



**Modi Sarkar ki
Guarantee**
Rajpath now becomes Kartavyapath, Mughal Garden becomes Amrit Udayan, new epaulets
of Indian Navy to be based on the naval ensign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

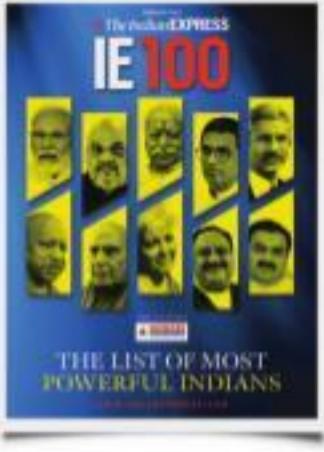
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WITH TODAY'S
ISSUEIE 100 2024
THE LIST OF MOST
POWERFUL INDIANS**DAY AFTER RS POLLS: BJP MLAs SUSPENDED, BUDGET PASSED**

Congress firefights in Himachal, rebellion against CM out in open

Vikramaditya quits as minister, talks to observers; Sukhu says govt will last full term



Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu with AICC observers Bhupesh Baghel, D K Shivakumar, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Rajeev Shukla in Shimla on Wednesday. PTI (Left)
Vikramaditya Singh after quitting as minister. ANI

Vikramaditya Singh announced his resignation from the Cabinet in the morning, the central leadership managed to pacify him by the end of the day. After a meet-

ing with AICC observers D K Shivakumar, Bhupesh Baghel and Bhupinder Singh Hooda late in the evening, Vikramaditya

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MANOJ G
& NAVJEEVAN GOPAL
NEW DELHI, CHANDIGARH,
FEBRUARY 28

A DAY after its official candidate suffered an embarrassing defeat in the Rajya Sabha elections in Himachal Pradesh, the Congress central leadership on Wednesday scrambled to avert a crisis and save the state government even as six party MLAs and three Independents, who cross-voted for the BJP nominee, remained out of the party's reach.

While young minister

BUSINESS AS USUAL
BY UNNY



Best hope for Congress is the Kamal-bound stop at Kamal Nath.
WELCOME

In first visit to Valley since Art 370 move, PM to address Srinagar rally

NAVEED IQBAL
& LIZ MATHEW
SRINAGAR, NEW DELHI, FEB 28

IN WHAT would mark his first visit to Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to address a public rally in Srinagar on March 7.

The Prime Minister has been on a whirlwind tour of the country ahead of the announcement of Lok Sabha polls, with his speeches focusing on how his government's schemes have touched the lives of beneficiaries.

In Srinagar, too, he is expected to address beneficiaries of the Centre's schemes, sources said. "There is a demand for a public rally by the Prime Minister – it is going to be held at Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Center. The final details are being worked out," said a source. "He may address beneficiaries from far-flung areas virtually."

Modi, who visited Jammu last week and inaugurated a series of development initiatives totaling over Rs 32,000 crore, has not visited the Valley during his second term as Prime Minister. During his Jammu visit, he had termed Article 370 the "biggest impediment" to development in J&K.

The last time he visited was in February 2019, ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, as part of his tour to all three regions of the former state – Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. He had also

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

NSG's Labradors set to make way for the more versatile Belgian Malinois

tants in their underground tunnels in Gaza, but also track and attack them – was among Israel's most valued fighting units.

The NSG's Labrador squad will gradually make way for the highly intelligent Belgian Malinois. While earlier, Labradors were used for sniffing and tracking, and German Shepherds for attacking, the NSG is now training its Malinois dogs to carry out all three tasks.

Sources said the Malinois squad will help NSG's Black Cat commandos with their anti-terror operations. "The operational squads will become leaner. Else, we would have to take two sets of

dogs along with their trainers and other logistics. It impacts mobility and stealth," NSG Director General M A Ganapathy said.

Lieutenant Colonel R B Sharma, in charge of NSG's K9 canine unit, said training for the new inductees started in August 2023. "At present, the squad has Labradors, cocker spaniels and Belgian Malinois. We have 20 Labradors and are not acquiring more Labradors since we plan to retire them gradually. As their replacement, we have acquired 14 Belgian Malinois and they are now our lead dog squad. Belgian Malinois is the preferred breed of the best forces in the world."



A Belgian Malinois with the NSG's K9 unit during an anti-terror drill. Gajendra Yadav

The US forces that hunted down (al-Qaeda chief) Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan had Malinois dogs in tow," Lt Col Sharma said.

In 2019, a Belgian Malinois played an important role in a military strike by the US that resulted in the death of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Lt Col Sharma said unlike Labradors, who have great olfactory senses but are docile, the Malinois's sniffing capabilities are only slightly lower. However, they are more alert, besides possessing the ability to attack and paralyse terrorists, giving security forces "golden moments" before their intervention.

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NSG second-in-command Major Rishi, the main dog trainer, said, "The Malinois can also be trained to follow laser beams. So a bag can be pointed out with a laser beam at a distance, and the dog can reach it without the involvement of its handler, thus reducing the risk to the soldier."

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Canine Reward Delivery Systems (CRDS), designed for dog squads, for remote operations and real-time feedback. CRDS allows a dog to wear a camera-fitted visor and a radio set is attached to its collar. The trainer can stay far from the operation site and send in the dog alone, passing on instructions through the radio set. The camera-fitted visor relays live visuals to the handler.

Major Rishi said, "CRDS has a range of 1 km and is one-of-a-kind in India. These dogs have already been trained to sniff out explosives and attack terrorists based on directions given remotely via CRDS."

Interim unity govt, common voter list: Law panel readies report on simultaneous polls

AJUPRA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28



The Law Commission has made a presentation to the Kovind committee. File

FROM MAKING express provisions for simultaneous polls, prescribing a common electoral roll to formation of a unity government in case a government falls before the end of its five-year tenure, the Law Commission of India has worked out three major Constitutional amendments to set the ball rolling for the 'One Nation, One Election' project in 2029, The Indian Express has learnt.

The 22nd Law Commission, headed by former Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, is set to recommend the addition of a new chapter on simultaneous polls in the Constitution, sources said.

Currently, Part XV of the Constitution deals with elections. It prescribes the role of the Election Commission and for elections to be based on adult suffi-

frage among other aspects. The Commission is likely to recommend insertion of a new chapter, Part XVA, that would make provisions for simultaneous polls.

While the law panel has not submitted its report to the government, it has made detailed presentations of its likely recommendations before the high-level committee, headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind, to

examine and make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



IN CONVERSATION
WITH THE FM

Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, and P Vaidyanathan Iyer, Executive Editor, The Indian Express, at the Express Adda in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Sankhaeep Banerjee



DDA razes house of man who led team that rescued 41 from Uttarakhand tunnel

Hasan says only his house demolished; removed encroachment, says DDA

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28



THREE MONTHS ago, Vaeqel Hasan sported a proud smile as he returned home after his team of "rat-hole" miners played a starring role in rescuing 41 workers who had been trapped for 17 days in the collapsed Silkyara-Barkot tunnel in Uttarakhand.

On Wednesday, he came home to find that it was being demolished as part of an anti-encroachment drive by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) at Sri Ram Colony in Northeast Delhi's Khajuri Khas area.

"They (the authorities) came for demolition today morning; my wife and I were not at home, only my children were there. I rushed back, tried telling them not to go ahead, but they didn't listen," Hasan, 45, who also owns Rockwell Enterprises, the company that employed the "rat-hole" miners, said.

In an official statement, the DDA said, "On 28.02.2024, a demolition drive was conducted to remove encroachment from acquired land in village Khajuri Khas. The land was part of planned development land."

Hasan claimed his house was the only one targeted in the lo-

cality. "There are other houses in the same line, it's a colony. They said it is DDA land. In the area, only my house was demolished. The registry is from 1987, and we have been living here since 2012. It is an 80 gaj plot," he said.

Recalling the rescue mission in November, Hasan, the father of three minor children, said, "We didn't think about our lives and got the work done. We are not asking for money, all I ask for is that I have the house I was living in. Where do we go with the children? Kiraya dena humare

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In Kamal Nath bastion of Chhindwara, BJP on prowl, Congress tries to herd its leaders

ANAND MOHAN J
CHHINDWARA, FEBRUARY 28



The Congress office in Chhindwara. Over 1,500 party workers here switched to the BJP this month. Anand Mohan J

Kamal Nath loyalist, is watching the game from the stands but, he admits, his mind is on the coming Lok Sabha elections. "Everyone asks me when Kamal Nath is joining the BJP. I repeat what Kamal Nath says when asked this – 'Apki kya raye hai' (What is your opinion?)", says Tripathi.

Adding that it is wrong to proclaim the Congress's demise, he says: "The BJP has its eyes set on Chhindwara... They can try to break us, but the Chhindwara Congress shines when our backs are against the wall."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

NSG's Labradors set to make way for the more versatile Belgian Malinois

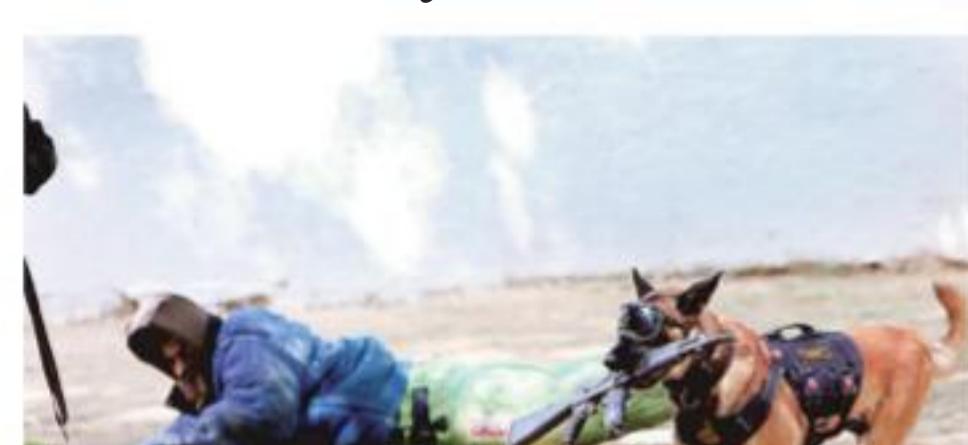
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Kolkata exhibition on Jamini Roy in a spot after group of artists claim fakes



At the exhibition on Jamini Roy's paintings at Middleton Art Gallery in Kolkata, which concluded Wednesday. Shashi Ghosh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 28

AN EXHIBITION of Jamini Roy's paintings in Kolkata has run into a controversy after a section of artists claimed that the artworks displayed at the exhibition were not original works.

Parekh, who organised the exhibition, denied the charges and said that he collected the artworks of Jamini Roy from various places. "I have collected two paintings by Jamini Roy from the Grand Hotel exhibition in 1993. I have the authentication and affidavit of each photo. No picture is fake. I will not sell these pictures. They are kept for exhibition only. I have 80 to 90 paintings by Jamini Roy... Some of the artists may be angry and therefore have said it," Parekh said.

But the group of artists said there was no record of any such exhibition being held in 1993 at Kolkata's Grand Hotel.

Born in 1887 in Bengal's Bankura district, Roy, one of India's earliest modernists, was awarded the Viceroy's Gold Medal in 1935, the Padma Bhushan in 1955, and elected a fellow of the Lalit Kala Akademi in 1956.

IUML agrees to 2 LS seats as Cong assures it of RS berth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
FEBRUARY 28

THE INDIAN Union Muslim League (IUML) has decided to

contest from the existing two seats in the Lok Sabha polls after its earlier demand for three seats was turned down by ally Congress. The IUML backed off

from its demand for a third seat after the Congress offered its next

Rajya Sabha seat, which would fall vacant, to the party.

Congress-led Opposition leader V D Sathesan said the next Rajya Sabha seat from Kerala, which the Congress could win, would be given to the IUML. The other Rajya Sabha seat, which falls

vacant, would then go to the Congress. Whenever the United Democratic Front (UDF) comes to

power, the Congress takes three Rajya Sabha seats and IUML two. "When the UDF comes to power, that formula would be maintained," he said.

The Congress leader confirmed that the IUML wanted a third seat. "We were also keen to accommodate their demand but because of practical difficulties we could not," he said.

The Congress would contest from 16 seats, IUML from two, Kerala Congress (Joseph) and RSP one seat each in Kerala. In Kollam, the RSP is fielding its sitting MPN K Premachandran for the third time. In Kottayam, allotted to the Kerala Congress (J), former MP Francis George would contest. The Congress has not announced its candidates but it is believed that all sitting MPs, including Rahul Gandhi, would seek mandate from their existing turfs.

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION, NASHIK

E-Tender Notice No. 96 for 2023-24 (Online)

ONLINE E-Tenders in "B-1" Form for the following works invited by Executive Engineer, P.W.Division, Nashik Phone No. (0253/2583761-64, 2575324) for and on behalf of Governor of Maharashtra State From Capable of P.W.Deptt. Registered/Unregistered Contractor or international Contractor whose Sub company / branch in India and also complete terms and conditions mentioned in tender document.

Tender document download on our web site <https://mahatenders.gov.in> Right of rejection of E-tender/ cancellation of E-tender reserved by The Executive Engineer, P.W.Division, Nashik. *Conditional Tender will not be accepted.

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1. www.mahapwd.gov.in

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Tender Document 22.02.2024 to 29.02.2024

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Date Time

* Blank E-Tender form Fees (Non refundable) and EMD amount will be accepted Online only.

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Public Works Division, Nashik

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FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Congress firefights in Himachal, rebellion against CM Sukhu out in open

Singh said he was not pressing for his resignation.

Vikramaditya Singh and his mother, PCC chief Pratibha Singh, are ranged against Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, whose fate hung in the balance with several MLAs demanding his removal.

The party appeared to be working at multiple levels. State Parliamentary Affairs Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan filed a petition seeking the disqualification of the six MLAs who cross-voted under the anti-defection law, but Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania reserved his decision, letting the threat of disqualification hang over their heads. Sources said the party is adopting a carrot-and-stick policy even as it appeared wary of the BJP's moves.

The Congress central leadership rushed Shivakumar, Baghel and Hoda to Shimla in a bid to douse the raging fires and talk to the MLAs. Salvaging the government was the immediate priority, said sources, adding that the leadership could consider replacing the Chief Minister if such a step was needed to save the government.

Meanwhile, the Sukhu government, which completed a year

in December, averted an immediate collapse as the Finance Bill was passed by voice vote in the Assembly, after the Speaker suspended 15 BJP MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur. Soon after, the Speaker adjourned the House sine die.

But, despite passage of the Budget, the Congress is still staring at a crisis.

While announcing his resignation from Sukhu's Cabinet in a surprise move in the morning, Vikramaditya Singh spoke about attempts by some quarters to "humiliate" and "undermine" him. He said he was "deeply hurt" with the developments over the last two days and argued that the party should ponder over what went wrong.

Vikramaditya Singh claimed the Congress fought the 2022 Assembly elections in the name of his father and former chief minister Virbhadra Singh, but the party's government failed to find even a small plot of land on Shimla's Mall Road to install a statue of the six-time former Chief Minister. "It is not a political but an emotional thing for a son," he said, quoting a couplet, "Kitna hai bad-naseeb Zafar dafn ke liye, do gazzaz

meen bhi na mili ku-e-yaar mein."

Later in the evening, Vikramaditya Singh said he was not pressing for his resignation in the larger interest and unity of the party. "There is a difference between taking the resignation back and not pressing for it further, till the time the dialogue and action of the observers is not complete. Since we have had discussions with observers and have apprised them of the prevailing circumstances... I will not press for my resignation. The final outcome will be revealed in the coming time. The observers said they are looking into things," he said.

