. This recording is very precious and of immense value to future broadcasters and researchers.

The entire broadcasting world will miss him because he has inspired and entertained millions of people across the country. Recordings of his popular radio show Binaca Geetmala will remain timeless and live on for many more decades.

Radio has been a symbol of romance, melody, mystery and beauty. How aptly it was named Akashvani — a word used in our mythology for celestial voices. Ameen Sayani's voice was indeed celestial — a gift he shared with the entire nation. That celestial voice has now left us for its heavenly abode.

The writer is former director general, Doordarshan



## FEBRUARY 23, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### EXTREMIST VIOLENCE

TEN PERSONS WERE gunned down by terrorists in Punjab, seven of them in Amritsar district, as the wave of violence continued against members of a particular community. At Srihargobindpur in Gurdaspur district, three unidentified terrorists shot dead one shopkeeper, Lajpat Rai. Two persons were shot dead and one injured at Sham Churas village on Jalandhar-Hoshiarpur highway.

### IRAQ ON ALERT

IRAQI PRESIDENT SADDAM Hussein put his forces on full alert to deal with an overnight

large-scale offensive by Iranian troops along a 100-km front in the central and western sectors of the Gulf war. In a message broadcast by Baghdad Radio, President Hussein said the offensive, codenamed "Val Fajr-6" (Dawn-6), was the most "crucial battle" of the three-and-a-half-year-old Iran-Iraq war.

### PAK'S ELECTION PREP

THE PAKISTAN ELECTION Commission is reported to have submitted a timetable to President Zia-ul-Haq stipulating a period of 90 days to hold elections in the country. The initial work of demarcating the constituencies and updating the electoral rolls has been

started by the commission. Lists of possible candidates for elections were being prepared by the administration. The first list will include members of the pro-Zia rightist parties.

### NO PACT WITH ISRAEL

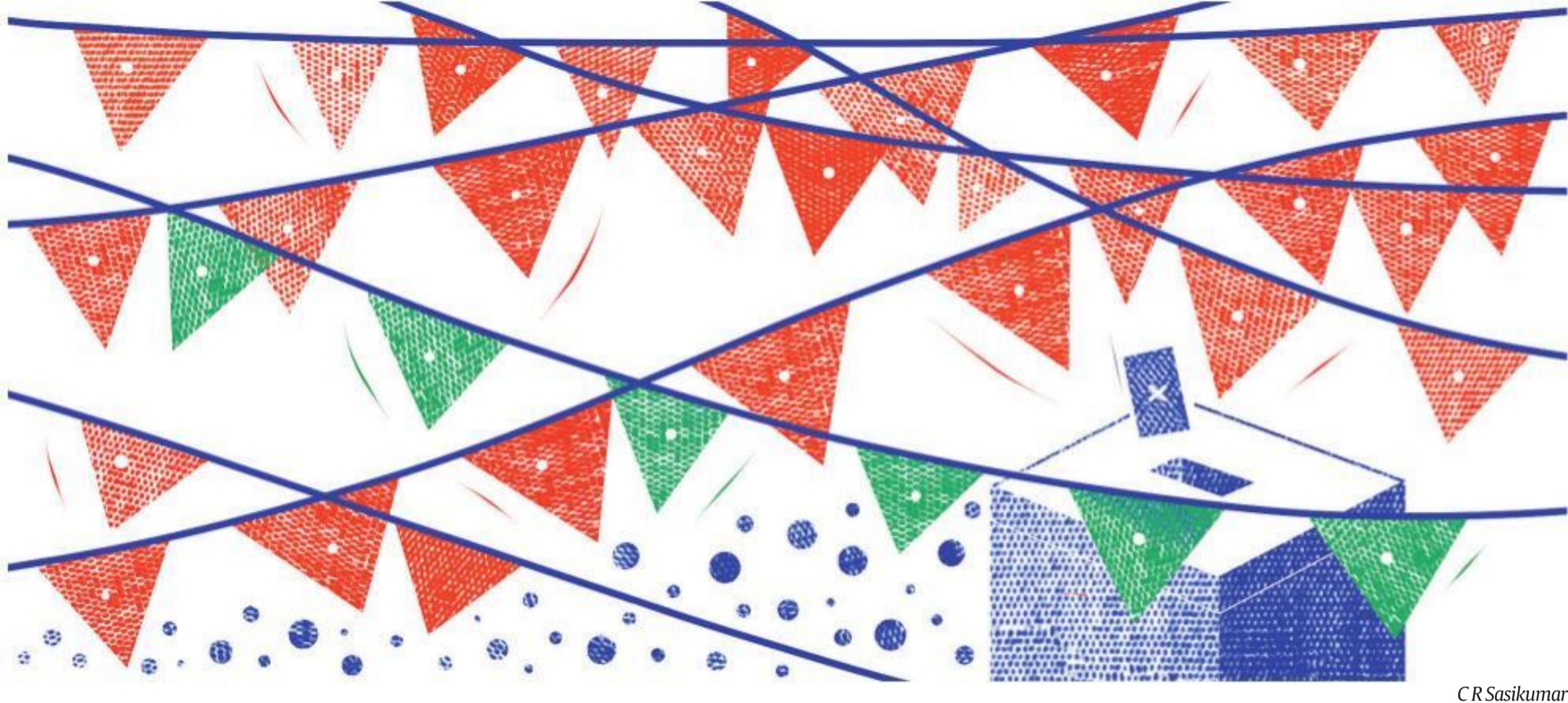
WITH THE PULLOUT of US marines from Beirut underway, President Amin Gemayel was reported ready to scrap Lebanon's troop withdrawal pact with Israel. US Army Maj Don McClary said the 1,300 marines based at Beirut airport as part of the multi-national force "basically have two-and-a-half ships loaded" in the move to pull out to warships offshore.

# 11 THE IDEAS PAGE

## DIS/AGREE

THE BEST OF BOTH SIDES

A fortnightly column, which offers not this-versus-that, but the best of both sides, to inform the debate



CR Sasikumar

After Ram temple in Ayodhya, and in an election year, what does the revival of controversy on Kashi and Mathura mean?

## An opportunity for minority

Going ahead, we need consensus, not conflict, on Kashi and Mathura



SHAZIA ILMI

Just as the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat discouraged Hindu groups from looking for a Shivaling under every mosque, similarly can the Muslim leadership not be sagacious enough to help heal civilisational wounds? Surely not all wrongs can be righted, but some can. Muslims should definitely not bear the brunt of the sins of their forefathers.

Instead of fulminating towards another bitter legal row and bearing misplaced fealty to foreign marauders, we, Indian Muslims of today, can rewrite our future in prosperity, for posterity. Will my community shatter the yoke of slavery to its political puppets, the liberals, who will drive it only up the beaten warpath, or will it break away from its inertia, from its indoctrinated rigidity, to follow false, clerical representations of true Quranic wisdom? Will it break free and derive the forward-looking essence of its religion directly, shaking the self-serving clergy off its bruised back?

It's time to revisit the historic legacy of the Treaty of Al-Hudaybiyah, signed in 628 AD, also known as the historic Sulh (truce), hailed by all believers of the Islamic faith wherein the new Prophet (PBUH) sought peace over war, between the Meccans (particularly the Prophet's own Quraysh tribe who had rejected the new religion) and his followers from Medina. The Islamic Prophet (PBUH) embarked on a journey to Mecca to perform *tawaf* of the Kaaba, the holy circumambulation, with his followers from Medina.

His tribesmen gathered for war, if need be, to deny him his wish. The holy Prophet (PBUH) refused to be provoked into recklessness, despite the sense of humiliation among his own followers intent on the pilgrimage. He camped at a lesser-known place called Hudaibiyah where he was met by his enemy's emissary, and a historic armistice was signed between the two factions.

The conditions of the treaty recorded by the Prophet's deputy and cousin Ali were belittling. The Prophet (PBUH) had to turn back. However, he could return the next year for the pilgrimage, with strict stipulations. His followers would not be permitted to go back to Medina, whilst the Meccans would get legal passage to Medina and back. This concession offered by the Prophet (PBUH) restored peace between Mecca and Medina, eased rancour between the warring sides and paved the way for a peaceful pilgrimage next year. This landmark treaty could be seen by some as a tactical means to consolidate political power. However, it offers several vital lessons to Muslims on peace, pragmatism and magnanimity.

This is certainly the time to revisit Sulh Al-Hudaybiyah, review our rigid stance on religious sites with sentimental value for our Hindu brethren, and eschew confrontation. A far-sighted, far-reaching consensus on the sites of Kashi and Mathura will foster a lasting era of national solidarity and inter-religious faith and peace.

The writer is national spokesperson, BJP. Views are personal

## Consecration as coronation

Effects of placing the majority's religion on a pedestal are now plain to see



PRATINAV ANIL

IS IT APPROPRIATE to begin an article on the new India in Pakistan? Strolling in Lahore recently, a friend and I stumbled upon the Bansi Dhar Temple in the walled city, tucked away behind an intriguing *jharokha* with Hindu motifs. The story goes that in the retaliatory desecrations of Hindu temples in Pakistan following the flattening of the Babri Masjid in 1992, mighty force was brought to bear on its robust facade. To no avail. Derelict, the temple nonetheless remains standing. The Islamic state is still work in progress.

But so, too, is the Hindu state. For decades, we have prided ourselves on not being a "Hindu Pakistan". Yet, the claim has always rested on rather flimsy foundations. Right from Independence, theocratic temptation has proven impossible to resist. Researches into Nehru's India have thrown up a grim catalogue of contemporary parallels: Riots in which the victims are disproportionately Muslim; ministers and chief ministers condoning violence against minorities even as their boss swears by secularism and diversity; the dispossession and deportation of Muslims in the northeast; Muslim underrepresentation in Parliament and public life.

Yet, the contrasting fates of the Bansi Dhar Temple and Babri Masjid tell us that, at this juncture, we may be winning the theocratic Olympics. As it is, "Indian secularism" was always too special to be encumbered by such mundanities as the separation of church and state. Ambedkar's Constitution favoured religious personal law and frowned upon cow

slaughter. Hours before the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, Nehru presided over priestly celebrations, all holy water and vermillion. Following in our founding fathers' footsteps, Modi, too, believes religion is too important to be left to the clerics.

Since Independence, Ayodhya has been a microcosm of our republic. Here we have a window into the world of actually existing Indian secularism — and it is a world away from the out-of-order oratory of our rulers. Here it emerges all too clearly that the groundwork for Hindu India was laid by the Congress. It was in 1949 that an idol of Ram serendipitously "appeared" in the Babri Masjid, leading to riots and army intervention. Heeding extreme Hindu sentiment, the Congress decided to leave the idol untouched, even as the mosque was placed under lock and key.

Fast-forward 36 years and you have Vir Bahadur Singh, Congress chief minister of UP, opening the locks under VHP pressure. Riots rocked north India, and Muslims

To urge that Court is powerless in a situation created by a legislative vacuum is to put a premium on constitutional immorality. It gives free rein to future parliaments to create laws which grant some citizens rights while denying others.

So it was that Narasimha Rao fiddled while Hindu nationalists razed the mosque. The Congress's neutrality had backfired. Mandal was buried by Mandir on the streets of Mumbai. Cashing in on the riots there and elsewhere in 1993, the BJP rode to power three years later. Since then, secular pretences have been dropped.

For decades now, Indian liberals have banged on about the genius of "Indian secularism": Not the separation of church and state but rather "equidistance" — indeed, equal admiration of both major faiths. The effects of placing religion — inevitably, the majority's religion — on a pedestal are now plain to see. The pink sandstone temple comes with a price tag of Rs 18,000 crore. The mosque being built for Muslims, by contrast, is a rather diminutive affair.

For liberals today, all that is left is the cold comfort of black comedy. A third victory for Modi is now a foregone conclusion. In the run-up to the election in April, much will be made of the simple elision of Ram's consecration and Modi's coronation. Here, then, is the making of not so much the world's largest democracy as the world's largest theocracy.

The writer is a historian at the University of Oxford and author of *Another India*

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Considering the beating his party has taken in the polls, will his priority be to push ahead at the expense of what little political capital it has left or to do what all politicians do...? Mr Sharif has said he wants to 'save' Pakistan. Many will be watching to see how long his resolve lasts."

—DAWN, PAKISTAN

## How to make MSP work

Giving it legal status is counterproductive, will be a burden on the economy



RAMESH CHAND

THE SYSTEM OF MSP has been under pressure since it was started in 1965 on issues related to inclusion of crops, the formula of MSP, effective implementation and its enforcement. It is ironic that most protests around MSP are seen in the region which has benefitted the most from it and where it has been almost perfectly implemented.

The main reasons for focus on MSP are inefficient and poorly competitive markets, the failure of markets to meet the changing requirements of the farm sector, neglect of non-price factors to raise productivity and crop income and the direct and instant effect of prices on farm income.

For almost 50 years, MSP implementation remained largely restricted to a few states and to paddy/rice, wheat and cotton. Low growth in agricultural income, decline in the terms of trade for agriculture and increase in farmers suicides from the period between 1993-94 to 2004-5 directed attention towards remunerative prices to address agrarian distress. The National Commission on Farmers (popularly known as Swaminathan Panel) submitted its report in 2006. Its recommendations included reforms in the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) market, contract farming, land reform etc. One was that MSP should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production.

Farmers and political parties vied to champion the implementation of its recommendations, especially those related to MSP. So much so that other more valuable recommendations have been overshadowed and farmers are rallying only around this.

MSP was originally conceived as a floor price that protects farmers against losses, leaving some margin to incentivise adoption of improved technology and investments. The level of margin to be given above cost was left to the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The MSP proposed by the Swaminathan panel (henceforth called new MSP) made it compulsory to include at least 50 per cent margin over cost. The report mentions no reason for doing so. This also took away the power of the CACP to keep MSP relevant to demand-side factors and the open-market situation. The second issue related to the cost concept — whether it should be A2+imputed value of family labour or Cost C2, which included imputed value of rent for own land and interest on fixed capital of farmers. Logically, margins should be calculated only on costs incurred by farmers. Farmers' unions are agitating to make MSP a legal guarantee and to fix at least a 50 per cent margin over cost C2, as demanded by the agitating farmers, defies logic and will turn out to be fiscally ruinous for the economy.

If the MSP includes a small margin, as was the case before Swaminathan's proposal, it can be subsumed in MSP. However, the new MSP requires a separate treatment of margin. It is suggested that the country should follow a system of Assured Price to Farmers (APF), which includes a MSP component and margin or profit component. This will include some net return to the farmer. Farmers should get some margin over and above C2 cost which should be decided each year by an expert body such as CACP. The margin should be kept variable unlike MSP which always moves on a rising trend. Giving MSP to include 50 per cent margin over cost C2, as demanded by the agitating farmers, defies logic and will turn out to be fiscally ruinous for the economy.

For implementation, MSP crops should be divided into two categories: Crops of all-India importance and crops of regional importance. Centre should take responsibility for implementing APF for the first category.

The responsibility for the latter should be entrusted to states, with shared funding.

The Swaminathan panel repeatedly emphasised the need for a wide range of reforms. States must study these recommendations and implement those necessary to enable markets to pay remunerative prices to farmers and reduce dependence on government intervention for MSP. Farmers should support such reforms — they were also very dear to Swaminathan.

The writer is member, NITI Aayog. Views expressed are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### LAST OF HIS TIME

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Fali Nariman' (IE, February 22). In an era where free speech is muzzled, Fali S Nariman was known for not mincing his words. His demise is untimely and disheartening. His desire for a secular nation was articulated in his autobiography *Before Memory Fades*. He was the silver lining that didn't hesitate to call out the highest court when needed. Nariman presented legalese in easier language to citizens in his articles and was respected across the political fraternity in this polarised age. An eminent jurist who didn't excuse himself from expressing his opinions even at the age of 95 in his letters to the editor. The country mourns the loss of such an inspiration.

Madhusree Guha, Kolkata

### NO FREE SPEECH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Stain on campus' (IE, February 22). As an institution of Eminence, Jindal Global University should reassess its actions and uphold its commitment to democratic values and academic freedom by rescinding the suspensions and ensuring that expressing ideas doesn't result in punitive measures. JGU was once

known for promoting free expression, but its recent suspension and eviction of students discussing the Ram temple issue contradict its principles, perceived as suppressing free speech rather than addressing a genuine threat.

Naomi Roy, Bengaluru

### WAVE OF NOSTALGIA

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Like a friend' (IE, February 22). Ameen Sayani's emergence as a radio broadcaster in the early 1950s coincided with the beginning of the golden era of Hindi film songs, and proved to be a wonderful godsend for millions of people. With an unusual style of presentation, which he laced with warmth and humour, as well as an excellent modulation of his silvery voice, he soon became the heartthrob of many. Wednesday evenings then were incomplete without listening to his program on Radio Ceylon — an accomplishment that was possibly matched much later by Ramanand Sagar's TV series *Ramayan* on Doordarshan. In a new series of albums, he has resurrected the charm of the Geetmala from its inception, enough to captivate generations of connoisseurs of old Hindi film songs.

Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru

## FIR against Karnataka JDS-BJP RS candidate over 'bribe for vote'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 22

BENGALURU'S VIDHANA Soudha Police Station Tuesday lodged an FIR against BJP-JD(S) combine Rajya Sabha candidate D Kupendra Reddy and three others based on a complaint filed by a Congress MLA, accusing Reddy of bribery and criminal intimidation to cross vote in the February 27 elections.

Congress Mandya MLA Ravikumar Ganiga alleged that Reddy had approached him and a couple of independent MLAs to cross vote in the Rajya Sabha polls. Apart from Reddy, the FIR also mentions Reddy's associates Ravi, Mahantesh, and Shivashankar.

In his complaint, Ganiga alleged that the JDS and the BJP have fielded a fifth candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls despite lacking numbers to elect 63-year-old Reddy, a real estate baron who has declared a wealth of Rs 1,200 crore in his poll affidavit.

According to the complaint, as

part of the conspiracy, a local hotel owner approached Independent MLA Latha Mallikarjun, an associate member of the Congress, offering cash on behalf of Reddy for cross voting.

Mallikarjun, Ganiga alleged, was also approached through close relatives and associates to cross vote and two other Independent MLAs – Puttaswamy Gowda and Darshan Puttanaiah associated with the Congress – were similarly approached.

With each candidate needing 45 votes in the 224-member Karnataka Assembly to win the biennial RS polls, the Congress with 135 MLAs has the exact numbers to elect its three candidates – Ajay Maken, G C Chandrashekhar and Nasir Hussain. The party also has the support of Mallikarjun, Gowda and Puttanaiah.

The BJP with 66 MLAs can elect Narayana Bhandage, a party worker, and can allot excess votes to Reddy, who can bag around 40 votes with the backing of 19 JD(S) MLAs.

**'ANIMALS SHOULDN'T BE NAMED AFTER REVERED FIGURES'**

## After row, Calcutta HC asks state govt to change names of big cats

SANTANU CHOWDHURY  
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 22

OBSERVING THAT animals should not be named after revered figures like Gods, mythological heroes, freedom fighters, or Nobel laureates, the Jalpaiguri Circuit Bench of the Calcutta High Court on Thursday verbally suggested the West Bengal government to change the name of the lioness 'Sita' and 'Akbar' of Siliguri Zoo.

The court also granted the petitioners the liberty to amend their pleadings in the form of a public interest litigation (PIL) instead of a writ petition.

Last week, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) filed a writ petition in the HC claiming that naming the lioness after Goddess Sita and the lion after Mughal Emperor Akbar at the North Bengal Wild Animals Park in Siliguri was "irrational", "illogical" and "tantamount to blasphemy".

While hearing the matter on

Thursday, the single bench of Justice Saugata Bhattacharya urged the state government to consider giving the two big cats some other names to ensure that the controversy is put to rest".

The court observed that Sita is worshipped by a large majority of people in the country and Akbar was an efficient, successful and secular Mughal Emperor.

"Mr counsel, will you name your pet after some Hindu God or Muslim Prophet... I think, if any of us had been the authority, none of us would have named them Akbar and Sita. Can any of us think of naming an animal after Rabindranath Tagore? Sita is worshipped by a larger section of this country... I also oppose naming the lion after Akbar. He was an efficient, successful, and secular Mughal Emperor," the judge said.

"I was thinking... whether an animal can be named after a God, a mythological character, a hero, freedom fighters or even Nobel laureates? Can a lion be named af-

ter Swami Vivekananda or Ramkrishna Paramhans? Can this be done? Though we aren't considering the issue but think about it. We aren't talking about the names of the pet animals of an officer of the zoo department. But you are a welfare and a secular State, why should you draw a controversy by naming a lion after Sita and Akbar?" the judge remarked.

The court also directed the reclassification of the writ petition as PIL, saying the nature of the petition espoused the rights of a large group of people. Claiming that naming the lioness after Sita, worshipped by many Hindus, would hurt their religious sentiments, the court said the plea would have to be reclassified as a PIL.

On Wednesday, while hearing the VHP's plea for the first time, the court asked the state government to submit a report.

The state counsel on Thursday submitted that the naming of the lions had taken place in Tripura, and it was the responsibility of the Tripura Zoo

authorities. The state counsel also said that the VHP's writ petition was maintainable as there was no element of personal rights of the petitioners being involved, and that the State itself was looking into the possibility of renaming the lions.

Earlier, the West Bengal Forest Department had denied naming the lion and lioness as 'Sita' and 'Akbar'. It maintained that the two big cats were brought to Siliguri Zoo from Tripura's Sepahijala Zoo along with eight other animals, as part of an animal exchange programme on February 12. The Tripura zoo officials had said the big cats' names were 'Ram' and 'Sita' as per official records.

"The court expressed its strong displeasure over the naming of the lioness as Sita and a lion as Akbar," advocate Subhankar Dutta, who appeared for the VHP, said, adding the matter is likely to be taken up by the regular bench of the Calcutta High Court in 10 days.

## Manipur HC deletes clause that included Meiteis in list of STs

SUKRITA BARUAH  
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 22

THE MANIPUR High Court Wednesday modified a clause in its controversial order from March 27, 2023 on the issue of inclusion of the Meitei community in the state's Scheduled Tribes (ST) list.

The court deleted a paragraph of the order, while disposing of a review petition filed by the Meitei Tribes Union (MTU), who were the petitioners in the case in which the court had passed the earlier order.

A single-judge bench of Justice M V Murli Dharan had, on March 27, 2023, issued an order asking the state government to consider recommending the inclusion of Meiteis in the state's ST list.

The order had been issued during the course of hearings in a petition by the MTU, seeking directions to the Manipur government to submit such a recommendation to the Union Ministry for Tribal Affairs.

The review petition had sought a modification of paragraph 17(iii) of the March 27 order which stated, "The first respondent (the Manipur government) shall consider the case of the petitioners for inclusion of the Meitei/Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribe list, expeditiously, preferably within a period four weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order in terms of the averments set out in the writ petition and in the line of the order passed in WP(C) No. 4281 of 2002 dated 26.05.2003 by the Gauhati HC."

With this order, this paragraph was deleted from the judgement. This particular paragraph had been contested since it was seen to be in contravention of the Supreme Court's order on State of Maharashtra V. Milind & Ors. [(2001) 1 SCC 4], which stated that states have no power to amend Presidential orders.

**EXPLAINED**  
**E** Amending Presidential order

THE PROCEDURE for inclusion or exclusion from ST list involves a representation made to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, which forwards it to the state government. The state then forwards the proposal to the Registrar General of India, who can then recommend it to the Centre. The Centre sends it to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, which can recommend it to Cabinet. Following Cabinet's nod, it is put up before Parliament in the form of a Bill to amend the Presidential Order.

"Courts cannot and should not not expand jurisdiction to deal with the question as to whether a particular caste, sub-caste, a group or part of tribe or sub-tribe is included in any one of the Entries mentioned in the Presidential Orders issued under Article 341 and 342 particularly so when in Clause (2) of the said Article, it is expressly stated that said orders cannot be amended or varied except by law made by Parliament," the Supreme Court had held.

While hearing two petitions on the flare-up in the state and on the March 27 order last June, the SC asked why the original petitioners who approached the HC seeking ST status for Meiteis had not told the HC that it does not have the power to recommend reservation.

Following this, the petitioners had approached the Manipur HC for a modification in this paragraph. **FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com**

## SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CAPT SAHILL SHARMA, VrC  
(26 Feb 1971- 22 Feb 1995)



29 years ago on this day you laid down your life in the service of our motherland, fighting the enemy in the world's highest battlefield, Siachen. You are fondly remembered and deeply missed by every member of YUDHE NIPUNAM family. You are and always will be our leading light.

**CO and All Ranks 237 Field Regiment**

23rd February, 2002

"Sashastra Seema Bal" fondly remembers the selfless and valiant act of the braveheart Constable(GD) Brij Lal who made the supreme sacrifice for the Nation.

On this day, he attained martyrdom in an attack by terrorists when he was deployed at Suleiman Complex, Srinagar (J&K) for protection of Tele-communication Building near Dal Gate. He will always be remembered for his courage, valour and supreme sacrifice for the Nation.

"SASHASTRA SEEMA BAL"



Late Brij Lal Constable (GD)

## Russian skier dead as avalanche hits Gulmarg

NAVEED IQBAL  
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 22



Army rescue team leaves to search for trapped skiers in Gulmarg on Thursday. PTI

A RUSSIAN national died and six others were rescued Thursday after an avalanche hit the upper reaches of Kashmir's Gulmarg while they were skiing.

"Despite the valiant efforts of the rescue team, one Russian skier tragically lost his life," the local administration said in a statement. Officials said the avalanche site is located far from Kongdoori, where the Fourth Khelo India Winter Games is currently underway. The Tourism Department's Gulmarg Ski Patrol and J&K Police rescued 5

Russian skiers and a guide from the area known as Army Ridge. Confirming the death, the Russian

embassy in New Delhi said it was in constant touch with local authorities. **WITH ENS, NEW DELHI**

## Army rescues 74 students stranded in J&K landslide

Jammu: The Indian Army on Wednesday rescued 74 students and 7 staff members of a law school after they got stranded along the Srinagar-Jammu highway following a landslide and heavy snowfall, near Banihal in J&K's Ramban district. The students and staff, belonging to Mohanlal Sukhadia University's Law College in Udaipur, were heading back to Udaipur after a trip to Kashmir. **ENS**

## In a first, CERN scientists carry out laser cooling of Positronium

tion announced this scientific achievement on Thursday.

The experiment was performed at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, more popularly known as CERN, in Geneva. This is an important precursor experiment to the formation of anti-Hydrogen and the measurement of Earth's gravitational acceleration on antihydrogen in the AEGIS experiment, they said.

Positronium, comprising a bound electron (e-) and positron (e+), is a fundamental atomic system. Due to its very short life, it annihilates with a half-life of 142 nano-seconds. Its mass is twice the electron mass and enjoys the unique distinction of being a pure leptonic atom. This hydrogen-like system, with halved frequencies for excitation, makes it a great contender for attempting laser cooling and thereby performing tests of fundamental theories.

With regard to the test of competence to drive, which is referred to in the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, the circular said only LMVs with manual gears should be used. Hereafter LMVs with automatic gear, automatic transmission and electric vehicles would not be allowed for the test. The department said persons who are tested on electric vehicles or ones with automatic gear, would not be able to drive a LMV with manual gear. It would lead to safety concerns.

Physicists representing 19 European and one India research group comprising the Anti-hydrogen Experiment: Gravity, Interferometry, Spectroscopy (AEGIS) collaboration

and positrons. In 2018, AEGIS became the first in the world to demonstrate the pulsed production of antihydrogen atoms.

"The experiment was done under the very challenging circumstances of an accelerator beam hall, rather than within the confines of a very well controlled laboratory. In every part of the experiment – be it the input beams, the lasers, laser alignment, timing and control systems, detection techniques, etc. required technological innovations to make the science a reality," said Professor Sadiq Rangwala, faculty at Raman Research Institute and lead of the Indian group in the collaboration.

Experimentalists achieved laser cooling of Positronium atoms initially from -380 Kelvin to ~170 Kelvin, and demonstrated the cooling in one dimension using a 70-nanosecond pulse of the alexandrite-based laser system. The lasers deployed, researchers said, were either in the deep ultraviolet or in the infrared frequency bands.

**FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com**

## Kerala govt tightens LMV licence rules

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEBRUARY 22

MAKING ISSUE OF two-wheeler and light motor vehicle (LMV) driving licences more stringent, Kerala motor vehicle department will allow only vehicles with manual gear for road test from May 1 onwards.

Among other reforms, as per the circular issued by the department on Wednesday, only motorcycles with foot-shift levers to change gears would be allowed for the test. Only two-wheelers with an engine capacity above 95 cc would be allowed during the test. Use of two-wheelers with gear systems on handle bars would be barred for driving tests as such systems are outdated and persons who win driving tests on such two-wheelers would not be able to use bikes with foot-shift gear systems.

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Superconducting Engineer, AIIMS Guwahati invites bids from eligible bidders fulfilling the eligibility criteria as stipulated in the bid document for "Providing Fencing around Type-II & Type-III Quarters, Nursing Hostel, Medical College and around Playground at AIIMS Campus". The bid document is published in [www.tenderwizard.com/](http://www.tenderwizard.com/) AIIMSG and [aiimsguahati.ac.in](http://aiimsguahati.ac.in/). The bids shall be submitted online. Hard Copy of technical bid including all forms and supporting documents to be submitted to the Superconducting Engineer, AIIMS Guwahati, Chhongsari, Kamrup Guwahati: 781101, Assam. Date of issue of bid document 22.02.2024. Last date of submission of bids 07.03.2024 at 15.00 hrs. **Sd/- Supdt. Engineer AIIMS Guwahati**

Narendra Narayan Yadav to become Bihar Deputy Speaker

Patria: The JD(U) seems to play the same Yadav card which ally BJP played a few days back, as seven-time Almanganj (Madhepura) MLA Narendra Narayan Yadav, a prominent OBC leader in Bihar, is all set to become the Deputy Speaker. Coincidentally, this is the first time in many years that three key positions in the Assembly will be held by OBC Yadav leaders, including Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav and Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Prasad Yadav.

Former minister Narendra Narayan Yadav Thursday filed his nomination for the post that fell vacant after the resignation of JD(U) leader Maheshwar Hazari Wednesday. **ENS**

No.7-3/2024-EXN-4618-4644  
Department of State Taxes & Excise, Himachal Pradesh. PUBLIC NOTICE

AUCTION-Cum-TENDER OF LEASE TO COLLECT TOLL AT SPECIFIED BARRIERS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE H.P. TOLLS ACT, 1975 FOR THE PERIOD OF One year WITH EFFECT FROM 01.04.2024 TO 31.03.2025.

In continuation to this office Public Notice No. 7-3/2024-EXN-3907-34 dated 16-02-2024 published on dated 17-02-2024, it is further notified that the Auction -cum-Tender process to lease the right to collect Toll at specified barriers in Shimla, Solan, Revenue District Nurpur under the H.P. Tolls Act, 1975 shall be held as per the schedule mentioned below:-

Sr. No.	District	Name of Toll unit	Date & Time	Venue
1	Shimla	Kuddu	26-02-2024 at 11.00 A.M.	O/o DC STE Shimla, SDA Complex Block No. 5, Distt. Shimla, H.P.
2	Solan	Parwanoo	26-02-2024 at 11.00 A.M.	Zila Parishad Hall, Solan, District Solan, H.P.
3	R.D. Nurpur	Kandwal	26-02-2024 at 11.00 A.M.	O/o DC STE Nurpur at Jachh, Distt. Kangra, H.P.

The terms and conditions for the Auction-cum-Tender process shall remain the same as mentioned in Public Notice No. 7-3/2024-EXN-3907-34 dated 16-02-2024 published on dated 17-02-2024.

**Sd/- (Dr. Yunus IAS Commissioner of State Taxes & Excise, Himachal Pradesh.**

SENSEX: 73,158.24 ▲ 535.15 (0.74%) NIFTY: 22,217.45 ▲ 162.40 (0.74%) NIKKEI: 39,098.68 ▲ 836.52 HANG SENG: 16,742.95 ▲ 239.85 FTSE: 7,683.98 ▲ 21.47 DAX: 17,414.09 ▲ 295.97



GOLD

₹62,800



USD RATE

₹82.85



OIL

\$82.43



SILVER

₹75,200

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of February 21

International market data till 1900 IST

Economy to grow by 6.5% in 2024-25:  
India Ratings

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE economy is likely to grow by 6.5 per cent in the financial year 2024-25, India Ratings and Research said in its macroeconomic outlook released Thursday.

The estimate, lower than the 7 per cent growth forecast of the Reserve Bank of India, is seen coming on the back of sustained government capex, healthy corporate performance, continued softness in global commodity prices and prospect of a new private corporate capex cycle. In FY24, the National Statistical Office has projected India's economy to grow at 7.3 per cent.

"Private corporate sector investments have been down and out for nearly a year. But when we look at lead indicators, all of them are indicating that at the current juncture the private corporate sector is once again becoming more bullish about investments. It may or may not be happening on the ground in the way we would like it to, but some flavour of that has already started becoming clearer at least in terms of intentions and the way they (corporates) are now approaching banks to finance their projects," Sunil Kumar Sinha, Principal Economist, India Ratings said.

According to India Ratings, the private sector raised ₹3.56 lakh crore to fund 982 projects in FY23, which is substantially higher than ₹1.98 lakh crore raised to fund 791 projects in FY22. However, there are risks to aggregate demand as it is largely driven by government capex, it said.

**Feb PMI at 7-month high on strong demand**

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE HSBC Flash India composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to a seven-month high of 61.5 in February from 61.2 in January, owing to strong demand conditions, S&P Global said on Thursday.

During February, growth improved for both manufacturing (five-month high) and services (seven-month high) sectors with survey participants attributing the upturn to buoyant demand conditions, investment in technology, efficiency gains, expanded clientele and favourable sales developments, S&P Global said.

McMonigle's comments were

**SPARKS GLOBAL RALLY IN TECH STOCKS**

**Nvidia nears \$2-tn valuation after topping Wall St forecast**

REUTERS  
FEBRUARY 22

NVIDIA GALLOPED towards the \$2-trillion market value Thursday after the bellwether for AI chip demand once again exceeded Wall Street's sky-high expectations, re-igniting a global rally in tech stocks.

The chipmaker returned as the third most valuable US company as its shares jumped 15% to a record high of \$780.85. If the gains hold, Nvidia will add about \$260 billion to its market capitalization.

The rally in the top performing S&P500 stock also lifted its counterparts in the chip sector, sending the benchmark index, Europe's STOXX 600 and Japan's Nikkei share average to record highs.

If Nvidia hits the \$2 trillion mark, it would achieve the milestone at the fastest

**SAMPLING 2 AI CHIPS FOR CHINA: CEO**

NVIDIA IS currently offering customers samples of its two new artificial intelligence chips aimed at the China market, its CEO Jensen Huang said, in a bid to defend its market dominance in the country now threatened by US export curbs.

The chipmaker forecast a whooping 233% growth in first-quarter revenue, above market expectations of a 208% rise.

Nvidia, which controls about 80% of the high-end AI chip market, reported fourth-quarter revenue jump of more than three-fold from a year ago to

pace ever by adding \$1 trillion in just about nine months. Soaring demand for Nvidia's chips used by companies rushing to upgrade their AI offerings helped the Silicon Valley firm forecast a whooping 233% growth in first-quarter revenue, above market expectations of a 208% rise.

Analysts, however, worried that U.S. curbs on chips sales to China may be hurting its revenue growth. Sales in China amounted to about 9% of Nvidia's fourth-quarter sales, down from 22% in the prior quarter.

The proceeds will be used for refinancing, providing loans to special purpose vehicles and for capital expenditure. REUTERS

**ADANI AIRPORT ARM EYES BOND FUNDRAISE BY MARCH**

Mumbai: Adani Airport Holdings plans to raise at least ₹2 billion through shorter-tenor bonds by March, two bankers said on Thursday.

The issuer is still finalising details such as terms and tenors of

the bond issue and is in talks with private credit funds and other investors," one of the bankers said.

The proceeds will be used for refinancing, providing loans to special purpose vehicles and for capital expenditure. REUTERS

## Byju's investors flag ₹1,700 cr given to Dubai affiliate; CEO Raveendran to skip EGM today

GEORGE MATHEW & SANDEEP SINGH  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 22

A GROUP of investors that has sought an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of the parent company of Byju's has questioned the debt-laden edtech firm's management over ₹1,700 crore given out as billings and commission to its affiliated re-seller in Dubai.

In their EGM notice, these investors have highlighted "the management's ongoing failure to exercise the company's legal rights in order to recover approximately ₹1,400 crore of billings from and also paying out ₹300 crore of commission to More Ideas General Trading LLC, especially given the startup's need for funding over the last 12 months."