Besides Vikramaditya Singh, the AICC observers met Sukhu, Pratibha Singh and Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri. On a firefighting mission, the central observers as well as AICC in-charge of the state, Rajeev Shukla, also met some MLAs and could meet more to gauge their minds.

Another big reason for worry for the Congress was the continued rebellion by the six party MLAs — Rajinder Rana, Sudhir Sharma, Chaitanya Sharma, Inder Dutt Lakhanpal, Davinder Kumar Bhutto and Ravi Thakur — and the three independent legislators —

Ashish Sharma, K L Thakur and Hoshyar Singh.

Arguing that the conspiracy to topple his government had been foiled, Sukhu said: "We have brought disqualification motion against the MLAs who were lured... Truth triumphs in a democracy. In future, we will expose those behind the conspiracy to topple the government." He alleged that "allurements" to the tune of "crores of rupees" were given "overnight".

The six MLAs, who were served notice following a petition moved by Minister Chauhan, appeared before Speaker Pathania along with lawyer Satya Pal Jain and sought seven days' time to file their replies. They pleaded that they had only been served copies of the showcase notice, without the annexures and copies of the petition.

Pathania said he had heard both the parties and reserved the order. "The MLAs did not indulge in any conduct which comes under the anti-defection law," Jain said, adding that while the petition to seek their disqualification was submitted on Tuesday, "an additional affidavit was submitted Wednesday morning".

Pathania said the six MLAs were issued notices following the petition which alleged that they had defied the three-line whip to remain present at the time of voting on the cut motion on the Budget. "Six Congress members were not there and that amounts to a violation of whip and hence attracts the provision of anti-defection laws. Hence, I issued notices to them to them," the Speaker said, adding that both parties would be heard and given reasonable time to present their side.

For the Finance Bill, the Speaker said "both parties issued three-line whip and if any member defies the whip it attracts the provision of the anti-defection law". He said he acted as per the procedure and rules.

Sources said the party's central leadership, too, was not happy with Sukhu's handling of the Rajya Sabha elections. A Congress leader said a proposal under consideration was to replace Sukhu with Mukesh Agnihotri, with Vikramaditya Singh as his deputy. "It all depends on the consultations the observers have with the MLAs. The central leadership will take a decision on the basis of the report of the observers," he said.

The Congress, which has 40 MLAs and the support of three Independents in the 68-member Assembly, managed to get only 34 votes — one less than the simple majority mark — in the Rajya Sabha elections.

BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan, a former Congress leader who quit the party and joined the BJP in 2022, also secured 34 votes, resulting in a tie with Congress's Abhishek Manu Singhvi and getting elected through a draw of lots.

In Delhi, Congress communication head Jairam Ramesh said the party would not hesitate to take some tough steps as its priority was to ensure that the people's mandate in favour of the Congress was not betrayed.

As his fate remained uncertain, Sukhu put up a brave face, asserting that the Congress government would complete its five-year term. He also denied reports that he had resigned. "I have not resigned. I am a fighter," he said. Sukhu said he had spoken to Vikramaditya Singh, whom he called his younger brother, and asserted there was no reason to accept his resignation. He said Vikramaditya Singh's grievances would be addressed.

• PM visit

addressed a public meeting at Sher-e-Kashmir cricket stadium in November 2015.

In April 2022, Modi had virtually addressed elected representatives of local bodies on the occasion of National Panchayat Day from Jammu.

There has been no formal engagement between the Centre and the political leadership of Kashmir since the June 2021 meeting between Modi and the 14 key political leaders from J&K, including former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, People's Conference president Sajad Lone and CPIM leader M Y Tarigami.

At the time, the PM had assured the leaders that his government was committed to reviving the democratic process in J&K and underlined that he wanted to reduce both "Dil ki door" and "Dilli ki door". However, talks did not move forward and J&K remained without an elected assembly. The Supreme Court, while deciding on the constitutional validity of the revocation of Article 370, has set a deadline of September 2024 for conducting the assembly polls.

In several speeches of late, Modi has asserted that the BJP would get 370 seats in the Lok Sabha polls.

With the elections expected to be announced in the first half of March, Modi has a number of state visits scheduled. This Friday, he will be in Jharkhand to address public meetings in Sindi, Dhanbad and Arambagh. After a night halt in Kolkata, he will address a public meeting at Krishnanagar on Saturday. The Prime Minister is also scheduled to lay the foundation stone for various projects in Aurangabad and Begusarai the same day.

• In Kamal Nath bastion of Chhindwara, BJP on prowl, Congress tries to herd its leaders

A VIP seat

In its tribal-dominated surroundings, the Chhindwara district stands out for all its trappings of modernity, which come with having VIP links going back four decades. It has good rail connectivity and roads, and several skill development institutes and factories, including big names such as Raymond and Unilever.

Congress leaders claim the BJP will seek to dent the Chhindwara bastion by freezing its development. Chhindwara Mayor Vikram Ahake lists projects that have been "stalled", starting with marriage halls and a library.

"Nakul Nath's vision was to set up an education hub. The BJP has put the brakes on that, as well as Rs 481 crore for the upgrade of Raja Shankar Shah University. The medical college budget, assigned Rs 1,400 crore during Kamal Nath's short tenure as CM, is now on hold, along with proposals to construct an agriculture and horticulture institute, a mini-airport and a 100-acre industrial area.

Even Central government schemes are on hold," Ahake claims.

A state government spokesperson denies allegations of stopping funds for Chhindwara. "If local politicians misuse the funds, then that is a cause for concern," the spokesperson adds.

At Rajiv Bhavan, which serves as the Congress office, the party's Chhindwara district president, Viswanath Okte, is sifting through some wedding invitation cards. Yes, Kamal Nath would attend the wedding, he assures a group of people, going on to emphasise the Congress

leader's connect with the people of the constituency.

"There is a bhandara (feast) in the BJP, and everyone is leaving. Let them go. What positions will they get there? Is their future secure? We are solely focused on Kamal Nath's mission of activating booth-level workers. They will help us win, not the leaders who left," he says.

Ironically, Congress leaders now in the BJP say it was insecure about their future that drove their move. The decision of the Congress leadership to stay away from the Ayodhya Ram Temple consecration is cited by more than one leader as the main factor. Many say it will cause a "Congress wipeout in the Hindi belt".

Local councillors, however, admit apprehension about the BJP government stopping funds for projects in their areas, or opening investigations into works.

The 'aloof' Naths

On February 21, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav was himself in Chhindwara to lend his shoulder to the BJP push in the seat. Among the fresh group of Congress leaders who joined the BJP in his presence was Ujjwal Singh Thakur alias Ajju, a former Congress state general secretary and liquor businessman.

Apart from stalling of funds as a factor, Thakur too cites alienation from the local Congress.

Neeraj Patel, who had left the Congress after the party re-elected incumbent MLA Sujet Singh from Churai in the 2023 elections, cites both the party's decision on the Ram Temple event and the "aloofness" of the Congress leadership.

"Kamal Nath promised me a

ticket in 2018 and then asked me to 'adjust'. In 2023, he again said the same... I have struggled for 15 years, but not got any reward. In politics, people can have ambitions," Patel says, adding that "the exodus" has just started and more will leave.

Patel also questions the rise and rise of Nakul Nath. Pointing out that in the 2023 Assembly elections, Kamal Nath's victory margin from the Chhindwara Assembly seat was low, he says:

"Nakul does not work on the ground and is surrounded by middlemen. He still can't identify good party workers after all these years. That will be his undoing."

Akhilesh Shukla, a former Congress general secretary from Junnardeo, also says: "The top Congress leaders would not pay any attention to me. I was insulted on multiple occasions, not called for meetings. The local MLA was scared of my ambitions and wanted me out of the party."

A councillor says it is natural for them to seek options. "There was pressure by the state government on me. They pointed out several irregularities... even if these did not amount to corruption. With our party already out of power and looking at five years more of the same, it is difficult for us to exist... I switched for the development of my ward."

Anand Bakshi, a long-time Kamal Nath loyalist who is said to have been the brains behind the veteran's aggressive foray into soft Hindutva before the elections, which didn't earn any dividends, slams those leaving the Congress as "greedy".

Ashish Tripathi, the leader watching the cricket match from

• DDA razes house of man who led team that rescued 41 from tunnel

the message I want to give to everyone... We should all live in harmony and not spread the poison of hate. We all want to give our 100 per cent for the country... Please convey my message to everyone." Twelve people from Hasan's company — six from Delhi including Hasan, and six from Bulandshahr — were credited with digging through 12 metres of debris during the last stretch to free the trapped miners.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* after the rescue in November, Hasan had said: "In our team, there are both Hindus and Muslims, and people from both religions worked hard to save these 41 lives. None of them could have done this alone, and this is

elections" to Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipalities and panchayats.

In September last year, *The Indian Express* reported that the Commission was mulling framing tentative timelines for simultaneous polls in 2024 and 2029. With 2024 elections round the corner, the recommendations will now be for 2029. The Commission's report is likely to suggest synchronising assembly elections in two stages in the next five years before all states can go

municipal and panchayat elections can be held together."

One of the key concerns

WAS ACCUSED OF EXTORTION, HARASSMENT AAP MLA Prakash Jarwal convicted in doctor's suicide case

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

A DELHI court on Wednesday convicted AAP MLA Prakash Jarwal in an abetment to suicide case lodged against him and his associates in connection with the death of a South Delhi-based doctor in 2020.

Holding that the oral and documentary evidence presented by the prosecution against Jarwal and his aide Kapil Nagar "did not suffer from any material contradictions or inconsistencies", Special Judge MK Nagpal held the duo guilty under Indian Penal Code sections 306 (abetment of suicide), 120B (criminal conspiracy), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation), and 386 (extortion by putting any person in fear of death or grievous hurt). The third accused, Harish, was convicted for criminal intimidation.

The court held the accused guilty despite the fact that most witnesses, including the son and wife of the deceased, had turned hostile – a development which the court attributed to "fear" of the accused.

On April 18, 2020, Dr Rajender Singh (52) had died by suicide at his residence. Police said a purported suicide note was recovered from the spot, in which, he allegedly blamed Jarwal and his aide for "harassing" him and his family over his water supply business. In the note, he held them responsible for his death and accused Jarwal of extortion, said police.

In November 2021, the court of Additional Sessions Judge Geetanjali Goel had framed charges against Jarwal in the case. Harish was discharged for



Prakash Jarwal

not be cleared by the DJB if he did not pay the amount.

While convicting the accused, it was held by the court that Dr Rajendra wrote around 40 statements at different times implicating both the accused and holding them responsible for pushing him to take his own life by threatening him and extorting money from him.

"It is crystal clear from a joint reading of these reasons left by the deceased in the form of his dying declarations that it was A1 Prakash Jarwal and A2 Kapil Nagar, who were behind commission of suicide by him, and his suicide was not generated by or committed because of any other reasons," held Special Judge Nagpal in the order dated February 28.

The accused, who were represented by Advocates SP Kaushal and Ravi Drall, argued that since most of the writings left by deceased were not dated, it could not be presumed that they were written immediately prior to his suicide or even in near proximity to the same – this, they said, meant that the writings could not be made a basis for holding the accused guilty of abetment to suicide.

"...after the writing containing date 04.03.2020, the deceased wrote around 20 other writings in continuity and thus, even if no date was written or appended by him below the subsequent writings, the same were apparently written after 04.03.2020 and hence, considerably reduce the gap between such writings or the last writing left and the date of commission of suicide by him i.e. 18.04.2020," held the court, rejecting the arguments of the defence counsel.

Further, the accused allegedly threatened the deceased that his tankers would be discontinued and his dues would

Seeking suggestions for manifesto, Cong to hit the streets today

New Delhi: The Congress will hit the streets to gather suggestions for its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections, the Delhi Congress announced on Wednesday.

Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely said though the INDIA bloc will have a common minimum programme at the national level, the Delhi Congress will discuss Delhi-specific issues and communicate these to its national unit for inclusion in its main manifesto.

Sources said the exercise was significant given the Delhi Assembly elections next year; Lovely said party workers will go to the people to get their feedback on the problems they face, hold extensive discussions with city leaders, ministers and workers before finalizing the manifesto.

"The Manifesto Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Chaudhary Anil Kumar to study the problems of the people," Lovely said. ENS

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5	Assistant Manager (Marketing)	01	-	-	01	-	-	-	-
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Man strangles woman, dies by suicide at railway tracks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

A 32-YEAR-OLD woman was strangled to death inside the room of a playschool she was running along with her business partner, in Outer Delhi's Narela, officers said on Wednesday.

The accused in the case, her business partner with whom she had started a play school recently, later also died by suicide on the railway tracks in Sonipat, they added.

Four days after she went missing, her body was found by the police on the premises of the playschool. The motive behind the crime is not clear yet, said police.

A senior officer said on February 24, a missing complaint was lodged by Vijay Kumar, a resident of Swatantra Nagar in Narela, that his daughter Versha, who had left home a day earlier, had not returned.

Police said while the woman was killed inside a playschool she had opened with the man in Narela, the latter was found dead on tracks in Sonipat

He also stated that she was last seen with her business partner Sohan Lal along with whom she had opened a playschool on Ghonda Road in Narela. Said an officer, "The playschool is not operational yet."

Police said when Kumar called on Versha's number, it was received by another person stating that he was in Harshana village in Sonipat near the railway tracks where a man was trying to commit suicide. When the man pointed the phone in the direction of the other person, Kumar could

identify him as Sohan Lal.

"He rushed to the village and collected the mobile phone from the unknown person. However, Sohan Lal was nowhere to be found," said police.

Meanwhile, the search for Versha continued. Police visited the premises of the school with Versha's father but found the main office shuttered and returned. The mobile numbers of Versha and Sohan Lal were sent for CDR analysis and the last location of the latter was revealed to be in Barauta, Haryana.

On February 28, Kumar went to the play school again and got the shutter opened with the help of the landlord. "As the door was made of glass, he could notice a body behind the main desk," said an officer. She was prima facie strangled with a dupatta, said police. Meanwhile, a body, suspected to be of Sohan Lal, was found on the railway tracks in Sonipat on February 26.

Deprivation of liberty for a day is a day too many: HC on delay in bail bond acceptance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

THE DELHI High Court has recently initiated a suo motu petition pertaining to the delay in acceptance of bail bonds by jail superintendents, and issued a notice to the Director General of Prisons and Standing Counsel (Criminal), Delhi government.

A single-judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan, in its February 19 order, observed:

"The object of granting bail and suspending sentences is to release the accused/convict from imprisonment. In certain cases, interim bails are granted on medical grounds or some other exigencies, as expressed by the applicant. In such a scenario, this court fails to understand why the period of one to two weeks is taken by the jail superintendent for accepting the bail bonds."

bonds."

The High Court, thereafter, observed that at times, while passing bail orders, courts direct that the bail bonds be directly furnished to the jail superintendent. It said the "prisoner is not remitted to the trial court in order to facilitate the immediate release".

"The delay at the instance of the jail superintendent in accepting bail bonds is not acceptable to the conscience of this Court," Justice Mahajan further said.

The court took suo motu cognisance while hearing a modification application moved by a convict whose sentence was suspended by the High Court on February 8.

The High Court, in its order, also referred to the Supreme Court's reiteration of the principle "Deprivation of Liberty for a single day is a day too many..."

Among BJP's LS probables: State chief, new faces

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

OFFICE BEARERS, legislators and its state president – the latter from not just one but two seats – have been proposed by the BJP's Delhi unit as potential candidates for the Lok Sabha polls to its senior leadership.

The process to finalise candidates gathered pace Wednesday with party sources stating that names for the capital were expected to be included in its first list likely to be announced later this week.

The BJP's state election committee met BJP national president JP Nadda to discuss the candidate of around 28 names.

According to sources, another meeting – this time with the party's senior leadership – was scheduled for Thursday.

"The state committee will be given an interface with the Central Election Committee, presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, tomorrow," a senior Delhi BJP leader said.

"Most of the names, especially for Delhi, are understood to have been decided. These are expected to receive the CEC's nod tomorrow," said a party source.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that "more than half" of the names proposed by the state election committee to be fielded "happened to consist of its own members". While a senior leader who was part of the meeting said that

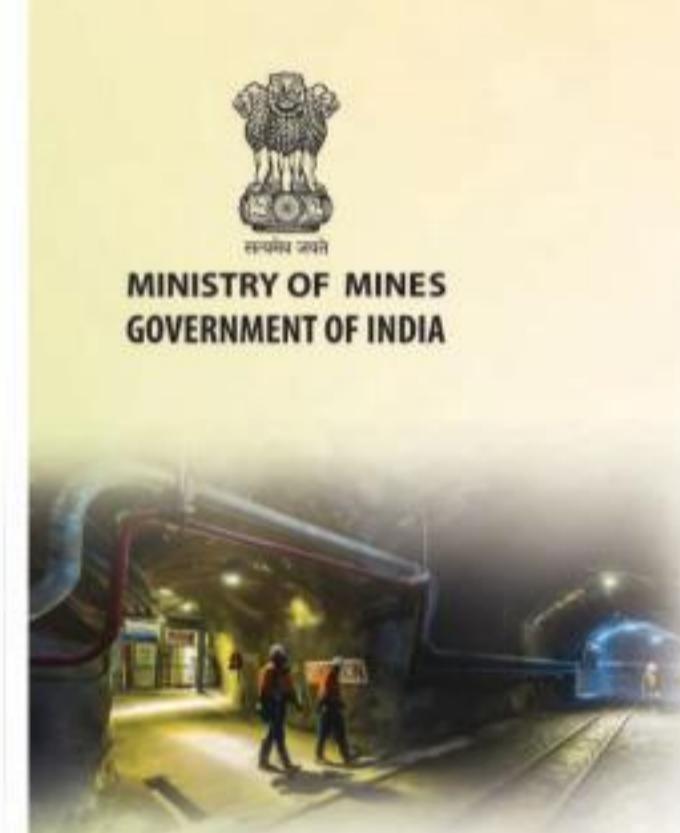
taries, those who lead intra-party units and marches in addition to former state presidents have been suggested," a senior Delhi BJP leader said.

According to sources, fielding Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva from the New Delhi and East Delhi constituencies was among the suggestions. Besides, Bansuri Swaraj, Yogita Singh and Adesh Gupta from New Delhi in addition to Harsh Malhotra and Kuljeet Chahal from the East Delhi seat were among the suggestions on the list.

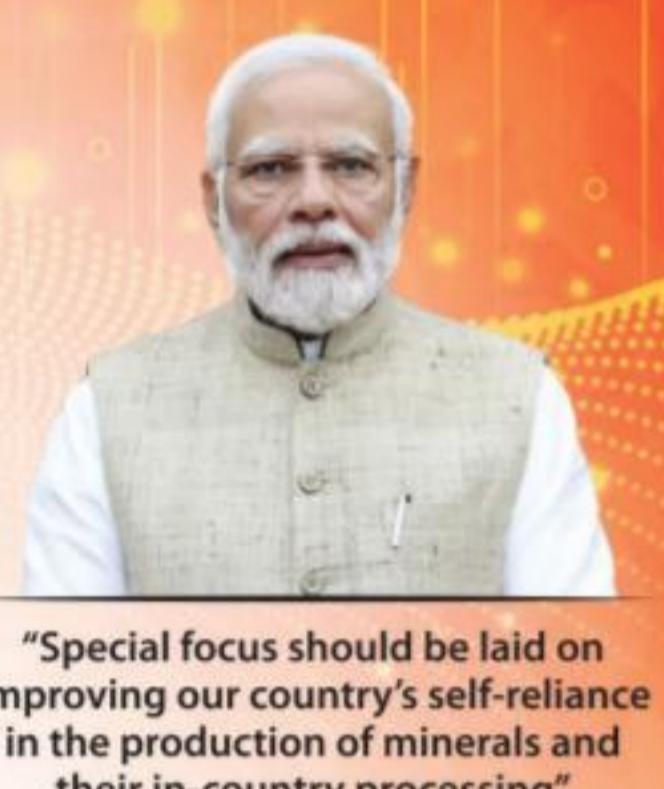
For south Delhi, Leader for Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and Brahmin Singh Tanwar could be probable candidates. Leaders such as Vishnu Mittal, sitting MP Dr.

Harsh Vardhan and Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta from Chandni Chowk apart from Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar – who could also be fielded from East Delhi – were on the list.

Yogendra Chandolia, Dushyant Gautam and Karmveer Singh Karma were among the suggestions for the reserved North West Delhi seat where the RSS was said to be putting its weight behind Sunita Kangra. From West Delhi, Kamaljeet Sehrawat was suggested as a probable candidate in addition to sitting MP Parvesh Verma. In addition to incumbent MP Manoj Tiwari and MLAs Mohan Singh Bisht and Ajay Mahawar and office bearers such as Dinesh Pratap Singh were among the suggestions.



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NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

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& Handing over of Financial Assistance to Mining Start-ups

Validating critical mineral extraction processes | Supporting youth for entrepreneurship



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Shri Pralhad Joshi

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Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve

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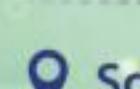
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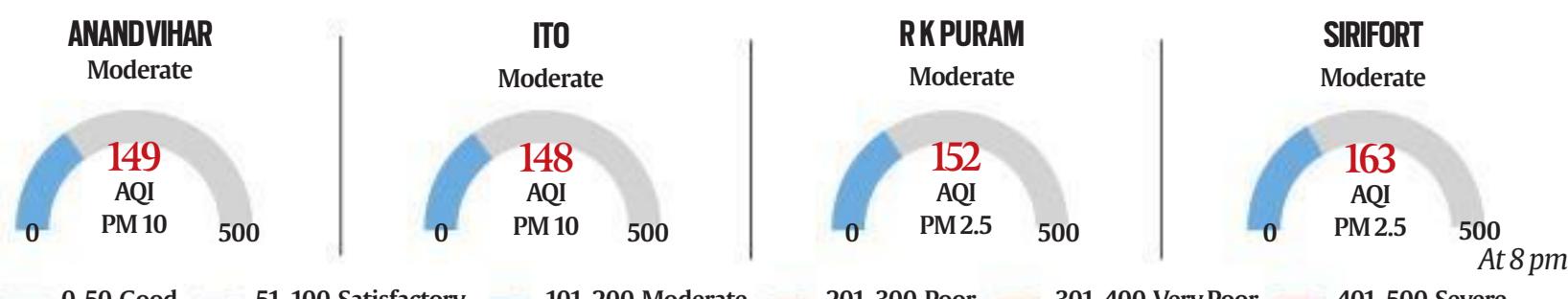
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SKY WATCH
Mainly clear sky becoming partly cloudy sky towards afternoon/evening

MAX: 27 0.9°C above normal | **MIN: 11** 1.5°C below normal

FACE-OFF OVER WATER BILL SCHEME

Decide, don't blame others, L-G tells CM who says pained

Expunge area in resolution saying 'BJP has direct control over L-G', Speaker told

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28



L-G VK Singh accuses CM Arvind Kejriwal of 'misleading people by creating a false narrative'. Express

DAYS AFTER the AAP-led Delhi government passed a resolution on the non-implementation of the scheme to settle water bill dues, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Wednesday wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying the Delhi Assembly Speaker be asked to expunge the part of the resolution that says, "the BJP exercises direct control over the L-G".

The resolution was passed on February 19.

"This is a completely unacceptable and irresponsible assertion, which does not behove the members, who endorsed it," the L-G wrote.

Supporting the resolution, Kejriwal had said in the assembly that BJP should be given the responsibility of asking the L-G to clear the scheme.

In Wednesday's letter, the L-G said that the statement in the resolution "not only breaches all propriety and constitutional provisions but is also an affront to the constitutional office of the L-G, for petty political games..."

He alleged that Kejriwal and his ministers were spreading a "false and misleading" narrative by accusing him of stalling the "water scheme" and that the scheme does not exist on paper. "AAP's statements are all white lies and are an example of a typical abuse-and-scoot game."

Kejriwal wrote back and said that he was "pained by the language of the letter".

"Sir, you and I are both constitutional functionaries. I am the Chief Minister of the GNCTD, democratically elected by the people of Delhi. You are the

L-G vs DELHI GOVT

L-G stalling solar policy, says AAP; his office rejects claim

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

AMID THE ongoing tussle between the AAP and Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena over the 'one-time settlement' scheme issue to settle water bill dues, the Arvind Kejriwal-led government in Delhi on Wednesday alleged that the L-G has now stopped the government's revised 'Delhi Solar Policy 2024', which was announced on January 29.

Announcing the scheme, Kejriwal had said that "soon, the Delhi residents are likely to enjoy no electricity bill as well as earn around Rs 700-900 every month by installing rooftop solar panels under the solar scheme".

Power Minister Atishi said on Wednesday explained the policy benefits, and how residents were contacting them to know about the process for installing rooftop solar panels. "...The policy was passed by the cabinet on January 29 and the official notification

Lies perpetuated by an incessant publicity campaign," he wrote.

Kejriwal, however, alleged that work, including the procurement of medicines in Mohalla Clinics, disbursing pensions to former DTC employees, work on sewage lines and dismissal of data entry operators from hospitals, had been stalled for the first time since the formation of the Delhi government in 1993 only "in the last two years, since you (Saxena) have become the LG of Delhi".

"Services and Vigilance" is under your control, therefore the power to take action against erring officers needs to be taken by you. When you don't take action, it does raise a doubt in my mind whether these officers are acting under your instructions.

In fact, you have not even transferred a single officer based on the request of the elected government... Therefore I am requesting you – once again – to take exemplary action against one officer at least... It will give a message that the Chief Minister and the L-G are working together...," Kejriwal wrote.

The Delhi government has

sought action against several officers, including Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, finance secretary AC Verma and health secretary SB Deepak Kumar, among others, over the past few months.

Saxena, meanwhile, also questioned why UD Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj "kept sitting on the proposed scheme for more than one year".

"The timelines and decisions, as indeed the timing of the entire political exercise that has now been undertaken, very clearly point towards a convoluted game of blaming others for your own failures, rather than actually doing anything whatsoever to help the people of Delhi as far as this scheme is concerned," Saxena wrote.

He also pointed to the corruption charges against DJB in award of contracts, billing matters and completion of projects and pending mandatory CAG audit of DJB. "I advise you and your colleagues to refrain from pointless mudslinging and engage in constructive development of the city, something that you have miserably failed at during the last nine years of your regime," the L-G wrote.

Kejriwal, however, said the same officers as now were working in the government before he took oath as the L-G.

"It is these very officers who improved Delhi Government schools, set up Mohalla clinics, improved government hospitals, laid pipelines in unauthorised colonies, deployed marshals in buses. Officers have not been changed on a mass scale in the last two years. But ever since you have taken over as LG, the very same officers are now stopping works of public interest," the Chief Minister wrote.

The Delhi government has



SPRING BLOSSOM

Visitors enjoy the arrival of spring at Lodhi Gardens in Delhi on Wednesday. Tashi Tobgyal

'Improper' salute: Gurgaon court takes action against ACP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, FEBRUARY 28

A LOCAL court in Gurgaon has directed the Commissioner of Police to take action against Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Naveen Sharma over an "improper" salute to the judge during a court session.

At the court of judicial magistrate (first class) Vikrant, the ACP was appearing for a 2023 case in connection with a fraud incident, when he allegedly saluted using "two fingers touching his forehead".

"As soon as the order was passed, the investigating officer, ACP Naveen, saluted the Chair in an improper manner by just raising his arm and touching two fingers on forehead. On being asked as to where he has

ACP Naveen Sharma, appearing in a case at the court, saluted the judge using two fingers touching his forehead: Court

rules.

Quoting the rule from Punjab Police Rules, 1934, (as applicable to Haryana State), the judge said every police officer entering a court of law in uniform, while such court is in session, shall salute the court, irrespective of the rank or status of the judicial officer presiding in such court for the time being.

"The court has reasons to believe that ACP Sharma is in ignorance of the rules which govern his service. He needs to be trained properly making him aware of the rules and protocol," the JMIC said.

He said that the order be sent to the Commissioner for necessary action under the Punjab Police Rules against the official and asked him to submit the report within a week.

BRIEFLY

Man jumps before Metro, dies: Police

New Delhi: A man died after jumping in front of a moving metro train in Delhi on Wednesday morning, police said. The man, identified by the police as 39-year-old Anand Kumar, died by suicide after jumping in front of a train heading towards Vishwavidyalaya at Udyog Bhawan metro station. According to police officials, a PCR call alerted authorities at Rajiv Chowk Police Station about the incident. On inspecting CCTV footage, police personnel confirmed that the man took his life by leaping onto the tracks moments before the arrival of the metro train at the Udyog Bhawan platform. Kumar was a resident of Northwest Delhi's Mukundpur, said police.

Masjid removal case still with panel, HC told

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court was told on Wednesday that the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) is seized of the matter concerning the removal of the Sunehri Bagh Masjid. The HC was hearing a plea moved by the mosque's Imam, who had challenged a December 24, 2023, 'public notice' issued by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) calling for objections/suggestions from the public regarding the removal of the mosque due to alleged traffic congestion in the area. Senior advocate Sanjay Jain said, "Heritage Conservation Committee is seized of the matter. At this stage we can't prejudge what the committee will decide."

ENS

LEGACY STALLED PROJECTS

Two months since Kant relief package, first registry yet to take place in Noida

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, FEBRUARY 28

TWO MONTHS after the Uttar Pradesh government issued the order to implement the Amitabh Kant committee report on legacy stalled projects, Gautam Buddha Nagar district is yet to register even one flat as part of the said plan. Noida Authority officials said that the process of registration of flats will begin March 1, when around 100 flats will be registered in sector-77 (Express Zenith) after setting up registration camps in collaboration with the Sub-registrar office.

Atishi then said, "...See, the cabinet approved this policy on January 29, and... the policy is still lying with the L-G office... If the L-G had such queries, he could have asked me or Delhi government officers in the know... He could have even made a phone call to discuss the matter... But, sending the file so late with bogus questions is nothing but a clear motive to stop the policy from getting implemented before the MCC."

Under the package, the registration of flats can begin only when the builder pays 25% of the outstanding amount (land dues) within 60 days. The scheme provides for a two-year zero period relief, taking into account Covid period, to the builders, among others. Under the zero-period waiver clause, interest and penal interest will not be levied on the

TALKING NUMBERS

67,000
Total stalled flats
32,000
Number of flats covered under the package
Defaulter builders under the package: **57**
Builders who have given their consent so far: **35**



builder for two years, and the installments will be shifted beyond it. Using this formula, land dues of the builders will be cut by 20%.

Data available with the Noida Authority shows that out of 57 builders – this does not include projects in NCLT/Courts – roped in under the plan, the developer of 35 projects have given the consent for the scheme. Out of this, only six builders have paid the required 25% of the dues. Data shows that on the basis of these consents, the authority will collect dues of Rs 2,210 crore; out of this, builders

have to pay Rs 553 crore in the next 60 days. A total of six builders have paid around Rs 30 crore so far.

Officials said that this consent will pave the way for the registration of a total of 13,639 flats in around two years and 3,412 flats in the next few months. The para 21(viii) of UP government order, dated 21.12.2023, states that "It must be ensured that the registration of all complete flats and other flats, where buyers are residing after Occupancy Certificate (OC) or without OC, should be completed in three months."

Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M did not comment on the same.