The investors are seeking the

**E.D. UPGRADES LOOK-OUT NOTICE ON FOUNDER**

New Delhi: The ED has upgraded its look-out circular against Byju's founder Byju Raveendran in connection with a FEMA probe, seeking to stop him for going abroad. The earlier such alert meant immigration authorities had to inti-

mate the agency about his movements through ports. Sources said the over-year-old LC was revised some time back in light of investors' concerns and adjudication of a FEMA contravention case against Raveendran and others. PTI

ouster of founder and Chief Executive Officer Byju Raveendran and his family members at the EGM Friday. Raveendran and other board members will not attend the meeting. "This EGM is procedurally invalid, contractually in contravention of our AOA and SHA, legally on the wrong side of the Companies Act, 2013. Byju Raveendran or any other board member will not attend this invalid EGM," said a Byju's

spokesperson. "This means the EGM, if it is still summoned, will not have the required quorum and cannot proceed to discuss or vote on the agenda."

However, an investor source said: "The EGM is valid and fully in accordance with applicable law and will continue as per plan... It's incorrect to say that EGM won't have a quorum if founders don't attend."

According to the financial statements of Byju's parent Think

## Growing divergence in global energy forecasts hurting energy security, transition, says IEF

SUKALP SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

UNPRECEDENTED UNCERTAINTY and growing divergence in energy forecasts by international organisations are eroding investor confidence and undermining energy security and transition goals, which in turn are contributing to high prices, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis, widening global divides, and fueling conflict, according to International Energy Forum (IEF) Secretary General Joseph McMonigle.

As per a statement by the IEF—the world's largest energy forum with 73 member nations that include major energy consumers as well as producers—McMonigle highlighted the "elevated levels of uncertainty" at the 14th IAEA-IEF-OPEC Symposium on Energy Outlooks in Riyadh on Wednesday. The International Energy Agency (IEA) represents a number of large energy-consuming nations, while the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a grouping of major oil producing countries.

The IEF report has flagged the issue of enormous variance in energy forecasts at a time when the world is debating the likely contours and timelines of global energy transition. India, which depends on oil and gas imports to meet a bulk of its energy needs, has set a target to achieve net-zero emission status by 2070.

"While the direction of travel is clear, the speed and modalities of transitions have become more contentious. This creates new risks and uncertainties for everyone involved in the energy market," McMonigle said. FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

based on the IEF's annual comparison of the most recent energy outlooks by the IEA, OPEC, and several research groups. The comparison report was released at the Riyadh symposium. Among other observations, the report highlighted that divergence between the highest and lowest forecasts for the global primary energy demand for the year 2050 exceeded the current size of the global energy market.

"This uncertainty gap" erodes investor confidence, which in turn damages energy security and market stability... We are already seeing this in the high prices and volatility, contributing to the cost-of-living crises, widening global divisions, conflict, and geopolitical adversity," the IEF secretary general said.

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"While the direction of travel is clear, the speed and modalities of transitions have become more contentious. This creates new risks and uncertainties for everyone involved in the energy market," McMonigle said. FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

changing the stance to neutral.

Das wrote that the current setting of monetary policy is moving in the right direction. "We must remain committed to successfully navigating the 'last mile' of disinflation which can be sticky. As markets are front-running central banks in anticipation of policy pivots, any premature move may undermine the success achieved so far," he wrote.

Most of the members believed that though consumer price-based inflation (CPI) has eased from the heightened levels seen last summer, uncertainty over food price remains a major concern for headline inflation.

Of the six members of the rate-setting panel, five voted to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent and to maintain a status quo on the policy stance of withdrawal of accommodation.

The remaining member, Jayanth Varma, voted for reducing the repo rate by 25 per cent and

& Learn Pvt Ltd for the year ended March 2021, while the revenue from the sale of educational content to customers based in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries amounted to ₹497 crore, the company paid a commission of ₹237 crore.

The commission accounts for 47.6 per cent of the revenue generated. In the year ended March 2020, while the revenue from such sales amounted to ₹245 crore, the commission paid was ₹151 crore, which is 46.9 per cent of the revenue generated.

With respect to the same, the company, in its financial statements for the year 2020-21, said: "All sales of the company to these customers are invoiced on an unrelated entity located out of Dubai. The company pays the aforesaid entity a commission on such sales." The financial statement does not disclose the name of the entity.

Reached for comment, Byju's stated: "The figure of ₹1400 crore mentioned in the EGM notice—which is invalid in law—is grossly overstated. Based on the products sold as part of a multi-year sales cycle, the outstanding net amount due was ₹74 million (around ₹614 crore). In recent months, the company started recovering some of the dues after persistent legal pressure. The vendor has committed to pay the entire balance of ₹69 million (₹572 crore) over the next 12 months."

More Ideas is the West Asia representative office of Byju's headquartered in Dubai, according to the website of the firm. The identity of the promoters and directors of More Ideas, however, is not available. "Byju or his family are not the promoters of More Ideas General Trading," the startup said in response to a query from The Indian Express.

## Vi board to take up proposal to raise funds at Feb 27 meet

JATIN GROVER  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

VODAFONE IDEA (Vi) Thursday said that the company's board will meet on February 27 to consider and evaluate proposals for raising funds.

The company has been looking to raise ₹25,000 crore based on its earlier board approval for a long time now. Of the ₹25,000 crore, it has raised about ₹5,000 crore from promoters so far, and there's commitment of another ₹2,000 crore.

Vi was expecting to finalise a fund raise plan by December 2023, which did not materialise. Its focus is to tie-up equity investments first, basis which banks will lend to the company, its chief executive officer Akshaya Moondra had said in October last year.

By December, the company has an obligation to pay debt of around ₹5,400 crore. The debt includes ₹533 crore towards spectrum payment, ₹3,200 crore to banks, and repayment of optionally convertible debentures (OCDS) of ₹1,600 crore. It also owes about ₹5,700 crore to one of its major vendors Indus Towers towards past dues.

In FY26, once the moratorium on regulatory dues ends, the company will have an obligation of ₹28,000 crore to the government. From FY27, Vi will have a debt obligation of over ₹41,000 crore to the government. FE

**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

## Disinflation last mile can be tricky, need to be vigilant: Das

HITESH VYAS  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 22

MONETARY POLICY must remain vigilant and not assume that the job on the inflation front is over, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das wrote in the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting held from February 6 to 8.

Most of the members believed that though consumer price-based inflation (CPI) has eased from the heightened levels seen last summer, uncertainty over food price remains a major concern for headline inflation.

Of the six members of the rate-setting panel, five voted to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent and to maintain a status quo on the policy stance of withdrawal of accommodation.

The remaining member, Jayanth Varma, voted for reducing the repo rate by 25 per cent and



Das wrote in the minutes that food price remains a major source of volatility

changing the stance to neutral.

Das wrote that the current setting of monetary policy is moving in the right direction. "We must remain committed to successfully navigating the 'last mile' of disinflation which can be sticky. As markets are front-running central banks in anticipation of policy pivots, any premature move may undermine the success achieved so far," he wrote.

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On December 12, the airline

headline inflation rose from 4.9 per cent in October to 5.7 per cent in December, even as core inflation (CPI inflation excluding food and fuel) softened to a four-year low of 3.8 per cent. Inflation eased to 5.1 per cent in January – above RBI's 4 per cent target.

Inflation is expected to soften to an average of 4.5 per cent in 2024-25 with a fleeting trough of 4 per cent in Q2. "Food price uncertainty remains a major source of volatility for headline inflation outlook," Das wrote.

MPC member Ashima Goyal said the experience of the past year suggests commodity price shocks may now be short-lived and may not drive up inflation persistently. "Then it would not be necessary to keep rates high just because supply shocks are expected in the future. But we can wait to test this for some more time. So, I vote for status quo on rates though headline inflation FY25 projections of 4.5 per cent gives room to cut."

Panipat: Aditya Birla Group expects to rake in revenue of ₹10,000 crore from its paints venture and become profitable within three years of full-fledged operation. The group aims to secure the second position in the decorative paints market that Asian Paints currently dominates.

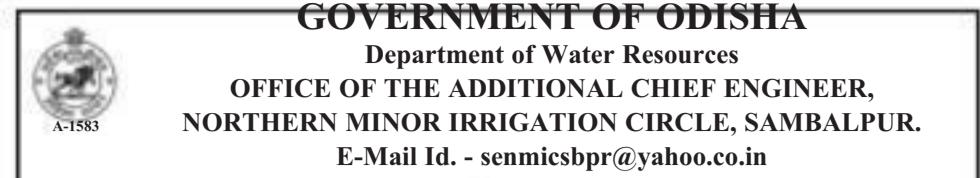
On Thursday, the cement-to-

**Birla enters decorative paints mkt, eyes no. 2 spot**

Panipat: Aditya Birla Group expects to rake in revenue of ₹10,000 crore from its paints venture and become profitable within three years of full-fledged operation. The group aims to secure the second position in the decorative paints market that Asian Paints currently dominates.

textiles conglomerate launched its decorative paints brand, Birla Opus, marking its foray into the ₹80,000-crore domestic decorative paints market. It is a division of flagship firm Grasim Industries, and the products will hit the market by mid-March starting with Punjab, Haryana and Tamil Nadu. FE

**ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES PATNA - 801507**  
(An Autonomous body under MoHFW



## GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

Department of Water Resources  
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,  
NORTHERN MINOR IRRIGATION CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR.  
E-Mail Id. - semicsbpr@yahoo.co.in

No 258/ Dated-21.02.2024

## TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE

ACENMIC, SBP - 03/2023-24

Cancellationto Bid Identification No- ACENMIC, SBP-03/2023-24 dt 02.02.2024  
The "e" Procurement Notice vide Bid Identification No- ACENMIC, SBP-03/2023-24 dt 02.02.2024 for the work "Improvement to Distribution system of Girishandrapur MIP in Nakidehi Block of Sambalpur District under ERM 2023-24 is here by cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Sd/-  
Additional Chief EngineerNorthern Minor Irrigation Circle  
Sambalpur.

OIPR-32208/11/0008/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

PWD, LUMLA DIVISION: LUMLA

DIST. TAWANG: AP

## E-PROCUREMENT PRESS NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, Lumla Division, PWD, AP, Lumla on behalf of Governor of Arunachal Pradesh invites bids on (EPC Mode) in electronic tendering system from approved and eligible contractors registered with CPWD/APPWD/BRO/MES/Railways/Other state Government for the work "Construction of road from Thongleng PMGSY road to Thangaphe Pilgrimage Centre in Tawang District in Arunachal Pradesh (L-21.00KM)".

The complete BID document can be viewed/ downloaded from official website [www.arunachtenders.gov.in](http://www.arunachtenders.gov.in) of Arunachal Pradesh Public Works Department from 29.01.2024 to 12.02.2024 upto 1500.00 Hrs

Executive Engineer  
PWD, Lumla Division,  
Lumla

DIPR/ARN/9989

देवी अहिल्या विश्वविद्यालय

आर.एन.टी. मार्ग, इन्दौर (म.प्र.)

क्रमांक/परीक्षा/निविदा/2024/95 दिनांक : 22.02.2024

## ई-निविदा

देवी अहिल्या विश्वविद्यालय, इन्दौर के परीक्षा विभाग में उत्तर-पुस्तिकाओं एवं कागज ब्रेक हेतु ई-निविदा@[mptenders.gov.in](http://mptenders.gov.in) पर दिनांक 15.03.2024 को साथे 5.30 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना व अन्य शर्तों से संबंधित जानकारी [mptenders.gov.in](http://mptenders.gov.in) पर दिनांक 23.02.2024 को सुधर 10.00 बजे से देखी जा सकती है। निविदा की सूचना विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट पर भी उपलब्ध है। निविदा में किसी भी प्रकार का संशोधन समाप्त प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से नहीं किया जावेगा, यह केवल विवि. की वेबसाइट [www.dauniv.ac.in](http://www.dauniv.ac.in) पर ही क्रांतिकारी निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना विश्वविद्यालय की जानकारी के लिये दूरभाष क्रमांक 0731-2528966 पर समर्पक किया जा सकता है।

म.प्र. माध्यम/113938/2024

कुलसचिव

**UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)  
Victoria Cross Vijaya Gaur Singh Jiya Bhawan, Kankali Road, Dehradun-248001  
Corporate Identity No. U40109UP2005G025867  
Telephone No. 0135-2763672 -75, Ext: 263, E-mail ID : [it@upcl.org](mailto:it@upcl.org)

## Notice Inviting e-Tender

(Tender Identification No. 03/RDSS/IT/OT)/2023-24 dated 21-02-2024)  
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited, Dehradun invites tender from eligible bidders for "Appointment of Agency for Supply and commissioning of additional hardware for ERP (SAP S/4-Hana) under RDSS Program of Ministry of Power, Govt. of India."

The references for the tender are given below:-

Tender Identification No. 03/RDSS/IT/OT)/2023-24 dated 21-02-2024

Cost of Tender Document Rs. 23,600.00 (20,000.00 + 3,600.00) inclusive of GST@18%

Earnest Money Deposit/ Bid Security Rs. 11,70,000.00 (Rupees Eleven Lakh Seventy Thousand only)

Date &amp; Time of Pre-bid conference 6th March-2024 at 11:30 Hrs.

Last Date and Time of submission of Bid (online &amp; offline mode) 12th Mar'24 up to 17:00 Hrs.

Due Date of Opening of Technical Bid 13th Mar'24 at 16:00 Hrs.

Due Date of Opening of Financial Bid To be notified later

Detailed document, Eligibility Criteria and prescribed format for submission of bids will be available on website [www.upcl.org](http://www.upcl.org) from 26th Feb' 24 onwards. In case any of the above date, is a holiday, the due date shall be the next working day at the same time. Any amendment/corrigendum in the future against the above mentioned tender shall be uploaded at <http://uktenders.gov.in> and www.upcl.org only.

Superintending Engineer

(IT, ERP &amp; SCADA)

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FORM NO. NCLT.3A  
BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL,  
BENCH AT INDORE  
CPC(AA)/5(MP)2024  
in  
CA(CAA)/5(MP)2023  
In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013  
AND

In the matter of section 230 to 232 /w section 66 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013

AND

In the matter of Scheme of Arrangement

Between Marvel Vinyls Limited

('Petitioner Company 1/Demerged Company') and Marvel GDC Private Limited ('Petitioner Company 2/Resulting Company') and their respective shareholders

Marvel Vinyls Limited (CIN - U74899MP1985PLC066740)

Regd. Off. 84 Industrial Area Malanpur,

Distt. Bijnor, MP 477001

PAN: AACAM1917B ...Petitioner Company 1/Demerged Company

Marvel GDC Private Limited (CIN- U22203MP2023PTC066064)

Regd. Off. 85-86 Industrial Area,

Malanpur Bijnor Road, MP 474011

PAN: AAQCM9289C ...Petitioner Company 2/Resulting Company

NOTICE OF PETITION

A petition under section 230-232 of the Companies Act, 2013, for sanctioning of the Scheme of Arrangement Between Marvel Vinyls Limited ('Petitioner Company 1/Demerged Company') and Marvel GDC Private Limited ('Petitioner Company 2/Resulting Company') and their respective shareholders was presented by Petitioner Company before the Indore Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal on 08.02.2024 and the said petition is fixed for hearing before National Company Law Tribunal, Indore on 05.04.2024. Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the instant petition should send to the Petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the Petitioner's advocate not later than two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition. Where he seeks to oppose the petition, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Sd/-

D. Bhattacharya/Lucky Jain Advocates

15, Jhabua Tower, RNT Marg, Indore (M.P.) 452001

Ph. 9818499377

Email: [dhriman.bhattacharya@unitylegal.com](mailto:dhriman.bhattacharya@unitylegal.com)

Dated: 23.02.2024

कार्यालय अधिकारी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान कर्णप्रयाग ।

## ई-टेंडर नोटिस

निविदा सूचना सं 3849/ ई-टेंडर नोटिस /2023-24/

1. कार्य का नाम :- जनपद चमोली के अन्तर्गत यात्रा मार्ग 2024-25 कमेड़ा से नन्दप्रयाग यात्रा मार्ग के निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

2. पोर्टल पर निविदा उपलब्ध होने की तिथि :- 23/02/2024

3. पोर्टल पर निविदा प्राप्ति की अन्तिम तिथि :- 07/03/2024

4. पोर्टल पर निविदा खुलने की तिथि :- 07/03/2024

5. उक्त पेयजल योजना कि निविदा सिंगल बिड है, निविदा की पूर्ण जानकारी, शुद्धि पत्र एवं निरस्तीकरण आदि हेतु [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर लोग इन करते रहें।

Dated: 23.02.2024

कार्यालय अधिकारी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान कर्णप्रयाग ।

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Dated: 23.02.2024

कार्यालय अधिकारी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान कर्णप्रयाग ।

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Dated: 23.02.2024

कार्यालय अधिकारी

# Kiru Hydel Project, focus of allegations against Satya Pal Malik

ARUN SHARMA

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 22

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Thursday raided 30 places across the country, including three linked to former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik in Delhi, Gurugram, and Bhagpat in Uttar Pradesh.

The agency is investigating alleged corruption in the award of a contract for the Kiru Hydel Project, in J&amp;K's Kishtwar district.

**What is the project?**

It is being constructed between the existing Kirthai II (upstream) and Kwar (downstream) hydel power projects, at an esti-

mated cost of Rs 4,287 crore. It will be developed near the convergence point of river Chenab and the Singad and Bela streams, near the Patharnakki and Kiru villages in Kishtwar district. The deadline for initiating commercial operations is July 2025.

It will have a 123-m tall

dam from the Chenab's river bed level. Its reservoir will have a storage capacity of 41.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of water. The project

will have one 700 m-long, horse-shoe-shaped diversion tunnel for the release of excess water. An underground powerhouse located at the left bank of the river will have four turbines, with a capacity of 156 MW each, raising the total capacity to 624 MW.

Apart from helping address the energy demand across northern India and the state's

The project is located in J&K's Kishtwar district. [kiru.cvpindia.com](http://kiru.cvpindia.com)**RAIDS ON EX-GUV**

rural areas, it could aid small-scale and cottage industries.

**Who is developing the project?**

The Chenab Valley Power Projects Private

Limited (CVPPPL) is a joint venture of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation, the Jammu &amp; Kashmir State Power Development Corporation and the Power Trading Corporation. Both the NHPC and JKSPDC have a stake of 49% each and the remaining 2% is with the PTC.

The Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change awarded the scoping clearance for the project in September 2008 and revalidated it for an installed capacity of 624MW in September 2015. It got environmental clearance from the ministry in June 2016 and received approval from the State Administrative Council (SAC) in January 2019. The foundation stone was laid the next month, with completion expected by 2023.

A construction company named Patel Engineering was awarded civil works worth

more than Rs 2,200 crore for the construction of a diversion tunnel, concrete dam, pressure shafts, cofferdams, tailrace tunnels, and a powerhouse in 2019.

Hydromechanical work related was awarded to PES Engineers and electro-mechanical work worth more than Rs 600 crore was awarded to Andritz Hydro. Together, they cover the design, manufacturing, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of turbines, generators, etc.

Some of the work, such as pilot excavation for a few of the pressure shafts, is completed, while riverbed excavation and dam concreting in the riverbed are in progress.

**What are the corruption allegations?**

The award of civil works to Patel Engineering Ltd has been called into question. On

its website, PEL calls itself a major infrastructure and construction company that was founded in 1949. Its areas of operation include dams, tunnels, bridges, refineries, real estate, and more.

The CBI has booked then CVPPPL chairman and IAS officer Naveen Choudhary, MD MS Babu, and Directors M K Mittal and Arun Mishra, along with Patel Engineering. The FIR says an investigation had been conducted by the J&amp;K Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Power Department.

The FIR alleges that guidelines for e-tendering in the awarding of civil works were not followed. Allegations of substandard work and failure to provide jobs to local youth have also been made against the hydel project.

**LONGER VERSION ON**  
[indianexpress.com/explained](http://indianexpress.com/explained)**EXPLAINED GLOBAL**

## RUSSIA CAPTURES AVDIIVKA: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR UKRAINE, EUROPE

YASHEE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22



A Ukrainian soldier prepares to operate a drone near Avdiivka on February 20. Reuters

US President Joe Biden too has pointed out that Ukraine lacks the necessary firepower.

**What led to arms shortage**

A key reason is that Republicans in the US House of Representatives are holding up a \$95-billion foreign aid package, which includes \$60 billion for Ukraine. In return for passing the package, the Republicans want stricter immigration rules at the US-Mexico border. Some hardliners, like Marjorie Taylor Greene, want the US to stop financing someone else's war, and push Ukraine towards negotiations instead.

With flows from the US stuck, the rest of Europe has been unable to plug the shortfall for Ukraine.

**Alarm bells in Europe**

For decades, European countries have not spent much on defence, banking heavily on the US for security in the face of no serious threats. Now, as the Russia threat looms larger, many European nations are facing up to the fact that they need to allocate a larger portion of their GDP towards defence, and can't depend entirely on the US.

Biden has remained steadfast in his assurance of support to Ukraine, but lawmakers have tied his hands. His challenger Donald Trump has said outright he won't help those who are not spending enough on security.

**LONGER VERSION ON**  
[indianexpress.com/explained](http://indianexpress.com/explained)**Key weakness highlighted**

The Avdiivka campaign has highlighted that Ukraine is running out of the kind of arms and ammunition it needs to keep the Russian military at bay.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky raised this issue at a global security conference in Munich last week. As reported by Reuters, he praised his troops for "exhausting" Russian forces in Avdiivka, and suggested the withdrawal was partly caused by a lack of weapons.

"Now, (the military) will replenish, they will wait for the relevant weapons, of which there simply weren't enough, simply aren't enough," he said.

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**Small and marginal land holdings, high indebtedness**

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE SITUATION arising out of the protest by farmers' unions demanding legally guaranteed minimum support prices (MSP) escalated sharply on Wednesday as a 22-year-old farmer was killed after police used force to stop the protesters' march to Delhi.

The intensified protests by farmers, whose year-long sit-in at Delhi's borders in 2020-21 forced the government to repeal the three farm laws, have polarised politics and public opinion. While major opposition parties have supported the farmers and the Congress has promised a legal guarantee for MSP, the fact is India's farm distress existed even before the NDA government came to power in 2014.

**Agriculture's lopsided role in national economic output**

At Independence, around 70% of India's workforce was involved in agriculture, and the farm sector accounted for 54% of annual economic output (measured by GDP).

Today, agriculture contributes less than 18% of India's GDP. But the proportion of India's workforce involved in the farm sector has only declined to 54.6%, as per the Census data of 2011, the latest available. Table 1 shows the contrast with the Census data of 1951, when 97.2 million of India's 139.5 million workforce (69.7%) worked in the agriculture sector.

**Rising share of farm labourers compared to cultivators**

Another key indicator of the situation in the agri sector is the relative proportion of "cultivators" and "agricultural labourers".

For purposes of the Census, a cultivator is one who "is engaged in cultivation of land owned or held from government or held from private persons or institutions for payment in money, kind or share". Cultivation includes "effective supervision or direction in cultivation".

An agricultural labourer, on the other hand, is a person who works on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share.

The relative proportion of cultivators has fallen from 72% of all farm workers in 1951 to 45% in 2011, while the proportion of labourers has risen from 28% of all farm workers in 1951 to almost 55% in 2011. (Table 1)

This shows (i) that farming is becoming increasingly unfeasible and, (ii) that the default notion that a "farmer" is someone who owns their land, is becoming increasingly out of date. Indeed, by 2011, the majority of people engaged on India's farms were wage labourers.

**Small and marginal land holdings, high indebtedness**

The survey also presents a state-wise picture of income and indebtedness. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, more than 90% of farm households were indebted, even though average monthly household incomes were around the same as the national level of Rs 10,218. (Each household typically has five members.)

West Bengal and Odisha fared badly on both parameters — they had significantly lower levels of farm incomes (in the range of Rs 5,000-6,000 per household per month), and average to above-average (50-60%) proportion of indebted farm households.

Countrywide, as of 2019, 50% of farm

**TABLE 1  
POPULATION AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS (IN MILLION)**

Year	Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Total
1951	139.5	69.9 (71.9%)	27.3 (28.1%)	97.2 (69.7%)
2011	481.9	118.8 (45.1%)	144.3 (54.9%)	263.1 (54.6%)

Source: Registrar General of India

**TABLE 2  
INDEBTEDNESS OF AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS (ALL-INDIA) IN DIFFERENT SIZE CLASSES OF LAND POSSESSED**

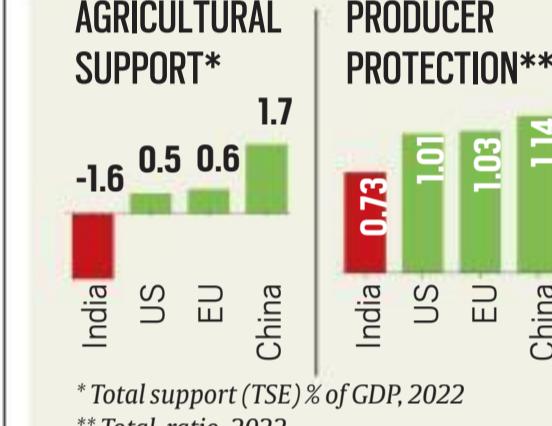
Land Possessed (hectare)	Estimated No. of Agricultural Households (lakh)	Indebted Agricultural Households	Average Outstanding Loan Amount
0.01-0.40	318.61	40.8%	₹33,220
0.41-1.00	331.48	48.4%	₹51,933
1.01-2.00	164.83	57.4%	₹94,498

Source: Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households (Jan-Dec 2019), National Statistical Office (NSO)

**CHART 1  
INDEX OF TERMS OF TRADE BETWEEN FARMERS AND NON-FARMERS**

Year	Index of Terms of Trade
2004-05	87.78
2010-11	102.95
2021-22*	97.07

Source: E&amp;S Division, DA&amp;FW \*Provisional



\* Total support (TSE) % of GDP, 2022

\*\* Total ratio, 2022

households were indebted.

**The terms of trade are against India's farmers**

Chart 1 shows the index of terms of trade (ToT) between farmers and non-farmers. ToT is the ratio of the cost input by farmers and the prices they receive for their output. A ToT lower than 100 means farmers are not making money. ToT were negative in 2004-05, but improved steadily over the next 6-7 years to hit a high of 102.95 in 2010-11. Since then, however, the ToT have turned negative yet again and remained stagnant.

**Indian farmers receive less support than other farmers**

The data do not support the notion that India's farmers are privileged, and receive "too much" financial support.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) collects data on "producer protection", which is defined as "the ratio between the average price received by producers (measured at the farm gate), including net payments per unit of current output, and the border price (measured at the farm gate)". A value of 1.10 suggests that farmers, overall, received prices that were 10% above international market levels.

India stands among the countries compared by OECD on producer protection. (Select countries; bottom right of Chart 1)

The OECD also calculates "agricultural sup-

port", which is "the annual monetary value of gross transfers to agriculture from consumers and taxpayers arising from government policies that support agriculture, regardless of their objectives and economic impacts".

The bars in the bottom left of Chart 1 show where India stands on the "total support estimate" (TSE), measured as a percentage of GDP, relative to other countries.

**Are MSPs the solution to problems of farmers?**

The MSP debate is the visible expression of a much deeper problem: farming is grossly unremunerative for most Indian farmers.

Also, the nature of India's farm distress is structural; that is, it has not been triggered by a recent passing event. The factors responsible for farm distress are long-standing, and merely tweaking MSPs or providing short-term solutions will not provide a sustainable solution.

There is no easy way out of this situation. The fact is that far too many people remain dependent on India's farms, which account for a small portion of economic output. Many of these farms are too small to even keep a family out of poverty. For all the lip service to farmers by successive governments, there is relatively little support, either through direct income transfers or provisioning of facilities (such as warehouses) that may bolster farmers' ability to bargain in the market. Also, the rest of the economy has not created enough jobs to pull people out of farms.

**EXPLAINED EDUCATION**

## CBSE open book exam plan: what is it, why now, how it can impact students

R RADHIKA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE CENTRAL Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has proposed a pilot study to check the feasibility of open book exams for Classes 9 to 12.

The pilot will be held in select schools in November–December for subjects like English, Mathematics and Science for Classes 9 and 10, and English, Mathematics and Biology for Classes 11 and 12. The CBSE has proposed this form of assessment based on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) released last year. The Board aims to study the time taken by students



**TENDER NOTICE**

Bank of Baroda, Baroda Corporate Centre, Mumbai, invites response for Request for Proposal (RFP) for "SELECTION OF TELE CALLING AGENCY FOR COLLECTION ACTIVITIES". Details of RFP is uploaded in Gems under ID GEM/2024/B/4634715 and also under 'Tender Section' on Bank's website: www.bankofbaroda.in.

Addendum/Corrigendum including modification in the RFP document, if any, shall be notified on the Gems Portal and Bank's website www.bankofbaroda.in. Bidder should refer the same before final submission of the RFP.

Last date for submission of above RFP is 16.03.2024 by 3.00 p.m.

Place: Mumbai

Receivables Management Department  
(Retail Assets, MSME and Agri Loans)

**Appeal for Identification**

General public is hereby informed that one person Name: Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 35-40 Yrs., Height: 5'5", Sex: Male, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Normal, Face: Round, Wearing: Black & White Colour Striped Jersey, Blue Colour Chatham Brand Lower and Bare Footed, Place of Recovery: Found dead near Gate No. 1, Anand Vihar Metro Station, Delhi on 20.02.2024. He was taken to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital, Delhi, Where doctor declared him brought dead.

In this regard DD No. 12A, Dated: 20.02.2024 has been lodged at Police Station: Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

SHO

P.S.: Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi  
DP/2192/ED/2024

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL,  
MUMBAI BENCH, MUMBAI (COURT – I)**

CA(CAA)/8/MB/2024

**In the matter of Section 230 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013  
and**

**In the matter of Scheme of Arrangement  
amongst  
ICICI Bank Limited  
and  
ICICI Securities Limited  
and  
their respective shareholders**

ICICI Securities Limited, a public limited company, incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office situated at ICICI Venture House, Appasaheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai – 400 025, Maharashtra, India. CIN: L67120MH1995PLC086241

...Applicant Company  
(Subsidiary Company)

**NOTICE AND ADVERTISEMENT OF NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF  
THE EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS (WHICH INCLUDES PUBLIC SHAREHOLDERS)**

NOTICE is hereby given that by an order dated February 14, 2024 ("Order"), the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench ("Hon'ble Tribunal") has directed convening of the meeting of the Equity Shareholders of ICICI Securities Limited (hereinafter referred to as the "Subsidiary Company"), for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit, approving the arrangement embodied in the Scheme of Arrangement amongst ICICI Bank Limited (hereinafter referred to as the "Holding Company") and the Subsidiary Company and their respective shareholders ("Scheme") pursuant to the provisions of Section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act") and other applicable provisions thereof and applicable rules thereunder.

In pursuance of the Order passed by the Hon'ble Tribunal and as directed therein, further Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Equity Shareholders of the Subsidiary Company will be held on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. (1730 hours) IST through Video Conference ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") (hereinafter referred to as the "Meeting") in compliance with the applicable laws including circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars") from time to time and the said Equity Shareholders are requested to attend the Meeting.

The Subsidiary Company has completed the electronic dispatch of the Notice of the Meeting dated February 20, 2024; the explanatory statement as required under Sections 230(3) and 102 of the Act read with Rule 6 of the Companies (Compromises, Arrangements and Amalgamations) Rules, 2016; and the annexes to the explanatory statement which includes the Scheme (collectively referred to as "Particulars") on February 22, 2024 through e-mail. The Particulars were sent through electronic mode to those Equity Shareholders whose e-mail addresses are registered with Kfin Technologies Limited ("Kfin"), Registrar and Transfer Agent of the Subsidiary Company/Depositories/Subsidiary Company and whose name appear in the register of members/list of beneficial owners as on Friday, February 9, 2024. The Particulars are placed on the website of the Subsidiary Company and can be accessed at [www.icicisecurities.com/wfrmDisclosureUnderSEBI\\_DELIST.aspx](http://www.icicisecurities.com/wfrmDisclosureUnderSEBI_DELIST.aspx) and are also available on the websites of National Stock Exchange of India Limited at [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com); BSE Limited at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com); and National Securities Depository Limited (hereinafter referred to as "NSDL") at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com).

If so desired, copy of the Particulars can be obtained free of charge, between 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon on all working days up to the date of the Meeting at the registered office of the Subsidiary Company or by sending a request along with the details of shareholding to the Subsidiary Company by e-mail at [investors@icicisecurities.com](mailto:investors@icicisecurities.com).

Since the Meeting is being held pursuant to the Order passed by the Hon'ble Tribunal and in compliance of MCA Circulars through VC/OAVM, physical attendance of the Equity Shareholders has been dispensed with. Accordingly, the facility for appointment of proxy by the Equity Shareholders of the Subsidiary Company is not available at this Meeting.

The Hon'ble Tribunal has appointed Justice (Retd.) Akil Kureshi, former Chief Justice of High Courts of Rajasthan and Tripura, and in his absence, Mr. BSV Prakash Kumar, Former Presiding Officer of the National Company Law Tribunal to be the Chairman of the Meeting.

Mr. Nrupan B. Dholakia (FCS No.: 10032, C.P. No.: 12884), of Dholakia & Associates LLP, Practicing Company Secretaries or in his absence Mr. Vishvesh Bhagat (ACS No.: 7255, C.P. No.: 25387) of Dholakia & Associates LLP, Practicing Company Secretaries, have been appointed as the scrutineer to scrutinize the e-voting during the Meeting and the remote e-voting process.

The Scheme, if approved by the Equity Shareholders will be subject to subsequent approval of the Hon'ble Tribunal or such other regulatory approvals as may be necessary.

NOTICE is further given that:

1. The Subsidiary Company has provided remote e-voting facility to its Equity Shareholders to enable them to cast their votes electronically and has availed the services of NSDL for providing VC/OAVM facility, remote e-voting and e-voting during the Meeting. Some of the important details regarding remote e-voting are provided below:

EVEN	127956
Commencement of remote e-voting period	Friday, March 22, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. (0900 hours) IST
End of remote e-voting period	Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. (1700 hours) IST
The remote e-voting module will be disabled by NSDL thereafter.	

2. The e-voting facility will also be made available during the Meeting to enable the Equity Shareholders who have not cast their vote through remote e-voting, to exercise their voting rights. Equity Shareholders who have cast their vote through remote e-voting prior to the Meeting may attend the Meeting but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.

3. An Equity Shareholder, whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the list of beneficial owners maintained by Kfin/Depositories/Subsidiary Company as on the cut-off date, i.e. Wednesday, March 20, 2024 only shall be entitled to exercise his/her/its voting rights on the resolution proposed in the Notice and attend the Meeting of the Equity Shareholders. The voting rights of the Equity Shareholders of the Subsidiary Company shall be in proportion to their equity shares in the paid-up equity share capital of the Subsidiary Company as on cut-off date i.e. Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

4. The Scheme shall be acted upon if a majority of persons representing three-fourth in value of the Equity Shareholders of the Subsidiary Company voting through remote e-voting and e-voting during the Meeting approve the Scheme, in terms of the provisions of Section 230 of the Act.

5. Further, in accordance with Master Circular No. SEBI/HO/CDF/POD-2/P/CIR/2023/93 dated June 20, 2023 issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (hereinafter referred to as "SEBI") read with Regulation 37(2) of the SEBI (Delisting of Equity Shares) Regulations, 2021, the Scheme shall be acted upon only if (i) the number of votes cast by the respective public shareholders of the Holding Company and the Subsidiary Company (through remote e-voting and e-voting during the Meeting) in favour of the Scheme is more than the number of votes cast by the public shareholders against it, and (ii) the number of votes cast by the public shareholders of the Subsidiary Company in favour of the Scheme is at least two times the number of votes cast by the public shareholders of the Subsidiary Company against it.

6. The results, together with the scrutineer's report, will be displayed at the registered office as well as the corporate office and on the website of the Subsidiary Company and on the website of NSDL at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) and shall be communicated to National Stock Exchange of India Limited and to BSE Limited on or before Monday, April 1, 2024.

7. Information and instructions for attending the Meeting including manner of voting (both remote e-voting and e-voting at the Meeting) by the Equity Shareholders holding shares in dematerialised mode, physical mode and for Equity Shareholders who have not registered their e-mail address has been provided in the Notice of the Meeting. The manner in which (a) person who becomes an Equity Shareholder of the Subsidiary Company after dispatch of the Notice and holding equity shares as on cut-off date (mentioned herein above); (b) Equity Shareholders who have forgotten the User ID and Password, can obtain/generate the User ID and Password, has also been provided in the Notice of the Meeting.

8. Equity Shareholders holding equity shares in dematerialised mode, who have not registered/updated their e-mail address with their depository participant(s), are requested to register/update their e-mail address with the depository participant(s) where they maintain their demat accounts.

9. Equity Shareholders having any queries or seeking any information with regard to the Scheme or the matter proposed to be considered at the aforesaid Meeting, are requested to write to the Subsidiary Company atleast 3 (three) days before the date of the Meeting through e-mail on [investors@icicisecurities.com](mailto:investors@icicisecurities.com).

10. In case of any difficulty or queries in connection with attending the Meeting through VC/OAVM or casting vote through remote e-voting facility, Equity Shareholders may contact:

For	Name & Designation	E-mail	Address	Contact Number
E-voting and VC/OAVM	Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, Senior Manager, NSDL	<a href="mailto:evoting@nsdl.com">evoting@nsdl.com</a>	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, A' Wing, Trade World, Kamala Mills Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013	022-4886 7000/ 022-2499 7000
			Sd/- Justice (Retd.) Akil Kureshi Chairman appointed for the Meeting	



S. No.	Positions	Pay Level	No. of post
1	Service & Maintenance Engineer	Level 7	1 - UR
2	Clerks	Level 4	2 - UR

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON****See Section 82 Cr. P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Sanjeev S/o Sh. Suraj, R/o Karol Bagh (Vegabond), Delhi has committed (or suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide CC No. 5665/19, FIR No. 25/2019 U/s 457/380/411 IPC PS-Barakhamba Road, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused Sanjeev can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Sanjeev has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Sanjeev of case CC No. 5665/19, FIR No. 25/2019 U/s 457/380/411 IPC PS-Barakhamba Road, New Delhi is required to appear before this court (or before me) to answer the complaint on or before the day of 24.04.2024.

By Order,

Sh. Vaibhav Kumar

Metropolitan Magistrate-05,

Court No. 13, Main Building

Patiala House Court, New Delhi



Sony

**SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE**

General Public is hereby informed that one female (depicted in the photo) namely Sony W/o Ravi R/o H.No.947, Pocket-7, Sec-8A, Narela, Delhi Aged-31 Years has been reported missing since 02.02.2024 at about 10 PM from H.No. Y-54, Mangolpuri, Delhi vide DD No.68A Dated 11.02.2024 registered at Police Station Mangolpuri, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

**Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5'1", **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, **Clothing:** Multi coloured suit, pant and Ladies slipper in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing female, may inform SHO, Mangolpuri, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 SHO, Mangolpuri, Delhi  
FAX No. : 011-24368639 Tel.: 011-27922186, 27921168  
DP/1993/OD/2024 Mob.: 7065036122

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, AHMEDABAD BENCH  
C.A. (CAA)/71 (AHM) 2023**

**In the matter of Section 230 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013**

**and**  
**In the matter of Scheme of Arrangement  
amongst**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**  
**and**  
**ICICI Securities Limited**  
**and**  
**their respective shareholders**

**ICICI Bank Limited**, a public limited company, incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office situated at ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara, Gujarat - 390 007.  
CIN: L65190GJ1994PLC021021

...Applicant Company  
(Holding Company)

**NOTICE AND ADVERTISEMENT OF NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS**

Notice is hereby given that by an order dated January 18, 2024 ("Order"), the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Ahmedabad Bench ("Hon'ble Tribunal") has directed convening of the meeting of the equity shareholders of ICICI Bank Limited (hereinafter referred to as the "Holding Company"), for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit, approving the arrangement embodied in the Scheme of Arrangement amongst the Holding Company and ICICI Securities Limited ("Subsidiary Company") and their respective shareholders ("Scheme") pursuant to the provisions of Section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act") and other applicable provisions thereof and applicable rules thereunder.

In pursuance of the Order passed by the Hon'ble Tribunal and as directed therein, further Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the equity shareholders of the Holding Company will be held on Wednesday, March 27



(CIN : U40108JH2013SGC001702)

Regd. Office : Engineering Building, H.E.C., Dharwa.

Ranchi-834004, Telephone : 0651-2400799 &amp; Fax : 0651-2400799

<https://www.jbvn.co.in>**Tender Cancellation Notice**

E-Tender No 79/PR/JBVNL/2023-24 under Engagement of Agency on turn key basis for Consumer Indexing, GIS based asset mapping and creation/updation of GIS Database, applications including upgradation & migration of existing GIS data, licenses, applications on cloud platform for a total period of 5 years (2 Years Implementation + 3 Years FMS). invited by General Manager (Comm), JBVNL under RDSS Scheme is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Sd/-  
General Manager (Coml.)

Save Energy, Save Nation for Better Tomorrow

PR.NO.320033 Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Ltd(23-24):D

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON****See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely (1) Feissal Shirazina, S/o. Abdol Hamid, R/o. (2) Hamed Hemmati, S/o. Gholam Hussain, Both R/o. H.No. 24B, Bhogal, Jungpura, New Delhi, have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 392/2022, date 17.09.2022 U/s 419/420/379/34 IPC & 14 Foreigners Act registered at P.S. Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued, stating that the said (1) Feissal Shirazina, (2) Hamed Hemmati, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said (1) Feissal Shirazina, (2) Hamed Hemmati, have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in this case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said (1) Feissal Shirazina, (2) Hamed Hemmati, accused of FIR No. 392/2022, date 17.09.2022 U/s 419/420/379/34 IPC & 14 Foreigners Act P.S. Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer said complaint on or before 20.05.2024.

By Order

Sh. Abhishek Kumar,  
Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate-01,  
Court No. 02, Main Building,  
Patiala House Court, New Delhi

DP/2052/IGIA/2024

HIMACHAL PRADESH  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENTTelephone No. 01893-220098 E-mail : [hp\\_kan2@mic.in](mailto:hp_kan2@mic.in)**INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**The Superintending Engineer HPWD 9<sup>th</sup> Circle Nurpur H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the lump sum bids, in the electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

S. N.	Name of work.	Estimated Cost (In lacs).	Starting date for downloadin g Bid.	Earnest Money (In lacs).	Deadline for submissio n of Bid.	Eligible Contract or.
1.	Construction of Rajpi Ambhi Jangal Bagga road Km. 0/0 to 1/300 including bridge over Debar Khad (SH- Formation Cutting, Retaining wall, Breast wall, Cross Drainage work, GSB, WBM-II, Road side Drains, Parapets, Cement Concrete Pavement and Construction of 102.50 Metre span prestressed concrete box girder bridge over Debar Khad at RD. (2/40) including five year Routine Maintenance after completion of work) under NHARD RID-E-XXIX.	993.56	04-03-2024 10:00 AM.	19.87	17-03-2024 (5.00 PM)	*A* Class,

The bidders are advised to note other details of tender from the department website .[www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in). Date of opening of tender is 18-03-2024 at 11:00 AM.Superintending Engineer,  
9<sup>th</sup> Circle, H.P.W.D., Nurpur  
Pin No. 1176202  
Tel. No. 01893-220098  
e-mail: [hp\\_kan2@mic.in](mailto:hp_kan2@mic.in)  
on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh  
HIM LOK SAMPAK.OFFICE OF PRINCIPAL, CENTRE OF COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT, OLD CHARA MANDI, KACHCHERA BERI ROAD, ROHTAK. Phone No. 01262-236275, E-mail: [pccmrtk@yahoo.com](mailto:pccmrtk@yahoo.com)**ADMISSION NOTICE**

Centre of Cooperative Management announces the commencement of its 54th session Diploma in Cooperative management (DCM) from 27-03-2024 to 13-08-2024 for Private students residing in Haryana State only (10 Seats Only)

Duration of the Course: 20 Weeks (27-03-2024 to 13-08-2024)

Age Limits: 18 to 40 Years

Last Date of Submission of Application: 26.03.2024

Admission will be given on merit basis.

1. Eligibility : Graduate.

2. Fees: 6000/- Rs.

You are kindly invited to personally visit our Centre during working hours and for any inquiry, you may contact our telephone No. 01262-236275 or Email ID: [pccmrtk@yahoo.com](mailto:pccmrtk@yahoo.com)Sd/- (Satish Kumar)  
Principal  
Centre of Cooperative Management Rohtak

25256/HR



File No. TP-21011 /2/2024-DIR-TP-TOWN PLANNING (E- 166874)/

Directorate of Town Planning  
Department of Urban Affairs  
Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh  
Mowb-II, Itanagar

Dated Itanagar the 12 February' 2024

**NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Consultancy Services Formulation of GIS based Master Plan for class III towns with population of 20,000 - 49,999

For

Seppa, Roing, Tezu, Changlang &amp; Khonsa towns in the state of Arunachal Pradesh

The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar proposes to undertake "Formulation of GIS-based Master Plans for class -III towns with population 20,000-49,999 for Seppa, Roing, Tezu, Changlang & Khonsa towns in the state of Arunachal Pradesh" under the sub-scheme of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0). Proposals are invited to conduct the assignment and submit the deliverables from Public Sector Undertakings/Autonomous Bodies/ISO certified Organizations and consulting firms/consortium that have requisite experience and infrastructure. The interested consultants/consortiums can download/purchase the RFP/application forms online from the E-Tendering website: <http://arunachaltenders.gov.in>. The completed application, as per instructions in the RFP document, should be submitted latest by 21st March 2024 upto 1500 hours. For further details may contact Shri Siyang Rebe, Assistant Town Planner at +91 8837484019.

The Department reserves the sole right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sd/-  
Vivek Pandey, IAS  
Commissioner to the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh  
Department of Urban Affairs  
Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh

DIPR/ARN/10307-09 Itanagar

**OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICER, UDAIPUR (Raj.)**

No. Store/F. Various Tender/2023-24/921 Dated: 10.02.2024

Notice Inviting Bid Bids for Rate Contract for Drugs and Medicine Items-Surgical Items and Absorbent Cotton Roll, Gauze and Bandage Items BID NOTICE No. 05/2023-24 E-Tender of subject's matters of Procurement are inviting from interested bidders from 12-02-2024 time 10.00 AM to 02-03-2024 time 6.00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eprocure.gov.in>, <http://www.sppr.rajk.nic.in>). The approximate value of the present bid is Rs. 650/-.NIB No. MHS2324A-2152.  
UBN No. MHS2324GLRC04831 (Drug and Medicine, Item No. 1)  
UBN No. MHS2324GLRC04832 (Surgical Item, Item No. 2)  
UBN No. MHS2324GLOBO4833 (Absorbent Item, Item No. 3)Sd/-  
Chief Medical and Health Officer  
Bari, Udaipur (Rajasthan)  
DIPR/C/1053/2024**SPORTS AUTHORITY OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

IGMC STADIUM, LABBIPET, BANDAR ROAD, VIJAYAWADA

Tenders are hereby invited from reputed and experienced companies for the following tenders.

Tender ID : 725001. Name of the work : Engagement of agency for the scope of work for design and development, testing, deployment maintenance of sports Data management system. Bid Starting date : 23.02.2024. Bid end date : 27.02.2024. Tender documents are available on e-procurement platform tender. [eprocure.gov.in](http://eprocure.gov.in). Tenders will be opened in the presence of company representatives who attend the evaluation. For further details contact : 0866-2499699.

Sd/- Vice Chairman and Managing Director

DIPR No.2726PP/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22, Dt: 22/02/2024

राजस्थान सरकार

कार्यालय मुख्य चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी, कोटा (राज.)

क्रमांक/एन.पी.यू.डी.एस./टेंडर/2023-24/1557 दिनांक: 22.02.2024

Notice Inviting Bids NIB No. 2023-24/18

UBN NO. MHS2324SLOB05082

E-Tender Bidders are invited upto 2.00 PM date 15-03-2024 for Janta Clinic/NUHM/NRHM/MNDY and Other Man Power Supply as per details mentioned in Tender Document at CMHO Office Swasthya Bhawan Kota Rajasthan. Total Estimated cost 720.00 Lakh. Details may be seen & downloaded in the Bidding Document at the Website [www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in) at site as well as in the office CM & HO Kota in working days from 9.30 AM to 6 PM.

हस्ता--

सदर्य सचिव

मुख्य चिकित्सा स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी, कोटा

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location 30-Elect-50-T-2023-24-E3  
Electrical work in connection with provision of VRF/ VRV type air conditioning plant with other associated work in canteen at Baroda House, New Delhi.

Approx cost of the works in Rs. 29.97 Lacs

Address of the office Sr. Divil. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

Bid Security Rs. 60000.00

Date &amp; time of submission of tender 26.03.2024, 12.00 Hrs.

Website & Notice board [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) & Sr. Div. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

572/2024

Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Open E-Tender Notice

Sr. The Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

Name of work: Augmentation incapacity by provision of heavy repair to shed /roof, drainage facilities, repair to floor and provision of level track etc. at EMU CAR SHED Ghaziabad under ADEN/GZB jurisdiction of Sr. DEN-II

Approx cost of work: 16362874.97

Earnest Money to be deposited: 231800.00

Date &amp; Time of submission of tender bid 01.03.2024 to 15.03.2024 at 15:00 Hrs.

Date &amp; Time of opening of tender 15.03.2024 15:00 Hrs.

Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system.

For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.

No manual offers are acceptable.

Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

330-TRN-GZB-2023-24-Dated : 20.02.2024

572/2024

Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Open E-Tender Notice

Sr. The Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

Name of work: Augmentation incapacity by provision of heavy repair to shed /roof, drainage facilities, repair to floor and provision of level track etc. at EMU CAR SHED Ghaziabad under ADEN/GZB jurisdiction of Sr. DEN-II

Approx cost of work: 16362541.97

Earnest Money to be deposited: 231800.00

Date &amp; Time of submission of tender bid 01.03.2024 to 15.03.2024 at 15:00 Hrs.

Date &amp; Time of opening of tender 15.03.2024 15:00 Hrs.

Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system.

For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.

No manual offers are acceptable.

Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

330-TRN-GZB-2023-24-Dated : 22.02.2024

583/2024

Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice

TSO-II-LRN-HQ-NDLs acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-tender against Tender no. CSP-KSF\_07\_2023-24 dated 20.02.2024. Closing date 21.03.2024; 15:00 hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual

## Classifieds

## PERSONAL

I, Varsha, W/o Prashant Verma, Address-Flat No-J-15, 2nd Floor, Jemna Block, Emerald Hills, Golf Course-Extension Road, Sector-65, Gurgaon-122018, changed my name to Varsha Chauhan.

0040715819-1

I, Syed Hasan Zaheer Naqvi R/o C-647, 3rd Floor Gali, No-E-22, Zakir Nagar, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi have changed my name to Syed Hasan Zahir Naqvi for all future purposes.

0070890428-1

I, Soniya W/o Pramod Kumar Maggo R/o Hno:26, Nishant Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi have changed my name from Soniya to Sonia Maggo permanently.

0040715814-1

I, Snehlma Jauhari D/o Harsha Jauhari R/o A-8, Sector-31, NOIDA, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301, have Corrected a spelling mistake in my father's Name on my Passport, i.e., Harsha Jauhari' to 'Harsha Jauhari'.

0040715798-1

I, Shruti Dan daughter of Amit Dang R/o E-75, 3rd Floor, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019 have changed my name to Shruti Dang.

0040715782-2

I, Seema Solanki W/o Mahesh Singh Solanki R/o H.no-304, No-1, Sunworld Arista Sector-168, Noida-201301 have changed my name from Seema to Seema Solanki for all future purposes.

0040715896-1

I, Sanjeet Kumar Singh S/o Ram Chandra Singh R/o House No-1/C, Block-25, Peshwa Road, D.I.Z. Area Sector-2, New Delhi-110001, have changed my minor son's name from Raju aged 16 years to Raju Kumar Singh forever

0070890401-1

I, Sanjeet Kumar Singh S/o Ram Chandra Singh R/o House No-1/C, Block-25, Peshwa Road, D.I.Z. Area Sector-2, New Delhi-110001, have changed my minor son's name from Raju aged 16 years to Raju Kumar Singh forever

0070890400-1

I, Sudha Kant Mishra S/o SH. DHAIRYA NATH MISHRA R/o PLOT NO. 5/B, 16, BALJEET VIHAR, KIRARI SOLEMAN NAGAR, DELHI-110086 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SUDHA KANT MISHRA in my Corrg. P.P.O. No. S/CO/R/024567/2011. The actual name of mine is SUDHA KANT MISHRA

0070890438-1

I, Rohan s/o Inder Pal, R/o A-521, Pandav Nagar, Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008 have changed my name to Rohan Pal.

0040715807-1

I, Promod Maggo S/o Raj Kumar R/o Hno:26, Nishant Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi have changed my name from Promod Maggo to Promod Kumar Maggo permanently

0040715814-2

I, Pramod Maggo S/o Raj Kumar R/o Hno:26, Nishant Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi have changed my name from Promod Maggo to Promod Kumar Maggo permanently

0040715814-3

I, Navkar Jain S/o Vijender Kumar Jain, R/o H.no-9/1929, Street No-2, Kailash Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, East Delhi-110031, I have changed the name of my minor Son Reyan Jain aged about 6 Years and He shall hereafter be known as Vansh Jain

0070890376-1

I, MEENU W/o NO. JC673659H RANK NB/SUB SUDHIR KUMAR R/o D-95, EKTA ENCLAVE, GALI NO. 2, BURARI, DELHI-110053, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MEENU SHARMA VIDE AFFIDAVIT DATE 21-02-2024 BEFORE DELHI.

0070890440-1

I, NO. 1484270X RANK SEP/MT BRAJESH BABU SHARMA R/o D-498, GALI NO. 12, BHAJANPURA, YAMUNA VIHAR, DELHI-110053, HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR DAUGHTER'S FROM VAISHNAVI VIDHE AFFIDAVIT 21-02-2024 BEFORE DELHI.

0070890439-1

I, Monika Chauhan D/o Shripal Singh and Ex. Wife of Vijender Singh Bhati, R/o F-314/C, Street No-8, Pandav Nagar, Delhi-110091, declare that I got divorce from my husband Vijender Singh Bhati vide court decree HMA NO 229/2019, Dated 23.04.2019. Further I have changed the name of my minor daughter Aashiya Alias Augysta aged 10 years and she shall hereafter be known as

0070890404-1

I, Mahender Kumar R/o BE-13, Clock Tower, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to Mahender Kumar.