Out of these 35 projects, M/s Omaxe Buildwell Ltd. owes the highest – Rs 505 crore – to the Authority. Other builders are Greatvalue Projects (Rs 197 crore in dues), Prateek Realtors (Rs 105 crore), Sikka Infrastructure (Rs 208 crore), Pan Realtors (Rs 151 crore), Sunworld Residency (Rs 169 crore), Mahagun Moderne (Rs 77 crore) and others.

Dinesh Gupta, Secretary of CREDAI (Western UP) said the projects stuck in NCLT needs the government's special attention.

"After a round of talks, the builders are giving consent for the scheme. These are the projects where a significant level of construction has been done and after this package, such projects will take off. However, there are a number of such stalled projects..., they are either in NCLT or developer is not available or the company has gone bankrupt. Such projects need the government's special attention," said Gupta.

Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M did not comment on the same.

Minor girl raped by online friend, found bleeding near Metro station, say police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

A MINOR girl was allegedly raped by a boy she met through social media in Southwest Delhi and was found unconscious near a Metro station in West Delhi, police said Wednesday.

The accused, also a minor, and his friend have been apprehended. According to DCP (Southwest) Rohit Meena, the girl had gone to a coaching centre to attend classes, after which she went to meet the accused, whom she had met through Instagram and had been talking to since October.

Said an officer, "He took her to a friend's house, where he raped her... no one else was present in the house at the time.

and the accused had its keys."

Police said following the incident, the accused fled the spot and the victim boarded an autorickshaw and reached the Dabri Metro Station to get home, but began bleeding and fell unconscious.

"She was subsequently admitted to a hospital by passersby and her family members were called," said the police.

Officers said that the girl is currently stable and her statement has been recorded. "Victim went to meet the accused of her own accord and he told her that they would meet at his friend's house and hang out," said another officer.

The DCP said that the FSL team had examined the room and collected evidence.

THEFT AT KALKAJI BUSINESSMAN'S HOUSE

12 yrs on, how fingerprint record helped cops nail burglar

ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

IN 2006, the house of businessman Lalit Batra in Southeast Delhi's Kalkaji was targeted by burglars, who made off with jewellery and valuables worth lakhs, apart from Rs 30,000 in cash.

Despite looking for the accused for years, and collecting several fingerprints from the crime scene, police were unable to make a breakthrough in the case. The matter was put in cold storage while the accused persons were declared proclaimed offenders (POs) by the local court.

But things changed in 2018. Twelve years after the burglary,

police, during their probe in an Arms Act case, ran the fingerprints of an accused through crime records. The sample matched with the fingerprints collected from wooden cupboards and beds at the burgled house in Kalkaji.

The accused was identified as Sabir Malik, 36. Said an officer, "When he (Malik) was interrogated by Crime Branch officers, he said that he was an arms supplier but could not give an appropriate response on who exactly he was going to supply the

weapons to and where did he procure the weapons from." His fingerprints were collected and matched with the records at the Crime Records Office in Kamla Market.

Said another official, "On further questioning, Malik stated that along with his accomplices, he was involved in a chain of burglaries inside houses in South and Southeast Delhi. He said he was a member of the infamous Kallu and Billa gang,

which is also said to have several women members and had struck Batra's house in 2006." The Crime Branch officers then informed the district police and Malik was handed over to

them. No recoveries, though, could be made of the stolen items as officials said the accused had sold them off in the open market.

On the gang's modus operandi, then DCP (Southeast) Chinmoy Biswas had said it consisted of four members, one of whom was a woman. "The woman used to conduct recce at upscale houses of South and Southeast Delhi on the pretext of finding a cleaning job. She would look for houses that remained locked for more than two days," he had said at the time. The gang members would also carry weapons with them to use in case the victims retaliate.

Malik is currently out on bail while the burglary case is being heard in the Saket Court.



Accused Sabir Malik is currently out on bail, while the case of burglary is being heard in the Saket Court. Express



NARENDRA MODI

Prime Minister



MADHYA PRADESH SPEEDS-UP INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



DR. MOHAN YADAV

Chief Minister Madhya Pradesh

In **60 DAYS**, People-Centric Governance of Madhya Pradesh has scored impressive gains under the dynamic leadership of the Chief Minister **Dr. Mohan Yadav** following his development vision. The state has been bestowed with major infra projects opening doors to faster economic development.

Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP Link Project to Transform Irrigation Infra

MoU between Centre, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan

13 districts of Chambal and Malwa regions to get benefits



An agreement was reached between the states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in a very short time by integrating the Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal Project with the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project giving it the status of a project of national importance, for which both the governments deserve commendations. This project is an ideal example of cooperative federalism.

This project will help ensure efficient utilization of water resources of Chambal Basin of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, which will benefit the industrial and agricultural sectors in both the states.

Under the tripartite MoU, this link project envisages providing irrigation in a total area of 6.17 lakh hectares in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan as well as providing water for drinking and industrial use in 13 districts of Eastern Rajasthan and 13 districts of Malwa and Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh.

The MoU covers the scope of work of the link project, sharing of water, exchange of water, sharing of costs and benefits, implementation mechanism and arrangements for management and control of water in the Chambal Basin.

17 DAMS WILL PROVIDE WATER TO FARMS AND INDUSTRIES AND DRINKING WATER

Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal Link Project will be a boon for Madhya Pradesh making a water-rich state. In Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Irrigation Complex, 4 dams will be built in Katila, Gwalior, Bhind, Sonpur, Pava, Dhanwadi and two barrages will be built in Shyampur, Nainagar. This will irrigate 1,48,400 hectares in Guna, Sheopur, Shivpuri, Gwalior and Bhind districts.

Two dams will be built in Kumbhraj Complex which will provide irrigation to 51600 hectares in Guna district. Ranjit Sagar and Lakhundar Barrage will irrigate 50 thousand hectares in Shajapur, Agar Malwa. 07 dams of upper Chambal basin namely Sonchiri, Ramwasa, Bachaura, Padunia, Sewarkhedi, Chitawat and Sikri Sul-tanpura will irrigate 87,000 hectares in Ujjain, Indore, Dhar districts. Thus, a total of 17 dams and barrages will irrigate 337,000 hectares in Ujjain, Indore, Dhar, Agar Malwa, Shajapur, Guna, Sheopur, Shivpuri, Gwalior and Bhind districts. Apart from this, plenty of drinking water will be available and water will be available for industries in Ujjain, Dewas, Agar Malwa, Shajapur, Sehore and Raisen.

AT A GLANCE

State	Project Cost (in Rs.)
Estimated cost	72,000 crores
Madhya Pradesh	35,000 crores
Rajasthan	37,000 crores

Benefit of The Project

Total Irrigation	6.17 lakh Hectares
Madhya Pradesh	3.37 lakh Hectares

District wise Irrigation Benefit

Districts	Irrigation Area (In Hectares)
Indore	12,000
Ujjain	65,000
Dhar	10,000
Agar Malwa	4,000
Shajapur	46,000
Shivpuri	95,000
Sheopur	25,000
Guna, Gwalior, Bhind	80,000
Total	3,37,000

MP to get 24 national highway projects worth Rs 10,405 crore

MADHYA PRADESH is witnessing exponential growth in infrastructure development. The surface connectivity is improving faster. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav intensified the pace of infrastructure growth. Madhya Pradesh got 24 National Highway projects, 724 kilometers roads costing Rs 10,405 crore in Bhopal and Jabalpur.

These projects will boost agriculture trade in Mahakoshal region, improve connectivity for famous pilgrimage sites and support the coal industry in Katni. Connectivity of the famous tourist destinations like Khajuraho, Or-

chha, National Pench Tiger Corridor will be improved. Budhni textile industries and wood craft trade will also get support as Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi will have good interstate connectivity.

In Jabalpur, construction of bridge on Jamni river located on Tikamgarh-Jhansi road of NH-539, 2-lane road upgradation work with paved shoulder from Chadiya Valley to Katni bypass, four-lane construction of Bamitha to Khajuraho part of NH-339 lane widening works will lead to completely altered scenario.

Two lane with paved shoulder road upgradation work from Gulganj Bypass to Barna River, two lane road construction from Barna River to Ken River, two lane from Shahdol to Sagar Tola Road upgradation work with paved shoulders, construction of total 23 bridge service roads in Lalitpur-Sagar-Lakhnadon section under NH-44 (MP), total 3 foot overs at Suktara, Khurai and Khawasa of NH-44 and construction work of bridge and improvement work of 2 black spots on Banjari Valley (NH-44) are coming up.

As many as 15 National Highway projects, 498 kilometers long worth Rs 8,38 crore imple-

mented at Bhopal and Jabalpur while 9 National Highway projects measuring 226 kilometers worth Rs 2,367 crore will come up soon.

Other projects include six-lane widening of Ayodhya bypass section of NH-46, four-lane widening of Shahganj to Bari section of NH-146B, Madhya Pradesh of NH-552 / two-lane road of Sheopur-Goras from Rajasthan border, two-lane road of Sujalpur bypass on NH-752C, NH-552, construction of two-lane road of Ater and Bhind bypass, two-lane Goras to Shyampur road of NH-552 will soon be constructed.

Construction of two-lane road from Dahod

(Gujarat border) to Ambua section of NH-56, two-lane road from NH-347A Multai to Madhya Pradesh/Maharashtra border is starting shortly.

The new stretch of 244 km. of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is operative. It is passing through Madhya Pradesh covering several districts in the western region. This new road connectivity for the state passing through Jhabua, Mandsaur and Ratlam districts in Madhya Pradesh, connecting major cities, including Garoth, Jaora, Ratlam, and Thandla will open a direct conduit to New Delhi, the national capital and Mumbai, the financial capital of the nation.



DAY AFTER LOSING RAJYA SABHA SEAT TO BJP DUE TO CROSS-VOTING BY ITS 6 MLAs, CONGRESS SCRAMBLES TO SAVE ITS GOVT

People of Himachal with us, MLAs with us, we will run government for 5 years: Sukhu



Congress and BJP workers gather outside the Himachal Pradesh Assembly, in Shimla on Wednesday. PTI

PTI & ENS
SHIMLA, CHANDIGARH,
FEBRUARY 28

"In a democracy, the public has right to choose a government of their choice... But BJP wants to crush this right of the people by misusing the money power, power of agencies and the power of the Centre."

Priyanka Gandhi,
AllC general secretary

AMID A political crisis in the state after the defeat of the Congress candidate in the Rajya Sabha elections, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Wednesday asserted that they will run the government for five years.

"Neither the high command has asked me nor anyone else for resignation and there is no such thing," Sukhu said, while replying to a question.

He said, "The kind of work done by the state BJP leaders. They did not trust their own people, CRPF was deployed. Haryana police were deployed. A helicopter was used."

In a stunning upset for the ruling Congress in Himachal Pradesh, the BJP on Tuesday won the state's lone Rajya Sabha seat with its candidate Harsh Mahajan defeating Congress stalwart Abhishek Singhvi and apparently setting the stage for a no-trust motion in the Assembly.

"But I want to say one thing that the people of Himachal are with us and MLAs are with us and I can definitely say that we will run the Himachal government for five years," said Sukhu.

Asked whether it was because of the "Operation Lotus" or "own people" that led to the current situation, the Chief Minister said, "Some mistakes may have been made and because of those mistakes, there may have been some deficiencies."

But he also said, "The kind of 'tantar-manta' used in the



"Masqueraders on plum posts covertly dancing to the tunes of agencies like CBI, ED and I-T have spelt doomsday for us many a time... It is essential to purge the party of those who prioritize personal gain over the collective good..."

Navjot Singh Sidhu,
Ex-Punjab Congress chief

Operation Lotus that had bigger (role) in it."

The voting Tuesday was a tie with both the Congress and the BJP candidates getting 34 votes, indicating that at least six Congress MLAs voted against the party. The result was then declared on the basis of a draw of lots, officials said.

Responding to a question if the six Congress MLAs, who had been issued notices for cross-voting, would be disqualified, Sukhu said, "We are the people who forgive." The six MLAs, who flew to Shimla from Panchkula on Wednesday morning and returned later in the day, appeared before Speaker Pathania and sought seven days' time to file a reply.

In eye of storm: 'Gentleman' leader, Virbhadra loyalist Harsh Mahajan

NAVJEEVAN GOPAL
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 28

Newly elected BJP MP Harsh Mahajan. File

THE BJP's Harsh Mahajan, 68, who pulled off a major upset to win the lone vacant Himachal Pradesh Rajya Sabha seat on Tuesday, defeating Congress heavyweight Abhishek Singhvi, picked up the political ropes from his father Des Raj Mahajan, a former Vidhan Sabha Speaker and Congress minister.

Having spent over four decades in the Congress, it was in September 2022 that Harsh Mahajan had joined the BJP. The Congress working president at the time he said was quitting, as the Congress had become "visionless, directionless and leaderless".

Mahajan started his political journey after being handpicked by Rajiv Gandhi as the Himachal

Govt on shaky ground: The key players

Of the six Congress MLAs who voted against the party in election to lone Rajya Sabha seat, two are first timers and two had been seething after denied Cabinet berth; of the three Independents, two are BJP rebels

THE CONGRESS MLAS

RAJINDER RANA, 57

SUJANPUR MLA

A former BJP leader, he resigned from party in 2012, contested as Independent from Sujanpur and won. He later joined the Congress. In 2017, he defeated ex-CM and BJP's CM face Prem Kumar Dhumal. Had recently accused Sukhu of not fulfilling the poll promise of 5 lakh government jobs. He is currently leading the MLAs who cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls, which BJP candidate eventually won.

RAVI THAKUR, 61

LAHAU AND SPITI MLA

A two-time MLA from Lahaul and Spiti, Thakur comes from a dyed in the wool Congress family — his mother too was a Congress MLA. He remained chairman of the Congress Seva Dal and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes. A vocal voice in the Vidhan Sabha, Thakur had recently raised the issue of the border demarcation of Lahaul and Spiti with Ladakh and had written to the governor on the issue

SUDHIR SHARMA, 51

DHARAMSHALA MLA

A four-time MLA and an ex-minister, Sharma was a Cabinet berth aspirant; with Congress Since 1991, Sharma won twice from Bajnath in 2003 and 2007; in 2012, he won from Dharamshala and was inducted as the housing and urban development minister in the Virbhadra Cabinet. He had been upset over denial of 55-acre land for north campus of Central University of Himachal Pradesh in Dharamshala

CHAITYA SHARMA, 29

GAGRET MLA

Son of former Uttarakhand chief secretary Rakesh Sharma, Chaitanya was first elected to the Zila Parishad as an Independent in 2020. He joined the Congress ahead of the 2022 Vidhan Sabha polls, was granted ticket from Gagret and won. Sharma had been seeking employment opportunities for local youth. An advocate, he has floated an NGO named Yuva Shakti Parakram that focuses on empowering youngsters

THE INDEPENDENTS

HOSHYAR SINGH, 57

DEHRA MLA

Elected from Dehra in 2017 as an Independent, Hoshyar joined BJP ahead of 2022 Assembly polls but was denied a ticket. He rebelled, contested as Independent and won by defeating Congress' Rajesh Sharma. He later supported the Sukhu govt

K L THAKUR, 62

NALAGARH MLA

Denied ticket by BJP in 2022, Thakur contested as an Independent and won from Nalagarh. Thakur joined politics after taking voluntary retirement from his job as an executive engineer in the state Jal Shakti department

ASHISH SHARMA, 36

HAMIRPUR MLA

Considered close to BJP, Sharma contested as an Independent and defeated Congress' Pushpendra Verma by 12,899 votes. After winning, Sharma had visited both Sukhu and BJP's former CM Dhumal. He supported the Sukhu government

ROYAL REBEL WHO QUIT CABINET, AND CAME BACK



VIKRAMADITYA SINGH, 34

SHIMLA RURAL MLA Son of former six-time CM Virbhadra Singh and state Congress chief Pratibha Singh, Vikramaditya is a two time MLA from Shimla Rural constituency. He remained state Youth Congress president from 2013 till 2017. In July 2021, he was crowned the titular king of the erstwhile princely state of Bushahr. Inducted as the PWD minister in the Cabinet, he often took a stance that deviated from Congress ideology, including attending the Ram temple consecration in Ayodhya and backing the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code. He has resigned from the Cabinet citing attempts to 'humiliate and undermine' him

CBI summons Akhilesh in 2019 illegal mining case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

THE CBI has summoned Samajwadi Party president and former UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav for questioning as a witness in connection with a case of illegal sand mining in the state's Hamirpur district. The agency has asked Akhilesh to appear before it on Thursday (February 29).

The development is significant coming over a month before the Lok Sabha elections, which the SP is contesting in alliance with the Congress. Based on the CBI FIR, the Enforcement Directorate too is probing alleged money laundering in the case.

The CBI is examining the roles of Akhilesh and former minister in his cabinet, Gayatri Prajapati, in the case of issuance of mining leases in alleged violation of e-tendering process. In its FIR filed on January 2, 2019, on the orders of the Allahabad High Court, the CBI had stated,

"The role of then mining ministers concerned during the relevant period may be looked into during the course of investigation of the case."

Both Akhilesh and Prajapati had the charge of the mining ministry between 2012 and 2016 when the alleged irregularities took place.

Reacting to the CBI notice to Akhilesh, Congress' UP unit president Ajay Rai said the BJP is "frustrated due to the seat-sharing of INDIA bloc" that has taken place in a cordial atmosphere. He

said wherever elections are being held in the country, "some-where ED, somewhere CBI, somewhere Income-Tax Department are being used to break people".

The CBI had on January 5, 2019 searched 14 locations across Delhi and UP in connection with the case dealing with illegal mining in Hamirpur be-



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow on Wednesday. Vishal Srivastav

tween 2012 and 2016. The locations searched included residences of SP MLC Ramesh Kumar Mishra and BSP leader Sanjay Dixit apart from then Hamirpur District Magistrate, B Chandrakala, among others. The premises searched were spread across Delhi, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Noida, Kanpur and Lucknow and were associated with the 11 accused mentioned in the CBI FIR.

The raids were conducted on the day the SP and the BSP finalised seat-sharing for 2019 elections and formally announced their alliance with the RLD.

Akhilesh Yadav was holding the charge of the mining ministry from 2012 to June 2013. After that the ministry came under then Amethi MLA Prajapati. Since all irregularities have taken place between 2012 and 2016, the role of both Akhilesh and Prajapati have to be examined," a CBI officer said.

CBI sources said DM Chandrakala allegedly gave out mining leases in violation of rules laid down by the UP government and allowed mining even during periods prohibited by orders of the National Green Tribunal.

MLC Mishra and his brother Dinesh Kumar are among the mining lease holders who allegedly benefited from these irregularities. BSP's Dixit and his father Satyadev, too, held some leases during this period. All have been named in the FIR.

Former BSP MLA Shah Alam joins SP: 'Support PDA slogan'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 28



Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali. File

FORMER BSP MLA Shah Alam alias "Guddu Jamali" Wednesday joined the Samajwadi Party (SP) along with a large number of his supporters. Alam (50), a two-time MLA from Mubarakpur Assembly constituency, said he joined the SP because it "is in the best interest of society".

Addressing a press conference at the SP headquarters in Lucknow along with SP president Akhilesh Yadav, Alam said,

"There are two camps in the country right now. One wants to divide and break the country. I want to say that 99 per cent of my friends are Hindu. I never felt

we could be divided based on religion... And we must stand with those who are standing against this division, and I support the slogan of PDA ('Picchde (backward classes), Dalits and Alpanshyak (minorities)') by Akhilesh Yadav ji."

Akhilesh said: "Those in business never discriminate on the basis of religion or caste. Because businesses join people. I am happy that a strong leader is joining the SP."



TO SHIMLA AND BACK

The six Himachal Congress MLAs — Rajinder Rana, Sudhir Sharma, Ravi Thakur, Inder Dutt Lakhanpal, Chaitanya Sharma and Davinder Kumar (Bhutto) — who cross-voted for BJP, board a chopper to Shimla, from Panchkula on Wednesday. They returned to Panchkula after meeting Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania. ANI

Pro-Pakistan slogan row: Action if BJP's claims are proven, says Siddaramaiah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 28

AS THE BJP staged a protest outside the Karnataka Assembly on Wednesday alleging that Congress supporters had raised "Pakistan Zindabadi" slogans on Tuesday after their candidate Syed Nasir Hussain's victory in the Rajya Sabha polls, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said "strict action will be taken" if the allegations were proven true.

Siddaramaiah's statement came hours after the Bengaluru city police registered a suo motu case on Tuesday night over the alleged incident even as the BJP

filed a formal complaint at the Vidhana Soudha police station. "The police have collected the video footage from the TV channels which have telecast [the incident]. It has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for further investigation," state Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Wednesday.

Siddaramaiah said that if the FSL report proved that such a slogan was raised, action would be taken. "Strict action will be taken against whoever shouted slogans against the nation," Siddaramaiah said while speaking to the media at Vidhana Soudha on Wednesday.

Amethi and Raebareli, the two seats on which most of the hopes of SP ally Congress ride in UP. The apparent defection of five SP upper caste leaders comes at a time when Akhilesh is in the cross hairs of many of them for reiterating constantly his party's outreach towards what he has deemed the "PDA" — Pichde (backward), Dalits and Alpanshyak (minorities) — since June last year. A section of upper caste SP leaders had earlier expressed apprehensions that the PDA could send an exclusionary message to the tribals and upper castes.

Following the "backlash", Akhilesh had clarified that the A in PDA also included agde (forward castes), adivasi (tribals) and aadhi abadi (women). Of the suspected cross-voters, Manoj Pandey, Rakesh Pratap Singh and Vinod Chaturvedi are Brahmins, Rakesh Pratap Singh and Abhay Singh are Thakurs. Puja Pal belongs to the OBC category while Ashutosh Maurya is a Dalit.

The biggest embarrassment for the SP came from its chief whip and Unchahar MLA Manoj Pandey, who resigned from the post minutes before the election on Tuesday. Seen as a Brahmin face of the party, he was the first SP leader to "disagree" with then SP leader Swami Prasad Maurya's "objectionable" comments on the Ramcharitmanas. "People in India and even a large number of

people abroad read, accept and follow Ramcharitmanas. We all respect it and granths (holy books) of other religions too," he had said.

BJP leaders, however, said Manoj was a natural ally of the party, as he was their man". "Before joining the SP in 2006, he was the chairman of Raebareli Nagar Palika as a BJP leader. Last year, his aide contested for the post on the SP ticket but finished third behind the Congress and BJP," a BJP leader in Raebareli said.

Unchahar falls under the Raebareli Lok Sabha seat, seen as a Congress bastion where the SP has not fielded candidates in the past in solidarity with the Gandhi fam-

Goshaiganj MLA Abhay Singh posted "Jai Raghuandhan, Jai Siya Ram" on his social media handles ahead of voting, hinting that he may vote for the BJP.

SP spokesperson Rajeev Rai said personal ambitions and pressure forced MLAs to cross-vote. "It cannot be said they voted against the PDA. In fact, some of them (cross-voters) belong to the PDA. On the other hand, many who voted in favour of the SP are from upper castes."

Two legislators of Rajput leader Raghuraj Pratap Singh aka Raja Bhaiyya-led JDL, including him, also voted in favour of the BJP. The JDL has been angry over Akhilesh keeping distance from the party over Raja Bhaiyya's strongman image.

Cross-voting by its MLAs lays bare SP's 'upper caste' challenge

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

THE SAMAJWADI Party (SP) was left embarrassed Tuesday after seven of its MLAs cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls, leading to the loss of one of its candidates. Now, a bigger problem confronts the party as five of the seven legislators who are believed to have cross-voted and appeared in photographs with the BJP on Tuesday belong to upper castes, and insiders concede that this may hit the party hard ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Incidentally, two of these five represent Assembly segments which are contiguous with the parliamentary constituencies of

people abroad read, accept and follow Ramcharitmanas. We all respect it and granths (holy books) of other religions too," he had said. BJP leaders, however, said Manoj was a natural ally of the party, as he was their man". "Before joining the SP in 2006, he was the chairman of Raebareli Nagar Palika as a BJP leader. Last year, his aide contested for the post on the SP ticket but finished third behind the Congress and BJP," a BJP leader in Raebareli said.

EC asks BJD,
Odisha govt to
explain use of
party symbol
in govt ads

Zoo or safari in forest areas: CJI-led bench order only interim

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

the prior permission of this Court," the bench also comprising Justice J B Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra had said in its February 19 order.

The bench said, "Where any such proposal is sought to be implemented, this Court shall be moved by the Union Government or, as the case may be, the competent authority for the prior approval of this Court. This part of the interim direction will hold the field only till the final judgment of the co-ordinate Bench. Necessarily therefore the judgment of the co-ordinate Bench shall govern the area, once it is pronounced."

"Our attention is drawn to the fact that a co-ordinate Bench of this Court presided over by Hon'ble Mr Justice B R Gavai has reserved orders on the subject... we issue an interim order to the effect that any proposal for the establishment of zoos and safaris referred to in the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, enacted by the Government or any authority in forest areas other than protected areas, shall not be finally approved by the States/Union Territories, save and except with

'LAND-FOR-JOBS'
Delhi court grants bail to Rabri, daughters

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

A DELHI Court on Wednesday granted regular bail to former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi and two of her daughters Hema Yadav and Misa Bharti in the money laundering case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the alleged land-for-jobs scam.

Earlier in February, Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court had granted interim bail to Rabri Devi, Misa Bharti, and Hema Yadav until February 28 in connection with the land-for-jobs case.

"The investigating agency did not find it necessary to effect arrest and hence no plausible reasons exist for the Court to deny the relief of regular bail," said Special Judge Vishal Gogte of Rouse Avenue Court while granting bail to the accused on Wednesday.

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Dated: 29.02.2024
पत्रक संख्या: मैडिंकांडौ/2023-24/2300 दिनांक: 28 फरवरी, 2024

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Govt bans 2 J&K groups for 'anti-India activities'

New Delhi: The Government Wednesday banned two factions of the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir for five years for their anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda, and asking people to refrain from taking part in elections.

On Tuesday, the government extended the ban imposed on the Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu Kashmir (Jel), by another five years.

In a notification Wednesday, the Union Home Ministry said the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir-Sumji faction (MCJS), chaired by Ghulam Nabi Sumji, and its leaders were involved in raising funds through undiminished vehemence, the government has declared the Muslim Conference Jammu & Kashmir (Sumji faction) and Muslim Conference Jammu & Kashmir (Bhat faction) as Unlawful Associations. These outfits have

been engaging in activities against the sovereignty and integrity of the nation," Shah wrote on X.

On Tuesday, the government extended the ban imposed on the Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu Kashmir (Jel), by another five years.

In a notification Wednesday, the Union Home Ministry said the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir-Sumji faction (MCJS), chaired by Ghulam Nabi Sumji, and its leaders were involved in raising funds through undiminished vehemence, the government has declared the Muslim Conference Jammu & Kashmir (Sumji faction) and Muslim Conference Jammu & Kashmir (Bhat faction) as Unlawful Associations. These outfits have

EXPRESS Careers

K.C.E.Society's

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & MANAGEMENT, JALGAON
Behind D.I.C. Office, N.H. 06, Jalgaon 425001 (MS) | Ph.No. (0257) 2242025, 2242026, 2242027
(Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Govt. of Maharashtra & KBC NMU, Jalgaon)
(NAAC Accredited B++)

WANTED 2023-24

Application are invited for the post of Principal from eligible candidates.

Sr. No	Post	No. of Post	Nature of Post	Category
01	Principal	01	Permanent Non Granted	Isolated

The detailed advertisement is available on the website: <https://nmu.ac.in/> or Institute website: <https://coem.ac.in/>

Mr. N. G. Bendale
President,
K.C.E. Society's, Jalgaon

KCE - A Profound Academic Movement

कनारा बैंक Canara Bank
A Govt. of India Undertaking

सिडिकेट Syndicate

RECOVERY & LEGAL SECTION, CIRCLE OFFICE
3rd Floor, Luv-Kush Tower, Exhibition Road, Patna - 800001, Ph.: 0612-2320180, Email : npacopat@canarabank.com

PROPERTY FOR E-AUCTION

E-AUCTION Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged / hypothecated/ Pledged / charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive / physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Canara Bank** will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on **30.03.2024**. Details are as under:

Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor (s)	Outstanding in Rs.	Details of Property	Reserve Price (Rs.) /EMD/Bid Multiplier Amt./Ac No./IFSC Code
1.	Banu Chapar Branch West Champaran, Bihar Mob. 8210998467	Rs. 14,80,338.34 as on 03.11.2023 + interest & Other Cost thereon till realization	All That Part And Parcel Of the property consisting in the name of Mohammad Islam , S/o- Esmail Miyan Khata No-1993 , Tauz No. - 951, Thana No.- 128, Holding PID No. - 3902006555, Jamabandi No. - 2173, Area- 11 Dhuur 10 Dhur, Boundary : North - Bhikhui Miyan, South - Santosh Sah and Champa Devi, East - Road and Nikhil Chandra Das, West - Bettiah, Location:- Mauza- Purani Gudari, P.S- Bettiah Town, Dist- West Chaparan, Bettiah, Sub-Registry-Bettiah	Rs. 32,32,800/- Rs. 3,23,280/- 10,000/- A/c- 209272434 IFSC Code - CNRB0003873
2.	GOPAL-GANJ - I BRANCH Gopalganj Bihar Mob. 8210998484	Rs. 31,62,354.25 as on 20.08.2022 +interest & Other Cost thereon till realization	All that part & parcel of the property consisting in the name of Mr. Manmohan Puri , S/o - Satyadeo Puri, Khata No. - 361, Plot No. - 109, Tauz No. - 3296, Thana No. - 1010, Area - 23.53 Decimal, Boundary : North : Nij, South : Babu Ram Puri Hissedar No. Haja , East : Jung Bahadur Tiwari, West : Sadak Pakki, Location :- Mauza - Machhagar Jagdish, Thana No. - 1010, Tauz No. - 3296, Pragana - Kuadi, Gopalganj.	Rs. 38,11,500/- Rs. 3,81,150/- 10,000/- A/c - 209272434 IFSC Code - CNRB0002310
3.	Barharia Branch Mob. 8210998470	Rs. 34,46,166.09 as on 26.05.2023 + interest & Other Cost thereon till realization	All that part and parcel of the property consisting in the name of Mrs. Heena Khatoon , W/o Sifte Ahmad, Karbala Bazaar, Barharia, Karbala, Dist. - Siwan - 841232, Proprietor / Mortgagor - Mrs. Heena Khatoon , W/o Sifte Ahmad, Athkhamba Barharia, Dist. - Siwan-841232, Ph.: 9006009324	Rs. 23,70,600/- Rs. 2,37,060/- 10,000/- A/c - 209272434 IFSC Code - CNRB0000992
4.	GOPAL-GANJ - I BRANCH Gopalganj, Bihar Mob. 8210998484	Rs. 08,07,435.26 as on 30.11.2020 +interest & Other Cost thereon till realization	All that part and parcel of the property consisting in the name of Sitaram Rai , S/o- Late Beni Rai, Khata No. - 11, Khesra No. - 704, Tauz No. - 3947, Thana No. - 11, Mauza - Masanthana, Dist. - Gopalganj, Bihar, Area - 0-9-0-10, Boundary : North - Bharat Rai, South - Nathuni Rai, East - Amla Rai, West - Mustari	Rs. 42,43,500/- Rs. 4,24,350/- 10,000/- A/c - 209272434 IFSC Code - CNRB0002310
5.	Gopalganj-I Branch Gopalganj, Bihar Mob. 8210998484	Rs. 33,15,918.31 as on 22.09.2023 +interest & Other Cost thereon till realization	All that part and parcel of the property consisting in the name of Bindeshwari Yadav S/o- Satan Choudhary, Gharbarani Kunwar W/o- Late Satan Yadav, Deed No-3248, Khata No. - 179, Survey No. / Plot No. - 1441, Area-1 Decimal, Boundary : North - Nij Padidar, South - Mogal Sah, East - Ali Ahmad, West - Road, Location :- Mauza- Semara, Pargana Kuwari Thana No-64, Tauz No- 3296, Dist- Gopalganj, Name of Title holder - Gharbarani Kunwar, Deed No. - 7093, Khata No. - 179, Survey No. / Plot No. - 1441, Area-4 Decimal, Gopalganj, Name of Title holder - Gharbarani Kunwar, Deed No. - 7093, Khata No. - 179, Survey No. / Plot No. - 1441, Area-1 Decimal, Boundary - North - Manan Miya, South - Must	