0070890434-1

I, Inderjeet Paul alias Inderjeet Kaur Paul D/o Mohan Singh Bhasin, W/o Devinder Singh Paul R/o 8/A, Pocket 10, Kalkaji, Extn., South Delhi, Delhi-110019, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Inderjeet Kaur

0070890370-1

I, Dolly wife of Ankush Dang r/o E-75, Ground Floor, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019 have changed my name to Dolly Dang.

0040715782-1

I, Anupreet Kaur w/o Ankit Aggarwal R/o 7/1, Second Floor, Subhash Nagar, Delhi-110027 have changed my name to ANU AGGARWAL

0040715793-2

I, Anup Kumar s/o Ved Prakash R/o A-25, Clock Tower, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to ANOOP KUMAR MALHOTRA

0040715793-1

I, Sunny S/o Kewal Krishan Chauhan R/o 28/8, Second Floor, Indira Vikas, Near Nirankari Colony, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009, have changed my name to Sunny Chauhan for all purposes

0070890405-1

I, Smriti Makhiya W/o Sumit Handa R/o ATS One Hamlet, Sector-104, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201304, have changed my name to Smriti Handa

0070890402-1

I, PRAMOD KUMAR S/o GULAB LAL R/o GALLNO-60 KHAJOOOR COLONY, SECTOR-31 NOIDA, SADARPUR COLONY, KANPUR PUBLIC SCHOOL, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201301 have changed the name of minor son PIYUSH aged 14-years and he shall hereafter be known as PIYUSH KUMAR.

0070890401-1

I, MAHMood KHANS/o MUBARIK HUSAIN, R/o HOUSE NO-408, A-4 BLOCK, SULTAN PURI, DELHI-110086 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM MAHMOOD KHANTO MEHMOOD KHAN TO MEHMOOD KHAN

0070890409-1

I, TKM. Vaishno Gupta D/o Ramnivas Gupta R/o A-3/197, New Kundli, East Delhi Delhi-110096 have changed my name to Vaishno Gupta for all future purposes.

0070890406-1

I, Divya Arora D/o Gulshan Arora and W/o Jaideep Bajaj R/o House No-C3A/59A Janakpuri B-1 Delhi-110058 have changed my name to Divya Bajaj Permanently.

0040715834-1

I, ZEBUNISHA W/o MEHMood KHAN, R/o HOUSE NO-408, A-4 BLOCK, SULTAN PURI, DELHI-110086 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM ZEBUNISHA TO JAIBUN NISHA

0070890410-1

I, Sunder Sharma, S/o Durgi Ram, R/o 15/253 Kalyan Puri, Chilla Saroda Khadar, Delhi-110091, Have Changed My Name To Sunder Lal Sharma.

0040715891-1

I, Shakuntala Devi Bajaj, W/o Laxman Dass, R/o A-1/1, 100 Feet-Road, Nathu Colony, Shahdara, Delhi-110093, have changed my name to Shakuntala Devi, for all future purposes. Both, name are same, person.

0040715902-10

I, Jasvinder Singh S/o Gurban Singh Chawla R/o House No-A-127, 3rd Floor, Asha Park, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018 have changed my name from Jasvinder Singh to Jasvinder Singh Chawla for all purposes.

0070890414-1

I, SHIVAM KUMAR, S/o Arun Mehta, R/o W-294, upper-Ground Near-Tandoor-Chowk Tihar-Village, Tilak-Nagar West-Delhi-110018, declare that name of my father and my mother has been wrongly-written as Arun Mahto and Kiran in my class-10th and class-12th marksheet and certificate educational-documents. The actual-name of my-father and my mother are Arun Mehta and Kiran Devi.

0040715819-10

I, Harish Kumar sablok, s/o Khan chand R/o-B260 surajmal vihar, delhi-92, have changed my name to harish sablok all future purposes

0040715905-5

I, Rekha R/o F-62 UGF Vishnu Garden New Delhi 110018 have changed my Name to Rekha Kharana after marriage for future.

0040715781-1

I, Sunder S/o Shri Charan Singh Sharma R/o House No. DA-297 Gandhi Ashram Colony, Palwal Haryana-121102 Permanent address House No. 41 Block No. 2 Village Mandukha Tehsil Hathin Palwal Haryana have changed my name to Jagjit Sharma for all purposes

0050237549-1

I, it is general information that I, SUMITRA W/o LATE SH. GIAN SINGH R/o MUNDA KHERA (78), JHAJRAR, HARYANA-124105 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SUMITRA DEVI in my P.P.O BOOK PC/GRI/16/1532. The actual name of mine is SUMITRA, which may be amended accordingly.

0040715803-1

I, hitherto known as CHANDER Bahadur, S/o LAHAD Bahadur, R/o 1056, Type-2, 3rd-Floor, Delhi Admin-Flats, Near-Gurudwara, Gulabi Bagh, North-Delhi, Delhi-110007, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHANDER Bahadur Gurung.

0040715891-10

I, hitherto known as AVINASH BANSODE alias BANSODE AVINASH DIGAMBAR, son of DIGAMBAR BANSODE, residing at 21/6, Gitanjali-Complex, Central-Bank officers-Quarters, South TT-Nagar, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh-462003, have changed my name and shall hereinafter be known as AVINASH BANSODE

0040715863-3

I, Jagdish Prasad, s/o Ramanand Shastri, Address: 203 &-204, First-Floor, Gali No. 3, Harit Vihar A-Block, Near Karmi Mata Mandir, Sant-Nagar, Delhi-110084, have changed my name to Jagdish Prasad Semwal

0040715819-2

I, Anupreet Kaur w/o Ankit Aggarwal R/o 7/1, Second Floor, Subhash Nagar, Delhi-110027 have changed my name to ANU AGGARWAL

0040715793-2

I, Anup Kumar s/o Ved Prakash R/o A-25, Clock Tower, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to ANOOP KUMAR MALHOTRA

0040715793-1

I, Jagdish Prasad, s/o Ramanand Shastri, Address: 203 &-204, First-Floor, Gali No. 3, Harit Vihar A-Block, Near Karmi Mata Mandir, Sant-Nagar, Delhi-110084, have changed my name to Jagdish Prasad Semwal

0040715819-2

I, have changed my name, from Parvesh Gupta to Pravesh Gupta. In future I shall be known and addressed as Pravesh Gupta, S/o Late Sh. Ramesh Chand Gupta, R/o G-105, Agrasen Apartment, 1/P extension patparganj, Delhi-110092.

I, Praveen Kumari, W/o Ankur Tyagi, R/o Tower-24, Flat No-901, Near-Dharmpur Village, M3M Woodshire, Sector-107, Dharmpur (59), Gurgaon, Haryana-122006, have changed my name to Pareen Tyagi.

0040715819-8

I, Viljender, S/o Saroop Lal R/o House no -23-B Kaliyanwala Mohalla opposite Shiv Mandir Sanatan Bhawan Chirag Delhi New Delhi-110017, Have changed my name to Virender Kumar Sherawat, Permanently.

004071583-2

I, Vidya Vati W/o Chander Shekhar Kalra, R/o H.No.1067, Sector-31, Gurgaon (Haryana), have changed my name to Vidya Kati Kalra for all Purposes.

0040715902-2

I, Vaishali Gandhi W/o Avtar Singh, R/o 15/38, Block-15, Geeta-Colony, Delhi-110031, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Harpreet Singh Batra in my minor daughter Jaipreet Kaur aged 17-years in her 10th-class educational document. The actual-name of mine is Harpreet Singh, which may be amended accordingly.

0040715905-7

I, Poornam Chaudhary, W/o Kapil Hudda, R/o H.No.C-33 West Jyoti-Nagar Near-Durgapur Chowk North-East, Delhi-110094, declared that name of mine have been wrongly written as Poonam Chaudhary in my service records. My correct-name is POONAM CHAUDHARY, which will amend accordingly.

0040715863-8

I, Gulshan Sachdeva, S/o Amarnath, R/o 4/376 Gali No. 13, Blk. Bhola Nath Nagar SHAHDARA, DELHI-110032, Have Changed My Name To Gulshan Kumar, permanently

0040715863-5

I, HITESH RAVERI S/o TILOK CHAND, R/o B-4/8, FIRST-FLOOR, SECTOR-16, ROHINI, DELHI-110089, change my name to HITESH KUMAR RAVERI

0040715863-8

I, Gulshan Sachdeva, S/o Amarnath, R/o 4/376 Gali No. 13, Blk. Bhola Nath Nagar SHAHDARA, DELHI-110032, Have Changed My Name To Gulshan Kumar, permanently

0040715863-3

I, PRANJAL S/O DINESH SINGH, R/o N-124/A-6, KATWARA SARAI, DELHI-110016, have changed my name to PRANJAL SANSANWAL, for all future purpose.

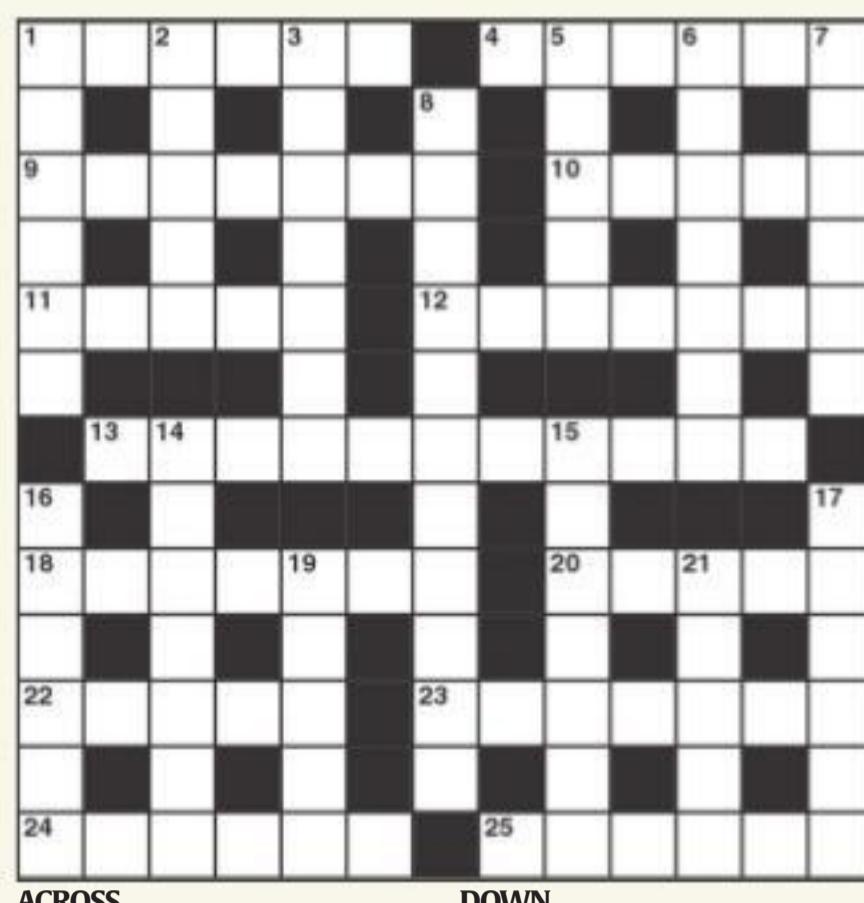
0040715863-4

I, PRABHAT KUMAR, father of ADIT Presently residing at H.No.29,Gali No.2,Raj-nagar part-2,Palam-colony,New Delhi-110077,have changed my minor son's name from ADIT to ADITYA SINGH,vide-Affidavit Dated-22.2.2024. 0040715891-9

0040715891-9

I, Dhwanil Vijaykumar Jain, W

## CROSSWORD 5295



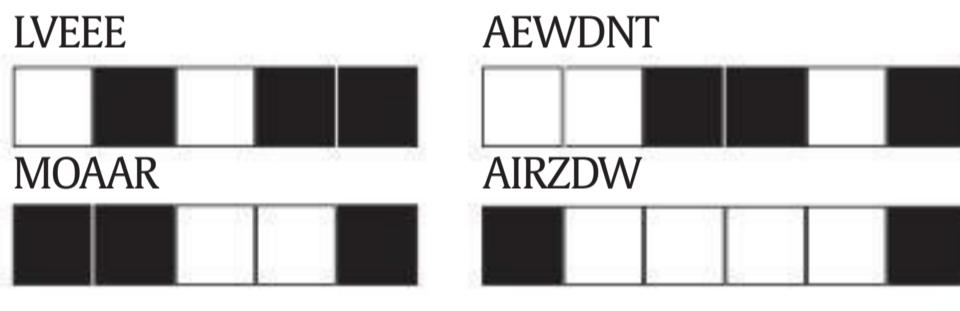
- ACROSS**
- No rice is cooked for Caruso for instance (6)
  - Small companies get ready to indulge (6)
  - Picnic arranged to entertain a well-bred composer (7)
  - The Middle East initially is the subject (5)
  - It may be drawn or sucked up (5)
  - They rise in anger (7)
  - Entrance alarm? (5,6)
  - Doris on shift confined to building (7)
  - Tart church man (5)
  - Study on leave in Africa (5)
  - Get lean in order to be graceful (7)
  - Go where lots of others go (6)
  - Ordinary seaman has to look after Belgian port (6)
- DOWN**
- Make use of a film strip (6)
  - Happen to be unoriginal (5)
  - Whig can be seen involved in an informal chat (7)
  - Surgical treatment on twitch in the eye (5)
  - Pass round the salt showing care and quietness (7)
  - Religion is embraced by them (6)
  - Mean being ready to fight (5-6)
  - It's old news (7)
  - Reporter's announcement produces marked effect (7)
  - It cuts things rather fine (6)
  - How expert in judo is beaten (6)
  - There's nothing persistent in this scint (5)
  - A seer in a flurry to get off the mark (5)

**Solutions Crossword 5294 Across:** 1 Vincent, 5 Tip up, 8 Out of practice, 9 Ariel, 10 Disease, 11 Digest, 12 Ardent, 15 Lookout, 17 Vernal, 19 Two-edged sword, 20 Donor, 21 Maddens Down: 1 Vola, 2 Nothing to go on, 3 Trifolids, 4 Tirade, 5 Tacks, 6 Private Income, 7 Present, 11 Diluted, 13 Revised, 14 Stream, 16 Order, 18 Lidos

## JUMBLED WORDS

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

How many a man has \_\_\_\_\_ in his life from the reading of a book. - Thoreau (5,,3,3)



Answers: LEVEE: AROMA; AWARD: WIZARD; WIZARD: DILATED; DILATED: VENAL

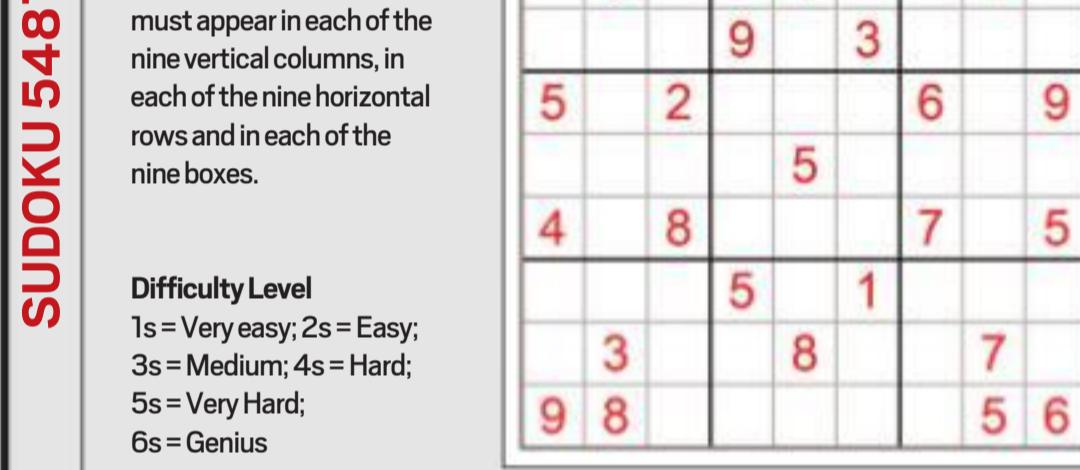
## Difficulty Level 5s

## Instructions

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

## Difficulty Level

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



## SOLUTION SUDOKU 5480



## AGREEMENT — REC

REC signed agreements worth Rs.588 Cr with DVC to strengthen infrastructure & energy projects in the region. The agreements aim to strengthen their cooperation for the development of TUBED coal mines, & include a Term Loan agreement, an Escrow agreement, & Hypothecation deeds. The agreement was signed by SK Sahu, Senior CPM, REC RO, Kolkata & D Maity, SGM (Fin.), DVC.

## MoU—EIL

A historic collaboration has been forged between IIT Roorkee, an esteemed academic institute of national importance, & EIL, a leading Engineering, Technology & Total energy consultancy company. This landmark partnership aims to drive innovation & advance research in critical areas of green technologies, marking a significant milestone in the pursuit of scientific excellence.



## INAUGURATION — WAPCOS

The Union Minister of Jal Shakti, G S Shekhawat inaugurated the Upper Yamuna River Board Building, constructed by NPPC, a subsidiary of WAPCOS in presence of M/o Water Resources from UP, Rajasthan & Delhi. Smt. D Mukherjee, Secy. MoJS; Chief Secretaries of Rajasthan & Delhi; Chairman CWC, Chairman, UYPR, RK Agrawal CMD, WAPCOS & NPCC, Anupam Mishra Director (Comm. & HRD), WAPCOS.

## VISIT — INDIAN COAST GUARD

The ICG has persistently aimed at indigenisation of spares for foreign-origin equipment installed on board ICG ships in partnership with OEMs. Recently, J Tegström, the CEO of Marine Jet Power Sweden, visited the Indian Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi to reaffirm his company's commitment to enhancing indigenous content in waterjet systems.



## VISIT — THDCIL

Pankaj Agarwal (IAS), Secy., M/o Power, along with team of other Senior Officers of MoP, Praveen Gupta, Member (Thermal), CEA & Piyush Singh, JS (Thermal) carried out inspection visit of the Under Construction 1320 MW Kharja STPP to review the progress of the project ahead of its commissioning in 2024. RK Vishnoi, CMD THDCIL conveyed his Heartiest welcome to Secy., M/o Power.



## LAUNCH — LIC

LIC launched a new product LIC's Amritaal at the hands of Dr. Vivek Joshi, Secy., Financial Services, M/o Finance. The plan is specifically designed to have an adequate corpus to meet the higher education & other needs of the child. It facilitates accumulation of corpus through Guaranteed additions at the rate of Rs 80 per thousand basic sum assured at the end of each policy year from the inception till the end of Policy term.