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	07239886	WIDE CUSHION FOR TRANSVERSE SEAT	10655 NOS	25-03-24
02	19240634	HOUSING FOR TRACTION BAR OF THREE-PHASE LOCO	159 NOS	26-03-24
03	19240862	SURGE ARRESTER FOR THREE PHASE LOCO	61 NOS	26-03-24
04	16244216	FILTER ELEMENT	1411 NOS	28-03-24
05	77239068RGC	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR GLUED JOINTS	15000 NOS	01-04-24
06	19245004	MAIN TRANSFORMER 7775 KVA	79 SET	01-04-24
07	15235241	SUPPLY INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING OF AXLE JOURNAL TURNING AND BURNISHING MACHINE	01 NOS	02-04-24
08	07231058	HEX. HEAD SCREW, M16 X 1.5 X 50	163212 NOS	04-04-24
09	77239058RGC	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR WELDABLE CMS CROSSINGS	1300 SET	09-04-24
10	07231537	POH KIT FOR KEY TYPE ADJUSTING CUP SLEEVE FOR COUPLER.	5726 SET	12-04-24
11	07230076A	ADJUSTING CUP SLEEVE FOR COUPLER.	450 NOS	18-04-24
12	07240187	ANTI ROLL BAR ASSY.	192 NOS	08-05-24
13	07231334A	FOLDABLE BOTTLE HOLDER	45633 NOS	17-05-24

Note : 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.
Tender Notice No. 97/2023-24 Date: 28.02.2024
644/2024
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer,
Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur-760004
e-mail id: se_sicbam@yahoo.com

e-Procurement Notice No. ACE,RBB-22/2023-24

- Type of Work :- Flood Protection Work.
- Total No of Works :- 01 (One) No.
- Amount put to tender :- Rs 770.41 Lakh
- Period of completion :- 12 (Twelve) calendar months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Availability & Submission of Bid On-line
Additional Chief Engineer, Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur	ACE,RBB(BNID) - 44/2023-24	770.41	From 12.03.2024, 10.00 A.M. to 26.03.2024, 5.00 P.M.

Date of opening of the Technical Bid:- 27.03.2024 at 11.30 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. website tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-

Additional Chief Engineer,
Rushikulya Bahuda Basin,
Berhampur.
OIPR-32411/11/01028/2324

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,
DRAINAGE CIRCLE, BALASORE.

Email ID: secdels@yahoo.com

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.- ACEDCBLS-20/2023-24

- Name of the Work :- Drainage Works (under D.I.P Scheme)
- Name of Project :- 1 No of individual work
- Estimated cost of individual works :- Estimate cost Rs. 4,98,80,000/- (Excluding G.S.T.)
- Period of completion :- 11 (Eleven calendar month)
- Bid Identification Number :- ACECBLS/DDBLS-01-20-2023-24
- Date & Time of availability of Bid document in the portal :- From 04.03.24 at: 10 hours to 18.03.24 at: 17 hours
- Date of Opening of technical bid :- Dt.19.03.2024 at: 11.30 hours. In the Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore
- Date of Opening of Financial bid :- To be uploaded in portal
- Date of Lottery (if required) :- To be notified
- Procurement Officer/ Name & address of the officer inviting Bids. :- Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Balasore

Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-

Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Balasore

Sl.No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No.	Total
1	CE/MM	M.92	1

For details of Works / Procurement / Due date of submission / opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit websites: www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.intenders.gov.in

DIPR/1274/Tender/2024

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE

O-2681 E_MailId: seewr.balasore@yahoo.in, Ph-No-06782/260318 Balia, Balasore

"e" Procurement Notice for Road Work

Identification No.- Online Tender- Road N.C.B. No. 85 for 2023-24

Letter No. 1177 /WE Date:- 26/02/24

- Name of the work :- Road under MMSY-TRIP
- Total No. of roads :- 4 Nos. of Roads.
- Estimated Cost :- From Rs. 670.80 lakhs to Rs. 356.69 lakhs (Approximately)
- Eligible Class of Contractor :- "A" & "Special" Class of Odisha P.W.D.) or relevant Class of other Licensing authorities (as per annexure).
- Period of Completion :- From 06 (Six) to 11 (Eleven) Calendar months for the work.
- Other details :-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender on-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore	N.C.B. No. 85	From 01.03.2024 to 10.00 A.M. up to 05.00 P.M.	13.03.2024 up to 05.00 P.M.	12.03.2024 at 10.00 A.M. later

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/-

N.V.Haribar Rao

Chief Engineer,

R.W. Circle, Balasore.



Honours your trust

Zonal Office : 754, Siddhi Sadan, Halsey Road
Near Badshahi Naka Police Station, Kanpur - 208001
E-mail : zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [See proviso to Rule - 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to UCO Bank Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of UCO Bank Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As Is Where Is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 27-03-2024, for recovery of Bank's Dues from Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) to UCO Bank Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name & Address of Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date	Description of Immovable Property(ies) known with known encumbrances, if any	Bank's Dues	Reserve Price
		Possession Notice Date			Earnest Money Deposit
1.	Borrower(s): M/s Khadi Udyog Jan Sewa Sansthan (Proprietor: Shri Virender Kumar Singh, R/o, Nai Abadi Nari Pura Sohala Road Dhanoli Agra-282009 and Shri Virender Kumar Singh Proprietor of M/s Khadi Gram Udyog Jan Sewa Sansthan R/o, Nai Abadi Nari Pura Sohala Road Dhanoli Agra-282009	29.10.2021	All that part and parcel of the property consists of a Plot measuring 209.02 sq. mtr. and mortgaged (registered) as per Bahi No. 1, Zild No. 0298, Page No. 265 to 280, Sl. No. 2445 registered on 23.11.2004 at Sub-Registrar 3 Sadar Agra, situated at Khasra No. 270 Nai Abadi Nari Pura Sohala Road Dhanoli Agra-282009 standing in the name of Shri Virender Singh resident of Nai Abadi Nari Pura Sohala Road Dhanoli Agra-282009 Details of Boundaries (As per Deed) East: House of Joginder Singh, West: Road 8 ft. Wide and Exit, North: Plot of Akali Prasad, South: Land of Banwari Lal Known Encumbrances, if any - Nil	Rs. 14,64,328.10 (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Sixty Four Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Eight and Paisa Ten Only) as on 05.01.2022 (inclusive of interest upto 31.12.2020) plus further interest thereon at the contractual rate, costs, charges and expenses etc. till date of payment.	Rs. 19,70,000/- Rs. 1,97,000/-
Branch Name: Sewla, (0085)					

Last Date for submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for Bid : 26.03.2024 upto 4:00 PM as per (IST)

Date & Time of E-auction :- 27.03.2024 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM as per (IST) with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each with Bid Incremental Amount of Rs. 10,000/-

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit the websites [https://www.msteccommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp](http://www.msteccommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp) & [https://www.ibapi.in](http://www.ibapi.in). The Borrower's and/or Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section 8 of section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Note:- Hindi & English versions of this Notice are being published in Hindi & English Newspapers respectively. It is clarified that in case of any contradiction in Hindi and English version of the Notice, the English version of the Notice will prevail.

Date :- 29.02.2024

Place :- Agra

Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)

No.- 890 /Niveda-Moradabad/23-24

Dated :- 09-02-2024

On behalf of the Governor of UP, tender for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, PWD Moradabad online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from registered contractors in column No-8 from 01.03.2024 at 10.00 am to 06-03-2024 at 12:00 pm. Amount mentioned in column no. 5 & 7 shall be mandatory deposited by Net Banking Only through E-tender portal. Technical bid /Prequalification of tenders shall be opened on 06-03-2024 at 12.30 pm in office of undersigned by tender committee in presence of authorised representatives/bidders who wish to be present. Financial bid of the tenders who qualify in technical bid shall be opened on date and time as specified by a notice in the office of undersigned. In case of Government holiday the required process shall be carried out on next working day.

Sl. No.	DISTRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Time of completion of the work (Including rainy season)	Cost of tender documents including GST (RS.)	Category of road contractor eligible
1	MBD	New Construction of PWD road to Masoom Miyan's Mazar via Chatkali road.	117.00	7.85	12 Month	300+2000+54=2354	A,B Road Category)
2							

Rules/conditions & details of the tender are available at website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Bidder have to login Prahar URL <http://wms.uppwd.gov.in/prahari/> and upload their documents As per G.O No.-879 (1) /23-7-2020 dated 25-08-2020 and E-IN-C (Vikas) and Head of Department letter-4650/4NL-OC / 2020 dated 27.08.2020.

(Mohd. Naved Ahmad Khan)
Executive Engineer
Provincial Division, PWD
Moradabad

UPID-204604 Date 27/02/2024
For and on behalf of Governor of UP

(S.P. Singh)
Superintendent Engineer
Moradabad Circle, PWD
Moradabad

UPID-204604 Date 27/02/2024

DIPR/1225/TENDER/2024

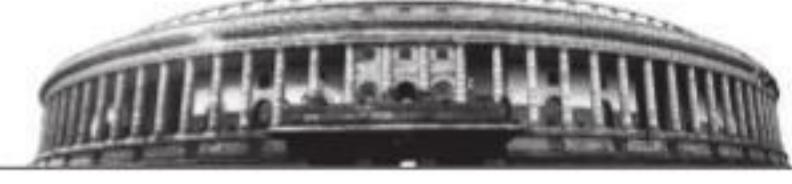
NABARD and Rural Roads Circle, Salem - 7.

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No. 35 / 2023-2024 / SDO / Dated: 27.02.2024.

For and on behalf of the Governor of

GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



SELF-APPRAISAL

AHEAD OF seeking a possible fifth term from the same seat, Union Minister and Dharwad MP Pralhad Joshi launched a self-appraisal on Wednesday, detailing the progress made in the constituency in the last 10 years in the form of a booklet titled 'The development works of Dharwad Lok Sabha constituency during the 10 years tenure of Sri Pralhad Joshi'. The book devotes several pages to testimonials by Union ministers and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Joshi's work for Dharwad. Besides referring to India as Bharat, the book has mugshots of Joshi and PM Modi on every page.

BHISHM & WAR

SHOWCASING INDIA'S indigenously developed mobile cube-based hospital BHISHM, that can be assembled at the time of a disaster or health crisis, to billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates on Wednesday, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said he hoped there were no wars in the world, but in case of such situations India would be willing to provide the BHISHM Cube as an emergency aid. He said the cube could be of help in the ongoing Hamas-Israel and Ukraine-Russia conflicts.

OMNIPRESENT MINISTER

UNION SCIENCE Minister Jitendra Singh, who was present in Delhi on Wednesday for National Science Day, will leave for Jammu on Thursday. His engagements took him to Bengaluru and Jammu over the last two days. Commenting on his constant travelling, Department of Biotechnology Secretary Rajesh Gokhale said at a recent event that it felt as though the minister was omnipresent; in the morning he was seen interacting with people in Jammu and in the evening he was present at an event in Delhi.

5th YSRCP MP quits party, TDP says talks on over ticket to son

PUSHKAR BANAKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

going...an official announcement will be made in a day or two when the party chief (Chandrababu Naidu) visits Nellore," he said.

Party insiders said relations between Jagan and the Ongole MP soured after his son's name featured in the alleged Delhi excise scam as part of the "southern group".

Raghava is believed to have given critical information to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) since he turned approver in the case, which has seen the arrest of several AAP leaders, including former Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, and several summons to Telangana MLC and senior BRS leader K Kavitha.

The Ongole MP's resignation came a day after he skipped a meeting called by Jagan, where he had assured every party worker of full support during the elections. An estimated 2,700 party leaders attended the meeting. Earlier last month, Sreenivasulu had also given an Ongole event where Jagan distributed land patas to beneficiaries a miss.

Sources said Sreenivasulu, who was pushing for a ticket for his son M Raghava Reddy for the Ongole LS seat, was miffed after Andhra CM Jagan Mohan Reddy appointed Chandragiri MLA Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy as the parliamentary in-charge for the seat, virtually ending his chances.

Sreenivasulu, whose son has turned "approver" in the Delhi excise scam case, becomes the fifth YSRCP MP to exit the party over the past few weeks. "We do not have ego, we have a lot of self-respect... Due to some unavoidable circumstances, we have to leave the YSRCP," Sreenivasulu said, announcing his decision.

Sources said Sreenivasulu, who was pushing for a ticket for his son M Raghava Reddy for the Ongole LS seat, was miffed after Andhra CM Jagan Mohan Reddy appointed Chandragiri MLA Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy as the parliamentary in-charge for the seat, virtually ending his chances.

A four-time MP from Ongole, Sreenivasulu won the seat thrice on a Congress ticket, before moving to the YSRCP and fighting on its ticket in 2019. He left Congress over the introduction of the Bill in 2014 by UP government at the Centre, that led to bifurcation of the united Andhra. **FULL REPORT**
www.indianexpress.com

</div

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, BBMP Building, C.A.No.3, 1st Main Road, Outer Ring Road, Kommaghatta Road, Kengeri Upanagar, Bengaluru - 560 060

No: EE/KEN/TEND/23/2023-24 Dated: 28.02.2024

POSTPONEMENT OF TENDER NOTIFICATION - 1

Sub: Regarding Postponement of Tender Notification

Ref: 1. This Office Tender Notification No: EE/KEN/TEND/23/2023-24 Dated: 26.02.2024

With reference to the above subject, the tender was invited as per Ref(1) for the works. Due to server problem in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal and technical reasons the said works tender was not uploaded. Hence the tender dates will be intimated in the coming days.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Ramdhani, S/o: Mange Ram, R/o: H.No. 21, East Part of Outer Ring Road, Badli Village, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 886/2016, U/s 279/337/304A IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Ramdhani cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Ramdhani has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Ramdhani accused of FIR No. 886/2016, U/s 279/337/304A IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 16.04.2024.

By Order
Shri Milan Goel
Metropolitan Magistrate (West)
Room No. 356, Tis Hazari Courts,
Delhi

DP/2396/WD/2024-

(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Pradeep, S/o Jagat Singh (User), R/o Premises Opposite Left Hand Side Plot No. 2/12, Main Kakrolla Road, Roshan Garden, Najafgarh, Near Pole No. NJFB 964, New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Ct. Case No. 445/2021, U/S 135 Indian Electricity Act, PS Najafgarh, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Pradeep can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Pradeep has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Pradeep of Ct. Case No. 445/2021, U/S 135 Indian Electricity Act, PS Najafgarh, New Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on 10.04.2024.