## FESTIVAL — PUNJABI ACADEMY

Basant Panchmi, the festival heralding the arrival of Spring, was celebrated by Punjabi Academy, Delhi with fervor & poetic brilliance by organizing Kavi Darbar at Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, Gole Market, New Delhi. The Kavi Darbar was presided over by SHS Balli, VC, Punjabi Academy. Dr. M Singh, Hon. Director, Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan and Members of Governing Council.

## LAUNCH — PSB

PSB has launched its one-of-a-kind MSME training program, "PSB IGNITE," designed with their MSME customers. The official launch event was held at the PSB corporate office recently & was graced by the presence of honourable dignitary Dr. Vivek Joshi, Secy., DoFS, M/o Finance. PSB strives to be a true partner to MSME entrepreneurs and has been a consistent contributor to India's economic growth.



## CORPORATE BRIEFS

## AWARD — GAIL

GAIL CMD Sandeep Kumar Gupta conferred CEO with HR Orientation award in Mumbai, recently. Sandeep Kumar Gupta, CMD, GAIL has been conferred with the CEO with HR Orientation award at the 32nd World HRD Congress & Awards held here. Gupta received the award for his business-related HR sensitivity & savviness, communication effectiveness with & towards employees, innovation within other HR disciplines and areas, and change management, according to a statement by the organizers. Gupta is a Commerce Graduate & a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. He has wide experience of over 35 years in the oil and gas industry. Before joining GAIL in Oct. 2022, he held the position of Dir. (Fin. since August 2019 on the Board of Indian Oil Corporation Limited.



## PROJECT HANDED OVER — RECPDCL

REC Power Development & Consultancy Limited handed over a project specific SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) to M/s GR Infraprojects Private Limited. The SPV was formed for the establishment of Inter State Transmission Project for "Evacuation of Power from RE Projects in Raigarh (1000 MW) SEZ in Madhya Pradesh-Phase II" through Tariff-based Competitive Bidding process. The SPV, named Pachora Power Transmission Limited, was handed over to the successful bidder, M/s G R Infraprojects Private Limited, in the presence of senior officials from RECPDCL.



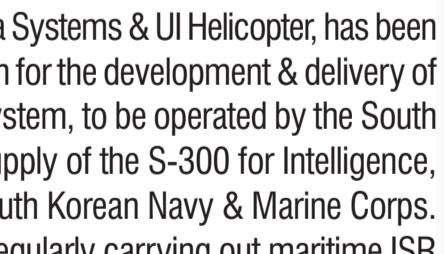
## BHOOMI POOJAN — NBCC

The "Bhoomi Pojan Ceremony" for the redevelopment of M/o External Affairs Housing at KG Marg, ND, took place recently. The event witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries including YK Sialas Thangal, Lt. Secy., MEA, Ms. Nidhi Anand, Senior Architect, MEA & KP Mahadevawamy, CMD, NBCC. Ms. BK Sokhey, Dir. (Fin.), NBCC, Saleem Ahmad, Dir. (Proj.), NBCC & Manoj Shrivastava, GM, NBCC along with other distinguished guests from both organizations were present on the occasion.



## SCHIEBEL WINS CAMCOPTER S-300 CONTRACT FOR SOUTH KOREAN NAVY

Schiebel, together with Korean-based defence solutions companies Hanwha Systems & UI Helicopter, has been awarded a contract by the Defence Acquisition Programme Administration for the development & delivery of the Vertical Take-off & Landing CAMCOPTER® S-300 Unmanned Air System, to be operated by the South Korean MOD. The contract was signed with Hanwha Systems for the supply of the S-300 for Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition & Reconnaissance missions for the South Korean Navy & Marine Corps. The South Korean Navy has been a Schiebel customer for over 10 yrs, regularly carrying out maritime ISR operations with its CAMCOPTER® S-100 UAS fleet. The changing geo-political situation & North Korean threat call for an expansion of their UAS fleet, adding larger & heavier UAS with greater capability.



## MOU — PNB

PNB have signed a MoU at IREDA Headquarter in New Delhi. Both the institutions will collaborate with each other in the field of lending in Renewable Energy sector. With this step, both the institutions will lend to those companies who are engaged in promoting Environment Social & Governance in the country.



Sustainability & Green Energy are the top priorities of the entire world at this juncture & both the institutions will work together in lending to such companies who are engaged in sustainability and green energy sectors.

**POWERGRID** PM Modi dedicated the Transmission System Strengthening Scheme for evacuation of power from SEZ in Rajasthan (8.1 GW) under Phase-II Part A & Transmission System for providing connectivity to RE projects at Bikaner (PG), Fatehgarh-II & Bhadla-II, recently. These have been built by POWERGRID has an ambitious target of establishing 500 GW renewable energy capacity by 2030, which includes 100 GW from solar & 60 GW from wind. This includes solar generation potential of about 20 GW in Rajasthan. The transmission system strengthening scheme for evacuation of power from solar energy zones in Rajasthan (11.1 GW – 3 GW through intra state) under Phase II, inter-alia includes evacuation of 1.05 GW in Bhadla complex, 2.2 GW in Fatehgarh complex, 1.9 GW in Ramgarh and 2.95 GW in Bikaner.

**DELHI TOURISM** organised the 36th Garden Tourism Festival in collaboration with Delhi Government recently at the Garden of Five Senses. The venue of the festival is spread over an area of 20 acres, the greenery spread all around here provides moments of peace in the fast-paced life. The theme of the 36th Garden Tourism Festival was "The Earth Laughs in Flowers".

## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

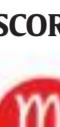
## ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

It's time to put yourself first, but recognise that others will come second and therefore deserve your help, sympathy and assistance. If at all possible, please do make financial plans earlier rather than later, for you need to be well prepared before new choices loom.



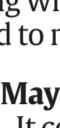
## LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

As far as very intimate affairs are concerned, you must refuse to be drawn back into the past, no matter how persistent and tiresome other people become. Never allow yourself to be emotionally blackmailed. With a mistake, admit it.



## SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Your personal life seems to have turned upside down not once, nor twice but possibly three times over the last twelve months. Everything seems to depend on how well you manage one or two important relationships, and how successful you are in keeping partners on your side.



## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

It could be another four or five days before you have the power to enforce your will without the risk that you'll shoot yourself in the foot or undermine your own interests. This is a day to form alliances and act in concert with your sympathisers.



## CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Employers or those in positions of authority should be gearing up for some sort of initiative, but they may not make it before you take your decisions. And if you're sensible and keep quiet when others are sounding off, then you may be let off the hook and saved from embarrassment.



## LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Try to see people and situations as they really are. If you genuinely manage to understand the true nature of what's going on, you will realise that delays and unpunctuality are part of life's rich tapestry. Actually, an unscheduled hold-up might give you the chance to think again.



## VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Although you are very realistic in some senses, you do tend to bury your head in the sand when emotions are raised. You must realise that loved ones are entitled to receive direct answers to clear questions. If you're honest with them, then they're more likely to be straight with you.



## PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Any arguments that do erupt over the next month or so are likely to be prompted by opportunities at home. Do your best and get on and complete each and every outstanding task. You'll never actually get to the end, but at least you can shift some of the burden on to other shoulders.



## AWARD — NFL

U. Saravanan, CMD, NFL, conferred with CEO of the Year Award during the Business Leader of the Year Awards function held in Mumbai on 17th February, 2024.



## NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR — NBT

The 9-day New Delhi World Book Fair 2024 concluded on Sunday, with the fairgrounds brimming over with lakhs & lakhs of visitors & booklovers browsing books, attending author sessions, children's activities & power-packed cultural performances.



## EMBASSY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Chief Executive Officer of Prasar Bharati, Gaurav Dwivedi recently received the Russian Embassy's Spokesperson Petr Sizov. Prospects for Russian-Indian information cooperation, in particular with "Big Asia" media Group, were discussed at the meeting.



**NTPC** PM Modi dedicated the 300 MW Nokhra Solar Project of NTPC Green Energy Ltd. to the nation through video-conferencing recently. Spread over 1550 acres in Bikaner district of Rajasthan, the project is being executed under the CPSU Scheme (Phase-II) with an investment of Rs1803 cr to ensure green power to the state of Telangana. With generation of 730 million Units per yr, this project will not only light up over 1.3 lakh households, it will also help restricting 6 lakh tonnes of carbon dioxide emission every yr. Going forward, the project is expected to restrict CO2 emission to the tune 15 million tonne in a span of 25 yrs.

**SCOPE** is organizing programs on 'Public Procurement' & 'Right to Information Act' at Hotel Vivanta, Shillong on 29th Feb - 1st March, 2024 & 1st March 2024 - 2nd March, 2024 respectively. With special focus on the NE region, the Workshops will be graced by Heeralal Samanya, Chief Information Commissioner, CIC; Smt. Ranveet Kaur, Chairperson, Competition Commission of India; H. Nongliah, State Chief Information Commissioner, Meghalaya; A Sobi DG, SCOPE; Industry experts & Senior Govt. officials. SCOPE regularly conducts workshops & capacity building programs across the country.

**The Royal Thai Embassy**, New Delhi, will organise the 5th Namaste Thailand Festival 2024 at the Embassy on 24 & 25 February 2024 from 11 AM onwards. It aims to showcase Thailand to Indians & foreigners residing in India through Thailand's various elements of Thailand such as food, culture, tourism, & products. The Festival will be inaugurated by H.E. Ms. Pattrat Hongtong, Ambassador of Thailand to India, along with Team Thailand, diplomatic communities, Friends of Thailand, & the Thai & Indian private sector. The Embassy will also arrange the workshops & activities for the interested visitors.

**ATL** is delighted to announce the successful launch of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle F14 by the ISRO. This achievement marks another milestone in India's space exploration endeavors. Ananth Technologies had made a significant contribution to the success of this mission. The GSLV F14 placed the satellite INSAT-3DS into Geosynchronous orbit with 6 channel Imager, 19 channel Sounder, Data Relay Transponder & Satellite Aided Search & Rescue transponder as payloads. It enhances meteorological observations & monitoring of land & ocean surfaces for weather forecasting & disaster warning. The flawless execution of the launch underscores the expertise & dedication of the entire team involved in the mission. ATL played a crucial role in the GSLV F14 & INSAT-3DS through its technological contributions.



IPL to start on March 22; first two Delhi games shifted

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE 17TH EDITION of the Indian Premier League (IPL 2024) will start on March 22 in Chennai as per the official schedule announced on Thursday. However, only the fixtures for the first 21 matches, spanning over 15 days, were announced on Thursday because the T20 extravaganza is clashing with the upcoming general elections. The remaining fixtures will be announced after the election commission announces the dates of the Lok Sabha elections.

Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will be taking on Royal Challengers Bangalore in the first match of the season. A total of 70 league matches and four play-off matches will be held including the two qualifiers, the eliminator and the final.

For newly appointed Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya, it will be a familiar foe to start off his tenure as Gujarat Titans host the five-time champions in their first game of the season at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Delhi Capitals first two home games will be hosted in Visakhapatnam after the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) requested more time to prepare a fresh surface for after they are done staging 11 Women Premier League games, including the final on March 17.

Delhi's first 'home' match of the IPL will be against defending champions Chennai Super Kings and will be played on March 31 in Visakhapatnam. The second match will be played at the same venue against Kolkata Knight Riders on April 3.

"Delhi's first two games will be moved to some other venue, we have informed the BCCI about it," a DDCA official told The Indian Express.

"The reason is WPL. We will be hosting a total of 11 matches in two weeks and with IPL starting from March 22 the first IPL match in Delhi was supposed to take place on March 24, so we don't have enough time to prepare pitches. The BCCI has agreed to shift the first two matches and that has given us some breathing space," he said.

#### IPL SCHEDULE

March 22- CSK vs RCB (Opening match); March 23- PBKS vs DC, KKR vs SRH; March 24- RR vs LSG, GT vs MI; March 25- RCB vs PBKS; March 26- CSK vs GT; March 27- SRH vs MI; March 28- RR vs DC; March 29- RCB vs KKR; March 30- LSG vs PBKS; March 31- GT vs SRH, DC vs CSK; April 1- MI vs RR; April 2- RCB vs LSG; April 3- DC vs KKR; April 4- GT v PBKS; April 5- SRH vs CSK; April 6- RR vs RCB; April 7- MI vs DC; April 7- LSG vs GT



The remaining IPL fixtures will be announced after the dates of the Lok Sabha elections are announced. File

#### LONG JUMP'S PROPOSED RULE CHANGE

Affects beauty of sport: Sreeshankar on plan for take-off zone instead of board

NILAKSHI KOSHIE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

WORLD ATHLETICS trying out a take-off zone in place of the existing take-off board aimed at reducing fouls in long jump will kill the beauty of the sport and finish off its novelty, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games silver medallist Murali Sreeshankar said.

The purpose of the take off zone is to reduce the time wasted because of jumpers overstepping, World Athletics CEO Jon Ridgeon had said earlier this week.

"At the World Championships in Budapest last summer, a third of all the jumps were no-jumps, athletes stepping over the front of the take-off board," Ridgeon said on the Anything But Footy podcast. "That doesn't work, that's a waste of time. So we're testing, for example, a take-off zone rather than a take-off board, so we measure from where the athlete takes off to where they land in the pit. That means every single jump counts..." Ridgeon said.

Though the take off-zone would be an advantage to jumpers because they don't have to worry about a foul as they now don't have to get as close as possible to the take-off line (foul line), Sreeshankar said World Athletics was 'questioning the skill' of long jumpers.

**"Long jump is a technical event and our aim is to be precise on the take-off board. The purpose of this intervention is to make the sport more interesting to viewers but it is affecting the novelty of the sport."**

MURALI SREESHANKAR,  
ASIAN GAMES, CWG SILVER MEDALLIST

"It will affect the beauty of the sport. It is also questioning the skill of athletes. Long jump is a technical event and our aim is to be precise on the take-off board. The purpose of this intervention is to make the sport more interesting to viewers but it is affecting the novelty of the sport. Long jump is all about taking off before a specific line, we have been doing this right from the time we have started training. Now you are telling me you can jump from wherever within the zone and we will measure it," Sreeshankar told The Indian Express.

Retired American star Carl Lewis, with

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#### WHY FOUL JUMPS WILL REDUCE TO ALMOST ZERO



**IN THE** long jump, under existing rules, an athlete jumps by taking off from a 20 centimetre wide board. But if any part of the athlete's foot touches the take off line (foul line), placed at the end of the board, it is deemed a foul. The distance is measured from the end of the take off board to the nearest mark in the sand.

**IN PROPOSED** changes, an athlete will take off from a zone wider than the take off board. The jump will be measured from the final point of contact within the take off zone. This means athletes don't have to strive for their point of contact being closest to the edge of the take off board and the risk of a foul diminishes drastically.

four gold medals from four Olympics in the bag, came out strongly against the proposed rule change.

"You're supposed to wait until April 1st

most difficult skill from the event. Just make the basket larger for free throws because so many people miss them."

#### Unaddressed issue

Sreeshankar said there remains an unaddressed issue related to the take-off board - the material it is made out of makes it slippery and it can result in injuries.

The 24-year-old also cautioned administrators about the material used within the proposed take-off zone.

"One more clarification is needed. If they are making a take-off zone and if they are placing some sort of material in that and if it is going to be the same material used for the take-off board, then we will definitely slip. It is like in Tom and Jerry, Tom sets his foot on the banana peel and he falls head first, it will be just like that."

He cites the example of Jamaica's Carey McLeod who slipped when taking off and injured his ankle at the World Championships in Budapest last year.

"The issue is with the take-off board. Because of the material of the take-off board everyone was slipping. It was introduced after the 2021 Olympics and everyone has been criticising it. It is definitely not wood. We wanted the material of the take-off board to be changed," Sreeshankar said.

An athlete who fouls is in danger of get-

#### ALVES GUILTY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Barcelona: Brazilian football star Dani Alves was found guilty of sexually assaulting a young woman in a Barcelona nightclub, a Spanish court ruled on Thursday. The three-judge panel sentenced Alves to four years, six months. AP

# Spinners have big shoes to fill

In absence of in-form Bumrah, tweakers will have to do the heavy lifting during Ranchi Test

SANDIP G  
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 22

AT DIFFERENT times during India's practice session on Wednesday, their trifecta of spinners inspected the pitch for the Ranchi Test. A padded-up Kuldeep Yadav strode in first, swishing his bat, had a couple of quick glances before hurrying to the practice ground, cutely named the Oval. Ravindra Jadeja walked in next, after he had wrapped up his session, peered at the patch with dry grass. Ashwin lingered longer, probing the surface from various angles. In the absence of their best friend in this series, Bumrah, the spinners would hope the pitch would dust up its old affection.

The spinners indeed have played their support cast roles in putting India 2-1 up but Bumrah has played the lead act. He has not only been India's leading wicket-taker, but also the only bowler who seemed like he could rip through an attack. In a sense the whole talk of India serving up a turner originates from Bumrah's absence, from the doubt that whether the spinners alone could stop the Bazballers on a benign turner.

Bumrah has been the new-ball intimidator, the reverse-swing executioner, the middle-over marauder, the soul and voice of the team. He is had wrapped up his session, peered at the patch with dry grass. Ashwin lingered longer, probing the surface from various angles. In the absence of their best friend in this series, Bumrah, the spinners would hope the pitch would dust up its old affection.

India's spinners too would miss him, especially in the turgid nothing-is-happening middle overs, when Bumrah would storm in and suddenly whip up some magic and cre-



Spinners have been the support cast in putting India 2-1 up in the Test series. PTI

ate an illusion that a whole lot is happening in the middle. In England's first innings in Rajkot, England were smooth-sailing at 224/2 when Bumrah induced madness in the brain of Joe Root, and triggered the England implosion. They would add just hundred more runs.

#### Bumrah, the instigator

In the second innings, he tone-set the spinners' carnage with a scything opening spell of 8-1-18-1. In Visakhapatnam, he produced an immortal spell of devilish reverse-swing in the first innings, grabbed three including that of Jonny Bairstow and set up a few more in the second innings. Twenty minutes before lunch on day three, with England on 184/4 and the game on a knife's edge, Rohit Sharma recalled Bumrah. The English batsmen froze and before they parted for lunch, they lost two more wick-

ets and were out of the game. It's what Bumrah instigates--fear, panic and mistakes. He makes things happen, from nothing, at the opening, middle-game and the endgame. Filling up the Bumrah-shaped hole, especially in the middle-overs, would be the spinners' biggest challenge and duty.

So far in this series, the pitch has not been as conducive to their craft as it has been in the recent past. All three surfaces aided spin to varying degrees and at different junctures. All three spinners did wield their influence at various points. Ashwin's lengths were delightful in the chase in Visakhapatnam; Jadeja was the quick-kill merchant in the second dig in

Rajkot and Kuldeep blended cunning with discipline in his 12-over spell in the first innings in Rajkot. The trio have accounted for 31 wickets at 29.6. The numbers are commendable without being flattering. English batsmen could apportion some of the credit, especially their utter proficiency in disheveling the spinners' length, employing the assortment of sweeps.

But historically, India's spinners begin to daunt on overseas batsmen as the series progresses. Once they size up the batsmen, dissect their weaknesses and strengths, and cope with the nature of the surfaces, they transform into an infalli-

#### BUMRAH SHOW

**2nd innings, Vizag**  
England, in their pursuit of 399, are 184/4 with Zak Crawley and Jonny Bairstow batting with relative freedom and comfort, stitching a partnership of 40 runs in 10 overs. Then arrives Bumrah, piles on the pressure, forces England to counterpunch. In the bargain, Kuldeep Yadav snaffled Crawley and Bumrah snared Bairstow. England fold up for 292, courtesy again a fierce Bumrah spell.

#### 1st innings, Rajkot

England began the third day on 202 for 2 in 35 overs. He bowled seven fiery overs to shift the momentum. In the 40th over, he provokes a moment of brain-fade from Root, who attempted to reverse scoop and self-destructed. Kuldeep would then eject Jonny Bairstow, and England would soon crumble.

ble proposition. Jadeja, for instance, was vastly different bowler in the second innings in Rajkot than he was in the second dig in Hyderabad. The sweep didn't throw him off-kilter here—he altered his lengths and varied his pace that both Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow perished when attempting to sweep him. And altered his line to induce an error from Ben Stokes' slog sweep in the first innings.

His accomplice, Kuldeep shed his restlessness to be among the wickets and showed his knack to stifle the batsmen in his forgotten 12-over spell for 35 runs on the third morning in Rajkot, after the England batters had plundered him for runs the day before. Among the three, Ashwin, the butcher of batsmen in India, had to wait the longest for his wickets, his eleven scalps coming at 34. His supremeness had shone only sporadically, but only a fool would write him off in these conditions. But they now have to strike without Bumrah.

(India vs England, 4th Test, Live on Sports18 Network and JioCinema from 9:30 AM onwards)

the ball leap off good length with his effort ball. Robinson doesn't use bounce as his primary weapon, as most tall fast bowlers are tempted to, but an ancillary device. If the surface tends to abet variable bounce, he could turn into a lethal proposition. But subtlety of lengths is his calling card, and one that could revitalise England.

His Sussex colleagues call him badger, because he spends countless hours researching about the batsmen he would face. Jason Gillespie, his coach at Yorkshire and Sussex, would reveal to The Guardian: "I would say he is comfortably the most researched and well-prepared fast bowler I have come across in professional cricket. He does his homework and comes to team meetings just full of ideas. He watches footage, gets information and formulates plans for each batsman with either the new or old ball."

The setbacks in different phases of his career—sacked from Yorkshire for multiple disciplinary breaches, banned from the national side for racist tweets—has, by his own admission, made him a mature and aware cricketer. England would want Robinson to channel all of these traits—the energy, aggression and relentless. A bit of verbal aggro and bloodshot stares would make for some theatre too, the lone missing ingredient of this series.



Ollie Robinson's expletive-laden send-off after dismissing Usman Khawaja instigated Matthew Hayden to ridicule him as "124 kph nothing." File

plied and could produce seam movement, both into and away from the right-hander.

His dismissals of Cheteshwar Pujara, who would become a friend of his in Sussex, Virat Kohli at Headingley, and Babar at Multan offers a gist into craft. He nailed Pujara with a clever change of length. Until then he had bowled in the shorter side of

good length, but here he pushed the length

wickedly back and blast the stumps off his pads.

Babar too had shouldered arms to a nipp-

backer that jagged back in from well outside

off to take out the off stump. In the next in-

nings, he went for a drive to a fuller ball that nipped back in through the bat and pad gap.

Away movement foxed Kohli. Kohli

struck him for two gorgeous boundaries, a

flick and an on-drive. But he produced one

that jagged away off the seam after pitching.

It bounced a trifle more than Kohli had

judged. It's another dimension of his, to make

ting injured. "If we foul we slip, if we are not fouling part of the foot will be on the synthetic sur-

face, so chances of slipping will be less, but if it is entirely on the take off board we are going to slip. It is not making sense. Even Jules (Aldrin) slipped during the World Championships last year but luckily he didn't get seriously injured," Sreeshankar said.

France's Jules Pommery, the third-placed finisher at the European Championships, and a friend of Sreeshankar, has slipped 'three-four times' because of the board and injured his ankle, the Indian jumper claimed.

"It is the responsibility of the athlete not to foul. But for the safety of athletes it will be better if they change the material of the take-off board."

Should the take-off zone be allowed only for multi-event disciplines?

Tejaswin Shankar, the high jumper and Asian Games silver-medal winner in the decathlon, posted on X, "Def not a fan of the new change in question for LJ but from a multi events standpoint (which is always neglected)

"Maybe for combined events athletes who have 10 events... they can get through their jumps without fouling," Sreeshankar said, adding, "But I don't think jumpers will agree to the change for the individual long jump."

# India's big questions at WPL

Harmanpreet's form, Deepti's batting and other concerns to address for T20I team during league

NAMIT KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE SECOND season of the Women's Premier League - the first to be played in two separate cities - will kickoff in Bangalore on Friday. Once the initial buzz dies down, for India's T20I setup, reality must also set in.

As of now, as per the updated Future Tours' Programme (FTP), no bilateral cricket is scheduled for India till the end of August, with a lot of down-time post WPL. So, this edition will likely play a crucial preparatory role ahead of the T20 World Cup in Bangladesh that starts in September; not just from a talent-scoping perspective, but also considering the under-performance of some of the side's biggest stars.

India had gone over a year without a full-time coaching staff, including last year's T20 World Cup. New head coach Amol Muzumdar was appointed right before a bumper home season recently, and there were a few new faces that came into the set-up.

But largely, the combinations and performances did not work. India won just two out of nine white ball games at home against England and Australia. Now, Muzumdar and co will have their eye on performances in the franchise league to plug holes in the side, and potentially take some tough calls if the form of the team's old guard does not show any upturn.

## Captain needs to step up

While India's batting order in general has not shown signs of much life over the past 12 months, chief among those under the scanner is skipper Harmanpreet Kaur.

Across her last nine T20I innings since last year's World Cup, Harmanpreet has scored just 146 runs, striking at 107.35 with only one 50+ score. She has been dismissed for single-digit scores five times in that period. In ODIs, too her form has dipped.

Signs of tetchiness have also shown with fiery, at times bizarre, incidents on the field, and some of her captaincy calls have also been debatable. As captain, and middle-order enforcer of the defending champions Mumbai Indians, Harmanpreet must use the WPL to address her slump. Failure to do so may cause a few headaches for India too.

Since breaking through into the team thanks to her aggressive batting style as a teenager, Delhi Capitals opener Shafali Verma's recent inconsistencies reached a point where she was dropped from the last two ODIs against Australia in December. She continues to be a mainstay of the T20 team though, especially when she can contribute a few overs as a spinner, but a solid WPL season is needed to



The second season of Women's Premier League - which will be played in two cities - will kickoff in Bangalore today. Sportspics/BCCI

bolster that status.

Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper and opener Smriti Mandhana has been India's top runscorer in the past year, with 302 runs in 12 innings. But with only one 50+ score during that run, she has struggled to convert starts, something she, and Team India, will hope is corrected during this tournament.

If India are to have any chance of doing well at the World Cup, these three must show in the WPL that they can deliver.

## Need for a finisher

Due to their lack of power hitters in the lower-middle order, India have persistently come up short while chasing challenging totals or attempting to put up big scores on good wickets in recent times. Since the last World Cup alone, Australia's average scoring rate in T20Is is 8.39 while India go at 6.80 RPO. The numbers might be skewed by the three T20Is in Bangladesh, nevertheless, in this period India have been outscored by Australia, England, South Africa and West Indies. Boundary-hitting and dot-ball frequency are big areas of concern.

India entrusted Deepti Sharma in the fin-

isher role in most of the six recent T20Is against England and Australia. Not only has she failed to register significant scores (84 runs in 8 innings since July), but there have been no useful cameos either, with her striking at a dismal rate of 88.09. In the WPL last year, she scored 90 runs in 9 innings at a strike rate of 83.33.

Deepti's consistency with the ball and composure when called upon in death overs, and her fielding, mean her place in the side is not in question. But as a batter, and especially as a finisher in T20s, she can hardly be relied upon anymore. She must attempt to address that in this tournament.

If India are holding out hope for a breakthrough performance, it would be the emergence of a power hitter or solid finisher during this WPL. Kamika Ahuja, who was drafted into the Indian squads post her WPL performances where she showed good striking abilities, will miss out this edition due to injury. India desperately need someone to complement Richa Ghosh when it comes to going big in the backend, and anyone who can excel in that area could well come into the national team reckoning.

In terms of seamers, Renuka Thakur's reliability has been matched by Titas Sadhu, but it will be the spin options that will likely determine India's fate in Bangladesh.

## Bowling combination

Perhaps one of the positives of India's last three series has been the emergence of talented spinners, the area of the squad where there has been some recent experimentation.

For the World Cup, slow turners can be expected to be rolled out in the vein of the Mirpur pitch where India played three ODIs and three T20Is in July last year.

Minnu Mani, Saika Ishaque (a standout from last year's WPL), and Mannat Kashyap all got debuts recently, while Shreyanka Patil has quickly established herself as a mainstay. But keep an eye out for some of the forgotten names like Sneh Rana, Radha Yadav, Ekta Bisht and Poonam Yadav as well. Radha, especially with her improved batting numbers during the domestic season, could make a strong case if she gets regular game time for Delhi.

In terms of seamers, Renuka Thakur's reliability has been matched by Titas Sadhu, but it will be the spin options that will likely determine India's fate in Bangladesh.

**PLAYING TODAY:** Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals Live on: Jio Cinema, Sports 18, 7.30pm

# Ranji QF: TN's Kishore guns for Saurashtra

VENKATA KRISHNAB  
COIMBATORE, FEBRUARY 22



AS THE rest of Tamil Nadu players were busy at the nets, captain R Sai Kishore was meditating in the dressing room. For close to half an hour, all that the 27-year-old did was enter the 'zen mode'; a trait that feels necessary not just for him, but to those around him, to perform consistently.

Last week after they defeated Punjab in their last league match, they locked their Ranji Trophy knockout berth for the first time in six years. In the overflowing excitement, Sai Kishore has been reminding the boys that they are yet to taste success.

"Not one of us is satisfied with what we have done so far. Even if we go to the final and lose, it will still be a failure. Qualifying for knockouts is bound to happen. With this team, not qualifying is a crime. We have the hunger to show that we are not just a white-ball team. I just feel things are beginning to fall in place. There is some divine power that is running this side now," Sai Kishore tells *The Indian Express*.

In many ways, Saurashtra, their opponents from Friday in Coimbatore, are the team that Tamil Nadu wants to be - making the Ranji finals regularly as against being content with qualifying for knockouts.

"When we 7-8 seniors sit and talk in the dressing room, we brag about winning the titles (white-ball). When we came in, that's what DK (Dinesh Karthik) used to do. Now we are doing it, so that the newcomers will also want to win something and brag about it. None of us have won a red-ball title, but when we do it, we can brag about it in a bigger way. More than winning a match, you need to talk only about winning the title. That should be made normal," Sai Kishore says.

When Sai Kishore took over, TN was far from being normal. In the middle of last

## QUARTERFINAL LINEUP

Vidarbha vs Karnataka  
Mumbai vs Baroda  
Madhya Pradesh vs Andhra  
Tamil Nadu vs Saurashtra

Ranji season, they had removed Baba Indrajith as captain. Sai Kishore had no experience of leading a team in age-group levels. Ahead of this season an axe hung over a few senior players like Indrajith, Vijay Shankar, N Jagadeesan and Sandeep Warrier. As they had just one point for the first two rounds, it felt like déjà vu. But, Sai Kishore unofficially converted them into his vice-captains who even set the field placements at times.

"It is my leadership style. Players blossom when they are at their expressive best. You can't play a game thinking, this will be your last if you fail. You have to put them in a good place and from there on it is about the individual. Everyone is talking about Bazball and it is not (Brendon) McCullum who is doing it in the middle. It is Ben Stokes and his players. But McCullum is providing the space to play so," he says.

Made to open again in the third round, Jagadeesan would hit a double century and a triple-ton in successive matches. Indrajith would go back to be the crisis man. Vijay Shankar would deliver two vital knocks, including a century under pressure. Warrier would bowl his heart out in scorching heat for crucial breakthroughs. In essence, Sai Kishore has turned into an inspirational captain, without him realising it. And most of it is down to what he inculcated from Stephen Fleming, during his time at Chennai Super Kings, where he warmed the bench without playing a game.

"Flem is big on this. He used to take captaincy classes. He is similar to MS (Dhoni's) philosophy. They are both big on process," Sai Kishore adds. "From the outside, you may not understand it and could even sound cliché. But you know what they mean. Not that I knew I would be captain of a team one day. But when I got the opportunity, I wanted to do it in a similar way."

For the next five days, defending champions Saurashtra will test Tamil Nadu. Among the current TN side, only three players - Indrajith, Vijay and M Mohammed - have experience of playing five-day matches or knockout matches in red-ball cricket. Over to Sai Kishore & Co to embrace the challenge.

Galeno's late goal gives Porto win over Arsenal; Napoli hold Barca

## RESULTS

Porto 1 (Galeno 94') bt Arsenal 0;  
Napoli 1 (Osimhen 75') drew with  
Barcelona 1 (Lewandowski 60')

REUTERS  
FEBRUARY 22

PORTO SNATCHED a shock last-gasp 1-0 victory over Arsenal as Galeno netted a sublime effort deep in stoppage time in their Champions League last-16 tie on Wednesday.

A drab clash was deadlocked until the fifth minute of added time when the Brazilian winger curled an unstoppable effort past David Raya to send the Estadio Do Dragao crowd wild.

Arsenal, who had scored 21 goals in their last five Premier League games, were strangely subdued in attack and failed to register an effort on target throughout a cagey contest.

They defended solidly enough but may live to regret their lack of urgency as Galeno gave Porto the edge ahead of the second leg in London on March 12.

In the other match of the day, Napoli fought back to hold visitors Barcelona to a dour 1-1 draw as Victor Osimhen cancelled out Robert Lewandowski's opener.

Last year's Spanish and Italian champions, both struggling this season, played out a poor match in which both sides were toothless and lacking attacking flair.

Third in the LaLiga standings eight points behind leaders Real Madrid, Barcelona dominated the first half against a disorganized Napoli who barely managed to get out of their own half.

"It is not a good result for the return leg," Barca manager Xavi Hernandez told Movistar Plus.

"We were better in all aspects of the game, we had to control and we struggled, we weren't effective up front, it was a summary of our season."

Barca were playing their first Champions League knockout match for three years while Napoli were led by new coach Francesco Calzona with their Serie A title defence in tatters as they languish ninth in the domestic standings.

# India's first woman curator is a paddy farmer's daughter

VENKATA KRISHNAB  
COIMBATORE, FEBRUARY 22

WHEN JACINTHA Kalyan moved from her village Harobele, 80 kilometres from Bengaluru, to work as a receptionist at the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) office at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, she never imagined that one day she would become the country's first woman curator. Over 30 years with the KSCA has seen her switch roles; from receptionist, to administration to accounts to preparing pitches for the second season of the Women's Premier League which begins on Friday.

Jacintha's career has seen more twists than the weekend stage plays in Harobele.

In 2014, when the paddy farmer's daughter was asked to oversee the ground staff at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, she paid close attention to how the pitch and the outfield were readied and maintained. She learnt on the job and then approached then KSCA secretary and former Test player Brijesh Patel about wanting to be a curator.

"I was like a LKG student among college students. I didn't know anything. But I was interested in learning. And after Brijesh sir put in a word, PS Vishwanath sir and K Sriram sir (both curators) took me under their wings and started sharing their knowledge. And in 2018, I took the BCCI examination," Jacintha, 49, told *The Indian Express*.

In many ways, Jacintha shares a special bond with the soil. Growing up at Halobele, she would help her father in the paddy fields. And even now, years after her father passed away, she retains a part of their farmland and still grows paddy.

But working with soil on a field and on a cricket pitch is very different, Jacintha said.

## Farming different from pitch preparation

"Although both farming and being a curator involves science, I have learnt that both are totally different. With farming, once you do the right things, it will grow on its own. But this (curator) koncham kashtam...kashtam na ishta pattu panthu (little tough, but one you do it with full love). If you think it is too hot,

Being a curator involves long hours, unlike her earlier day job timings. Her husband Kalyan Kumar and son Sharath, who is working for an IT major, bought into the idea of her switching roles.

"I have my husband and son Sharath who is now working at Infosys to thank. This is not an easy job, but they have been totally understanding and supportive."



Jacintha Kalyan is overseeing pitch preparation for the first leg of Women's Premier League in Bengaluru.

you can't say 'let's go inside'. You need to nurture it because in summer it will behave differently and in winter, it will act differently. So you should take good care of the pitch.

"Every season it changes and you have to be with her (pitch) and take care like a baby. Only if you do that, she will listen to what we say," Jacintha said.

From 2018, Jacintha has been involved in pitch preparations at the KSCA, where she has been assisting Sriram. But the 2023-24 domestic season was a breakthrough one for Jacintha, who was assigned as a neutral curator for the Ranji Trophy. In the ongoing round of the Ranji Trophy, she had overseen the pitch preparations at Pondicherry, Goa and Kerala before she got the call to do the same for WPL.

"I am constantly learning," she said. Jacintha, academics has always been a priority. After Class 3, Jacintha moved out of her village and stayed in a hostel in Kanakapura town, Ramanagara district, to access better schools. "My parents prioritized education and till Class 11 I studied while staying in the hostel. And after that I joined KSCA as a receptionist," she said.

When she moved to Bengaluru to work at KSCA, she used part of the salary to pay for her evening college fees.

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