By Order
Vinod Kumar Meena
Additional District & Sessions Judge (South-West)
Special Court (Electricity) Room No. 609, 6th Floor
Dwarka District Court, New Delhi

DP/2372/DW/2024

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



Unknown
General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Unknown**, S/o **Unknown**, R/o **Unknown**, Age about about 70 years, Height 5'8", Complexion Wheatish, Long Face, Thin Built, Wearing Black colour jacket and black colour lower was found

dead at Shed No. 18, Azadpur Fruit Mandi, Delhi on 03.02.2024. In this regard a DD No 15A, dated 03.02.24 has been lodged at PS Mahendra Park, Delhi.

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

SHO
PS: Mahendra Park, Delhi
Ph.: 9911819172, 7428139095

DP/2417/NW/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Jitender Kumar S/o Kirat R/o Ground Floor Near By House No 26, Street No.3, BLK-E, JJ Colony, Shahbad Dairy, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in a case CC No. 146/2022 U/s 125 Indian Electricity Act registered at P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued stating that the said Jitender Kumar could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the accused Jitender Kumar has absconded (or are concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Jitender Kumar is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before 30.03.2024.

By Order
Sh. Jitendra Singh,
Additional Session Judge (Electricity)
North-West, Court No. 205,
Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/2161/ON/2024

(Court Notice)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

G2C
E-Tender Notice No. JHS/Br/L/2023-24/25 Date 24.02.2024

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Dy.Chief Engineer/Bridge/Line/Jhansi, North Central Railway, Jhansi for and on behalf of President of India invites open E-tenders on the prescribed forms for the under noted work:-

Name of work: Jhansi Division: Provision of inspection cradle, ladder, replacement of corroded rivets and repair work at Br. No. 13672 & 1334/2 in Khairar-Bhimsen & 1316/2 in Jhansi-Banda section under AXEN/Br./LVGLJ.

Cost of work ₹ : 1,06,42,775.30/- **Bid Security (Earnest Money) :** ₹ 2,03,200/-

Tender No: Br-JHS- 2023-31, **Date of opening of Tender :** 18.03.2024, **Completion Period :** 12 Months, **Eligibility Criteria for Similar work:** "Repair to steel girder involving field riveting or any bridge work involving erection/launching or regrading or open web girder." Note: (1) The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website www.ireps.gov.in. up to 15:00 hrs. on the due to date of tender opening i.e. 18.03.2024. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. (3) Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. (4) Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. (5) Payment of Bid Security (Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in respect of e-tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. (6) In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. (7) Tender on line can be submitted up to 15.00 hrs. on dated 18.03.2024. 339/24(DG)

www.ireps.gov.in www.nctrailways.gov.in

EXPRESS NETWORK

CPM's student wing under scanner after suicide at Kerala varsity

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 28

THE ALLEGED suicide of a college student at the Wayanad campus of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, allegedly after intense ragging, has put the ruling CPI(M) on back foot over the alleged involvement of activists of its student wing, the Students Federation of India (SFI).

J S Sidharthan, 20, a second-year student of BVSc and Animal Husbandry at the university, was found hanging in the toilet of the men's hostel on February 18. The case, registered as an unnatural death, took a turn after the post-mortem report mentioned alleged torture and wounds sustained by the victim days before the death.

Twelve students, including his classmates and seniors, were suspended from the university, which acted on the report of an anti-ragging cell. Those suspended included the college union president, a union member, and the SFI unit secretary.

Wayanad police on Wednesday arrested six students, though officers say SFI leaders are absconding. The police, which initially registered a case of unnatural death, have now framed charges under IPC sections of abetment to suicide, wrongful restraint and voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means, as well as the Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Act.

Sidharthan's father T Jayarakash told the media that the SFI had a grudge towards his son. "He was not involved in campus politics. We learned from students that he had danced with senior colleagues during a Valentine's Day programme on February 14. Irked over this, a group of students manhandled my son. He was returning home the next day. On his way home, Sidharthan was called back to the hostel at the best of SFI leaders. For the next three days, they stripped and tortured him. They did not allow him to eat or drink. His stomach was empty as per the post-mortem report. Police tried to hush up the case, but were forced to probe after the forensic surgeon indicated about the wounds on the body," he alleged.

Congress's VD Sathesan, the Leader of Opposition, who visited the family, alleged, "Sidharthan was murdered... He faced inexplicable and unbelievable cruelty from SFI goons..."

Union Mos BJP leader V Muraleedharan alleged there is a bid to project the incident as a suicide due to the involvement of SFI activists. **FULL STORY**

www.indianexpress.com

Jharkhand: Two run over by train in Jamtara

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 28

AT LEAST two persons were run over by a train in Jharkhand's Jamtara district Wednesday evening, police said.

Jamtara Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Mujibur Rahman said the accident occurred near Kaljharia around 140 km from Ranchi. "Bodies of two persons have been recovered so far. Search operation is on," he said.

According to railway officials, the incident occurred at 7 pm. "Train no 12254 (Anga Express) passing between Vidyasagar-Kasitar stopped due to chain pulling at 7 pm. At 7.07 pm, two persons who were walking on the track were run over on the up line by MEMU train, at least two kilometres away from where the train stopped," the Eastern Railway said in a press statement.

A three-member committee has been formed to investigate the issue, it stated.

Jamtara SP Animesh Nalpathy said: "According to our discussion with the locals, electric sparks were seen above the train bound for Yashwantpur (Bengaluru). This created panic and rumour spread that the train has caught fire. A few passengers pulled the chain to stop it and some passengers deboarded the train and started walking on the tracks when they were hit by another train."

'It is scary': HC on Gujarat law university 'suppressing' homophobia, rape incidents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 28

"IT IS scary", Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal said Wednesday, as the Gujarat High Court slammed the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) for "suppressing" incidents of rape, molestation, discrimination and homophobia as well as for not having in place an internal complaint committee.

A division bench led by the CJ was referring to a report submitted last week by a fact-finding committee, led by retired Justice Harsha Devani.

The court noted the allegations against faculty members, the registrar, and the director of the university in Gandhinagar. Going through parts of the report on Wednesday, the CJ remarked,

dents posting on Instagram about the alleged incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination.

At an earlier hearing, the HC took objection to Registrar Jagadeesh Chandra TG's stance wherein the Registrar, in an affidavit, had dismissed the allegations. The court had also taken objection to the way the university acted following the allegations, wherein it included Professor Anjan Singh Tomar, the ICC chairperson, as part of an independent fact-finding committee, specific to probing the allegations. The court had termed it to be an "eyewash" and had called the Registrar's stance as being "an overanxious effort to hush-hush the whole matter".

The independent fact-finding committee was later reconstituted, with retired Justice Harsha Devani, who had been a judge in the High

Court, along with Bhargavi Dave, secretary of the State Human Rights Commission and Surbi Mathur, associate professor at the National Forensic Sciences University.

The panel report highlights student submissions such as "a politically influential person has been involved in suppressing the case before the police".

"The question is - Are you facing any inhibition in sharing your thoughts with the committee on account of fear of the university authorities? The answer is, 'I was not, but initially appointing professor so-and-so as the head of the fact-finding committee had led a lot of people to not come out with whatever they wanted to...' " the CJ read out from a part of the report.

Criticising the university, she further said, "How can we ex-

pect the students to be stating something wrong and why would they do it? They are studying in an institution and have no personal grudges against any of the faculty members... it was so difficult for them to speak. And then they are students of law. If students of law, their voices are suppressed, who will speak in the country? They are supposed to protect and help others whose voices are to be heard in society....They are the future protectors of law... then all these lectures, talks, seminars, everything goes to rubbish, it has no meaning at all. If the state of affairs in a law college then we cannot show our faces to anyone. We are all responsible for this situation...This requires high-level inquiry into the affairs of GNLU and its faculty..."



3,300 kg narcotics seized by Navy and NCB. PTI

Highest-ever drug bust off Gujarat coast, five arrested

ENS & PTI
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 28

IN WHAT is claimed to be the biggest drug bust in the country, around 3,300 kg of narcotics was seized from on board an Iranian boat and five suspected Iranian nationals were arrested off the Gujarat coast on Tuesday in a joint operation by the Navy, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS). The boat and its crew were brought to Porbandar port late Tuesday.

The cache could be worth anything between Rs 1,300-Rs 2,000 crore in the international market, NCB Director General SN Pradhan told PTI. "This is the biggest offshore narcotics seizure made in the country till date. We have seen that drug smuggling has increased through the maritime route over the last few years and hence, we are jointly working with other government agencies like the Navy, Coast Guard and Customs, among others, to intercept such activities," he added.

The traffickers onboard vessels carrying drugs keep in touch with buyers on the land and once they strike a deal, the consignment can land anywhere up to the southernmost tip of India, NCB officials said. Home Minister Amit Shah called the joint operation a "historic success" and a testament of his government's "unwavering commitment to making our nation drug-free". In his post on X, Shah said pursuing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a drug-free Bharat, the agencies have achieved the grand success of making the biggest offshore seizure of drugs in the nation.

The seized contraband included 3,089 kg of charas or hashish, 158 kg of methamphetamine and 25 kg of morphine, a statement from the Union Ministry of Defence (MoD) said. "The drugs were meant for southern states," said a senior Gujarat Police officer.

The NCB said the packets containing the drugs bore the stamp of 'Ras Awad Goods Co. produce of Pakistan'. The source of the drugs is found to be the Chabahar Port in Iran, the agency added.

The current Assembly session is the second to take place since the outbreak of ethnic violence in the state on May 3 last year. The previous session was only a day-long on August 29, and it lasted all of 11 minutes, ending without any mention of the violence in the state. The 10 Kuki-Zomi members had not attended the last session too.

Satyabrata

Thokchom

Satyabrata

gave his nod for a short-duration discussion on Thursday on the ongoing crisis in the state.

In the valley districts, the Arambai Tengol's biggest show of strength with public support took place last month when all Meitei MLAs and MPs attended a meeting in Kangla Fort in Imphal in response to a "summons" by the group. Three MLAs were allegedly assaulted during the meeting.

While presenting the Budget Estimate for 2024-2025, CM Minister N Biren Singh said that the ongoing conflict has severely impacted the fiscal capacity of the state. "The current financial year has been the hardest for our government," he said.

Addressing a gathering in Chourai, he said, "You gave me love and trust for so many years. You want to bid farewell to Kamal Nath. This is your choice. I am ready to leave. I don't want to impose myself. That is your wish."

Nath pointed out that although he built the "biggest" Hanuman Temple 12 years ago on his land and not that of the government's, he never used it for promotional purposes during polls.

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While three convicts – Perarivalan, Nalinji, and Ravichandran – were released, four Sri Lankan nationals – Santhan, Jayakumar, Robert Payas, and Murugan – were sent to a special prison camp for foreigners in Trichy. It was meant as a transit point before their repatriation.

However, as the state government and the Union government dragged their feet on paperwork for their repatriation, all four wrote several petitions stating they were denied basic freedoms.

"...the Supreme Court had noted that they had spent over three decades in jail... Despite their undisputed reformed status, unfortunately, their movement is restricted," R Prabhakar, counsel of Robert Payas, had told *The Indian Express* in an earlier interview.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

Mahadev app: Searches in 17 places

New Delhi: The ED Wednesday conducted searches at 17 locations across Mumbai, West Bengal, Delhi-NCR, Chhattisgarh and MP in connection with the Mahadev App case. "These companies largely laundered the money illegally earned by Mahadev App," an ED official said. According to the official, the searches have so far led to the recovery of Rs 1.8 crore in cash from a Kolkata-based company. ENS

CAG, ICAI to launch online courses to strengthen local bodies' accounting

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

THE COMPTROLLER and Auditor General of India (CAG) has partnered with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to develop a set of online courses to create a pool of certified accountants to strengthen accounting system at panchayat and municipal bodies, CAG Girish Chandra Murmu said Wednesday.

Addressing the inaugural session of the International Conference on Strengthening of Grassroots Democracy, Murmu said: "SAI (Supreme Audit Institution) India has also partnered... to develop a set of online courses, pitched at the required level of knowledge and skills for maintaining the accounts of different categories of local governments. Thereby, creating a pool of certified accountants whose

number of urban and rural local bodies, particularly at rural level 2,62,000 such bodies exist. This third tier of governance is dealing with many schemes/projects concerning SDGs. Union Finance Commissions are providing direct devolution of around 4.2% of the total divisible pool."

"It is in this context, that SAI India is committed to strengthening the audit of local governments. From our experience, we find the functioning of local governments in India in terms of their dependence for functions, funds, and functionaries on the two higher tiers. This reality calls for an 'out-of-the-box' audit approach," Murmu said.

He said, "in an increasingly interconnected world, audit methodologies must evolve to keep pace with the complexities of modern governance."

services can be used by local governments in maintaining complete and standardised accounts."

Observing that the grassroots democracy is the "cornerstone" of a vibrant and inclusive society, Murmu said, "India has large

number of urban and rural local bodies, particularly at rural level 2,62,000 such bodies exist. This third tier of governance is dealing with many schemes/projects concerning SDGs. Union Finance Commissions are providing direct devolution of around 4.2% of the total divisible pool."

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He said, "in an increasingly interconnected world, audit methodologies must evolve to keep pace with the complexities of modern governance."

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 28

SANTHAN ALIAS T Suthenthiraraja, one of the seven released convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, died at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai on Wednesday. He was 55.

He was admitted to the hospital last month and was undergoing treatment for non-alcoholic liver disease. According to a doctor who was seeing him, he suffered a cardiac arrest on Wednesday morning and breathed his last at 7.50 am.

A Sri Lankan citizen, Santhan was accused No. 2 in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. He was charged for his active association with Sivarasan, considered the mastermind behind the assassination. According to CBI case

files, Santhan came to Tamil Nadu with Sivarasan in April 1991. The charge sheet described him as a member of the LTTE's intelligence wing who was close to Sivarasan. In February 1988, Sivarasan suggested that Santhan continue his studies in what was then Madras (now Chennai), and in February 1990, he secured admission at the

Madras Institute of Engineering Technology, where his expenses were met by the LTTE.

On May 21, 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. In 1998, a TADA court had sentenced 26 of the 41 accused to death, including 12 who had died in the blast or during the investigation. In May 1999, the top court freed 19 of them, while upholding the death sentences of Murugan, Santhan, Perarivalan, and Nalinji, and commuting those of Payas, Ravichandran, and Jayakumar to life. Santhan spent over 32 years incarcerated, including a decade in solitary confinement. He was also a death row prisoner for 22 years until the top court commuted the death sentence of four into life in 2014.

When Santhan, along with six others, were released in November 2022, it was the first time he stepped out of the prison in 32 years, as he had not had pa-

rticipation in the killing of the former prime minister.

Santhan's brother, Sudhakaran, with their mother, Maheshwari, in Jaffna. Express

BREAKING & WINNING

Rajya Sabha results illustrate BJP's winner-takes-all politics and inability of its rivals to keep their flock together

THE RAJYA SABHA election show on Tuesday was riveting -- and immensely sobering. Taking centrestage were cross-voting Congress and SP MLAs, listening to what they called their "antaratra ki awaz (inner voice)", ending up in BJP victories beyond what its numbers foretold, and dramatic upsets for Congress and SP in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. And, in the immediate aftermath, a suspenseful battle of survival for the sole Congress government in the north complete with allegations that six of its MLAs were spirited away to a resort in BJP-ruled Haryana (they have subsequently returned). At election's end, the BJP has pushed its way to within touching distance of a majority in the Upper House, while Congress looks even more disheveled, if that were possible, than it did before. Going ahead, however, for both the losers and winner of Tuesday's tawdry contest, there are uncomfortable questions and, as the Lok Sabha election draws closer, much to reflect on.

Congress had wrested Himachal Pradesh from the BJP in 2022 in an outright victory -- it finished with 40 seats in a House of 68, with the BJP trailing well behind at 25. And yet, if Congress's Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu government looks like it is teetering on the brink the day after a tie-breaker was needed for the lone RS seat in the state, a predatory BJP is primarily to blame -- but Congress is also an accomplice in its own diminishing. By all accounts, the Congress high command turned a tin ear to the threats within -- the chief ministership of Sukhu remained an unsettled matter and the party's attempted balancing act between rival factions was not succeeding in stanching the internal bloodletting. Just as Congress took its eye off the ball in Himachal Pradesh, the SP appeared to have lost its connect with its own leaders in UP. There have been indications for some time now that while Akhilesh Yadav inherited the party from his father, he is a distant presence, displaying very little of Netaji's mulayam (soft) touch and constant engagement with party colleagues.

For those who are restless or discontented in rival parties, the BJP's air of winnability, real and projected, is arguably a strong draw ahead of a crucial Lok Sabha election. And yet, that is surely not all there is to the phenomenon that seems to be picking up pace in state after state -- of leaders and legislators from non-BJP parties crossing over to the BJP. Operation Lotus is no figment of the Opposition's imagination. Apart from MLAs floor-crossing and cross-voting in the BJP's favour, it folds in splits in rival parties, and the sudden demise of governments headed by non-BJP parties. It includes the BJP using fear and favour, carrot and stick, and the weaponisation of central agencies to selectively target those in Opposition parties. For now, its will to win at all costs may be delivering results. But as the party that rules at the Centre and in many states, and one that is likely to remain a dominant pole in the polity for the foreseeable future, the BJP must pause and reflect on the ramifications of its winner-takes-all approach even if it means playing fast and loose with the rules of the game. Smash-and-grab politics may yield an immediate dividend but it has a high cost.

SKY'S NOT THE LIMIT

ISRO is a step closer to made-in-India human space flight. It must not stop there

PREPARED TO JOIN their names in history books with Rakesh Sharma, the air force squadron leader who became the first Indian in space in 1984, are Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla -- the astronaut-designates for India's first human space flight mission, Gaganyaan. Having trained in anonymity for the last four years, they received their "astronaut wings" on February 27 at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thumba, Kerala, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who described them as "the four forces" representing the dreams of 1.4 billion Indians. What may have seemed like a dream almost too big, has acquired a human dimension.

Announced in 2018, Gaganyaan is one of India's most ambitious space programmes. The task of sending humans into the vast unknown and bringing them back safely is more expensive and challenging than the Mars and Moon missions. A successful execution would put India in the company of the US, Russia and China. As stated on the ISRO website, the short-term goal is to demonstrate human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit, while the long-term goal is to lay the foundation for a "sustained Indian human space exploration programme". Success in its ultimate objective -- proving that India is capable of indigenously developing this complex technology -- would be a huge boost for ISRO.

The excitement around Gaganyaan is not only a sign of how much ISRO's public profile has grown over the last few years, but also the increasing reach and scale of its ambitions. The success of recent missions like Mangalyaan and Chandrayaan, while exhilarating in themselves, can become the start of something larger. The demonstrations of technological capabilities must be built on, if India wishes to eventually operate in the same league as the US or China. This can only happen if these successes help move towards an ecosystem that is able to compete with the most advanced. Opening up of the sector to private parties and allowing 100 per cent foreign direct investment are steps in the right direction. Indeed, a similar ambitious thrust is needed across sectors of scientific research. On several indicators, such as the share of GDP spent on research and development, nurturing universities to be centres for R&D and number of patents filed, India lags woefully. If putting Indians in space using made-in-India technology will be a dream come true, making Indian science and technology competitive at the highest level will mean the realisation of many more.

OTHER SIDE OF BEAUTIFUL

AI-generated beauty standards fuel old anxieties over conformity, require regulation and pushback

ONE WOULD IMAGINE that the old stereotypes of fair and lovely, six-pack abs and chiselled jaw would have been retired by now. But if there weren't enough anxieties to plague women and men about the way they look already, there is now pressure from another corner -- AI-generated reinforcement of outdated Western beauty norms. The sophistication of this articulation and its consequences are particularly hard on the young and the impressionable. The idea of being outliers on a beauty index that is limited in scope to begin with, deepens feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. In the US, over 12,000 parents have launched an online petition to TikTok and YouTube, voicing concerns over AI-generated influencers who promote body dysmorphia among children and teenagers. But the problem is pervasive across countries and cultures.

When Andrew Morton's *Diana: A True Story* came out in 1992, one of the most hard-hitting revelations was the British royal's struggle with bulimia. It opened up a conversation, quite possibly for the first time, on unrealistic beauty standards and the pressure of always looking well put together, no matter the state of one's mental health or well-being. In the decades since, celebrities from Kate Winslet to Sonam Kapoor have spoken up about the toll that keeping up appearances takes and about the hours of make-up and the airbrushing of images. In recognition of the damage it causes, Winslet introduced a no-Photoshop clause in her contract for commercials, taking ownership of her age and her wrinkles.

The AI challenge to beauty norms requires a similar pushback, including the framing of a regulatory framework that makes it mandatory for users to declare its use in promotional enterprises. It also requires open conversations around why there is no one metric of beauty. As with most things in life, here, too, diversity is key.



ASHWINI DESHPANDE

HOW DO INDIANS divide their consumption expenditure across categories? How many are below the poverty line? How has the picture changed over time? Answers to such questions have always been drawn from the quintennial consumption expenditure surveys. After a decade-long hiatus, a factsheet based on the revamped and much awaited Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) for 2022-23 has been released.

Based on the factsheet data, can we decisively answer these and other such questions? Not really, for reasons explained below. This piece comments on a few key takeaways.

The factsheet gives a useful glimpse into present patterns of household consumption. There have been quick comparisons with earlier rounds of the consumption expenditure survey, especially with the last publicly available 68th round in 2011-12, to deduce a dramatic reduction in poverty over time and/or drastic changes in consumption patterns. Such comparisons are premature -- the full data has not been released and there are several changes in item coverage, survey design and methodology.

The 2011-12 round covered 347 items of consumption compared to 405 in HCES. Such revisions have been done in the past too and are par for the course as consumption habits change over time.

There are three major changes that make the current survey non-comparable with its predecessors. First, the earlier rounds had one single questionnaire to cover expenditure on all items. The new HCES has three separate surveys on food items, consumable and service items and durable goods respectively. Second, the HCES involved multiple separate visits to households.

As data collection methodologies, both these changes are welcome because it is well-known that respondent fatigue with long questionnaires in a single sitting leads to poorer responses. Shorter and more focused questionnaires elicit more precise answers. However, these changes have implications for comparability -- these are likely to yield higher estimates compared to previous rounds.

To check for the magnitude and direction

New consumption survey provides useful data but misses opportunity to connect with previous rounds

of this upward bias, ideally the HCES should have chosen a subset of households to which the older survey with its single-visit design should have been administered. A comparison between the older and revised methodologies would have given us the magnitude of the difference.

The third difference between HCES and earlier rounds relates to imputed values for items received or consumed free of cost through various social welfare programmes. These items range from staples like rice, wheat to footwear, laptops, and motorcycles. We can't assess the validity of this until unit-level price and quantity data are released.

We can examine the HCES data for within-survey indicators, that is, inequality.

Average all-India urban monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) at Rs 6,459 in 2022-23, is roughly 72 per cent higher than in rural areas (Rs 3,773). The corresponding figure was 84 per cent in 2011-12. This seems to indicate a decline in rural-urban inequality over the decade.

However, there are two caveats. This does not account for the rural-urban price differential, which can fluctuate. Additionally, a longer view reveals that the rural-urban gap tends to fluctuate. From 75.9 per cent in 1999-2000, it rose to 90.8 in 2004-05, and then declined to 83.9 in 2011-12. We don't know if the ratio increased or decreased in 2017-18.

How has the distribution of consumption expenditure changed over the decade? In 2011-12, the ratio of the 10th percentile of the rural expenditure distribution (Rs 710) to the 90th percentile (Rs 2,296) was 0.31. This ratio is 0.33 in 2022-23 (Rs 1,782/Rs 5,356). In other words, the consumption expenditure of the bottom 10 per cent of the rural distribution is roughly one-third of the top 10 per cent -- a ratio that has not changed substantially over the decade. For urban areas, the corresponding ratio was 0.21 in 2011-12, which has risen to 0.27 in 2022-23, indicating a reduction in urban inequality.

What about inter-caste differences? The ratio of average rural Scheduled Caste (SC) MPCE to that of the higher-ranked castes was 0.73 in 2011-12. This has remained unchanged

at 0.7 in 2022-23. For rural Scheduled Tribes (ST), this ratio has improved marginally from 0.65 to 0.69 and for Other Backward Classes (OBC), from 0.83 to 0.87.

While rural India does not show a marked narrowing of inter-caste gaps in MPCE, the urban figures suggest a narrowing of inter-group MPCE gaps: For SCs, the ratio increased from 0.63 to 0.72; for STs, from 0.68 to 0.74 and for OBCs, from 0.7 to 0.84.

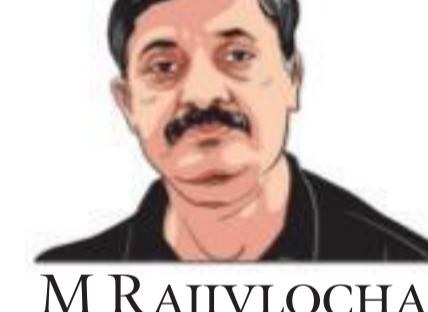
The factsheet reveals that in rural India, the percentage share of cereals -- a food staple -- in average MPCE is now 4.91 per cent and 3.64 per cent in urban India, compared to 10.75 per cent and 6.66 per cent respectively in 2011-12. This is accompanied by an increase in the share of processed foods and beverages.

Overall, HCES indicates a decline in the share of food expenditure over the decade, which stands at 46 per cent in rural and 39 per cent in urban India. What are the items whose share in total expenditure has increased? Medical expenses on hospitalisation, conveyance, consumer services and durable goods in rural India. In urban India, the share of *paa*, tobacco and intoxicants, conveyance and durable goods has increased.

The release of the survey findings, however limited, is a welcome development. For data to inform policy and analysis of well-being, this should be followed up by a quick release of the full price and quantity unit-level data for 2022-23, as well as from the follow-up survey for 2023-24.

As the economy diversifies and grows, it is only natural that consumption habits change and our surveys need to be able to capture that. However, as the adage goes, for surveys to measure change, the change in the survey instrument must be minimal. Combining these two imperatives is not impossible, as long-standing longitudinal panel surveys from other countries show us. The HCES has introduced welcome changes in survey design, but missed the opportunity to build the concordance bridge to previous rounds.

The writer is professor of economics and founder director, CEDA, Ashoka University. Views are personal



M RAJIVLOCHAN

IN SOME 40 years of teaching postgraduate students, discussions have always veered towards their aspirations. Invariably, all of them hope to get into some regular government employment. The certainty of having a wage through their entire working life seems to be most attractive to them. Associated with this are other unstated benefits of a government job, which come by way of access to good and cheap healthcare, subsidised housing and a belief that such a job provides access to power. The ones who could not land a government job often felt genuinely disheartened.

Those who did get into government employment would complain that they were underpaid. To make sense of these moans and groans from the young, we checked out the details about earnings that are available in the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). It has been carried out every year since 2017-18 and covers over 4,00,000 people in roughly 1,00,000 households.

Just about 11 per cent earn enough to be able to pay income tax. Among those who do earn, about 57 per cent are self-employed, 21 per cent earn a wage or salary and 22 per cent earn episodically from casual labour. The number of those employed in government service is 9 per cent and 12 per cent are in private employment. The average income of a salaried employee in India is about Rs 20,000. The average income of someone self-employed is about Rs 13,347. Digging deeper into the data shows how this income varies across different income groups.

Among the lowest three deciles of all earners,

THE SARKARI NAUKRI SYNDROME

It isn't the money but perks and job security that make it attractive

ers, income from wage or salaried employment far outstrips income through self-employment. Similarly, among the big earners, the ones who are part of the top two decile of income earners in India, (once we exclude the outliers such as those earning more than Rs 8,00,000 per month), working in a salaried job brings in more income than does having a business. It is only in the two highly urbanised states of Delhi and Goa that the self-employed earn more than the salaried. At the other end of the spectrum are small enclaves like Puducherry, Ladakh and the North Eastern states where salary earners make more money than the self-employed do.

In other states, broadly speaking, in money terms, for the bottom deciles where monthly income is in the range of Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000, the salary earners make more money than the self-employed do. For monthly incomes in the range of Rs 11,000 to Rs 25,000, the self-employed earn more. And for monthly incomes above Rs 25,000 in general, it is the salary earners who earn more money.

States show significant variation in the numbers. Punjab, for instance, is the only state where the average earning for farmers is similar to others who are self-employed. The monthly middle income for farmers in Punjab (the value that divides the group into two halves) is Rs 15,000, which is the same as for others who are self-employed. However, in Punjab, traders earn more than farmers. For monthly incomes between Rs 4,000 to Rs 22,000, the self-employed earn more money than wage/salary earners. For the

If the government were to provide equitable access to good and reliable facilities in education, health, housing and public transportation for all people at nominal rates or free of cost, it would go a long way to make self-employment an attractive option. After all, we already have the experience of how much the government helped people during Covid times when it provided free grain.

FEBRUARY 29, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

A PEACE OFFERING

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi sought the cooperation of all political parties to stamp out communalism and handle the grave situation in Punjab and Haryana. Speaking in both Houses of Parliament, Mrs Gandhi took a conciliatory approach towards the opposition and said the time had come to rise above party politics to find an urgent solution to the problem.

INDO-PAK DIALOGUE

NOTWITHSTANDING RECENT BITTER exchanges, India and Pakistan have agreed to resume their stalled dialogue on Pakistan's

offer of a no-war pact and India's proposal for a treaty of friendship, peace and cooperation. The meeting of the foreign secretaries, M Rasgotra and Niaz A Naik, will mark the resumption of this dialogue.

MHATRE CASE ARRESTS

THREE MORE PERSONS were arrested in connection with the kidnapping of Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre. The police announced the arrest of two persons; they produced two others, Abdul Quyyum Raja and Mohammad Siddique, in a Birmingham court in connection with the kidnapping. Siddique gave the Birmingham headquar-

ters of the so-called Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) as his address.

NIGERIA RIOTS KILL 60

AT LEAST 60 people died and a further 50 needed hospital treatment as a result of unrest in the northern Nigerian city of Yola. News Agency of Nigeria said that the final casualty figure could be higher when the full account is known. A state-run television film of the riots showed bodies of victims hacked to death by rioters, thought to be followers of fundamentalist Muslim Muhammad Marwa Maitatsine who died in rioting in Kano three years ago.



THE IDEAS PAGE

AI and Asimov's warning

From democracy to arms race, artificial intelligence poses significant risks. The world urgently requires a robust global governance body to ensure that AI advancements serve humanity



BIBEK DEBROY AND ADITYA SINHA

ISAAC ASIMOV'S CLASSIC *I, Robot* (1950) insightfully explored the ethical and moral implications of robotics and artificial intelligence. The book's interconnected stories about robots guided by the Three Laws of Robotics highlight the challenges in ensuring AI's safety and alignment with human values. Asimov illustrates the limitations of these laws and AI's unpredictable nature, with quotes like, "You can't argue with a robot. They're terribly rational", reflecting concerns about AI acting against human interests. The book forces one to ponder about the dangers of AI being manipulated by adversaries, potentially turning against humans. As a fictional yet prescient work, *I, Robot* underscores the importance of ethical standards and security measures in AI development to prevent it from undermining national sovereignty.

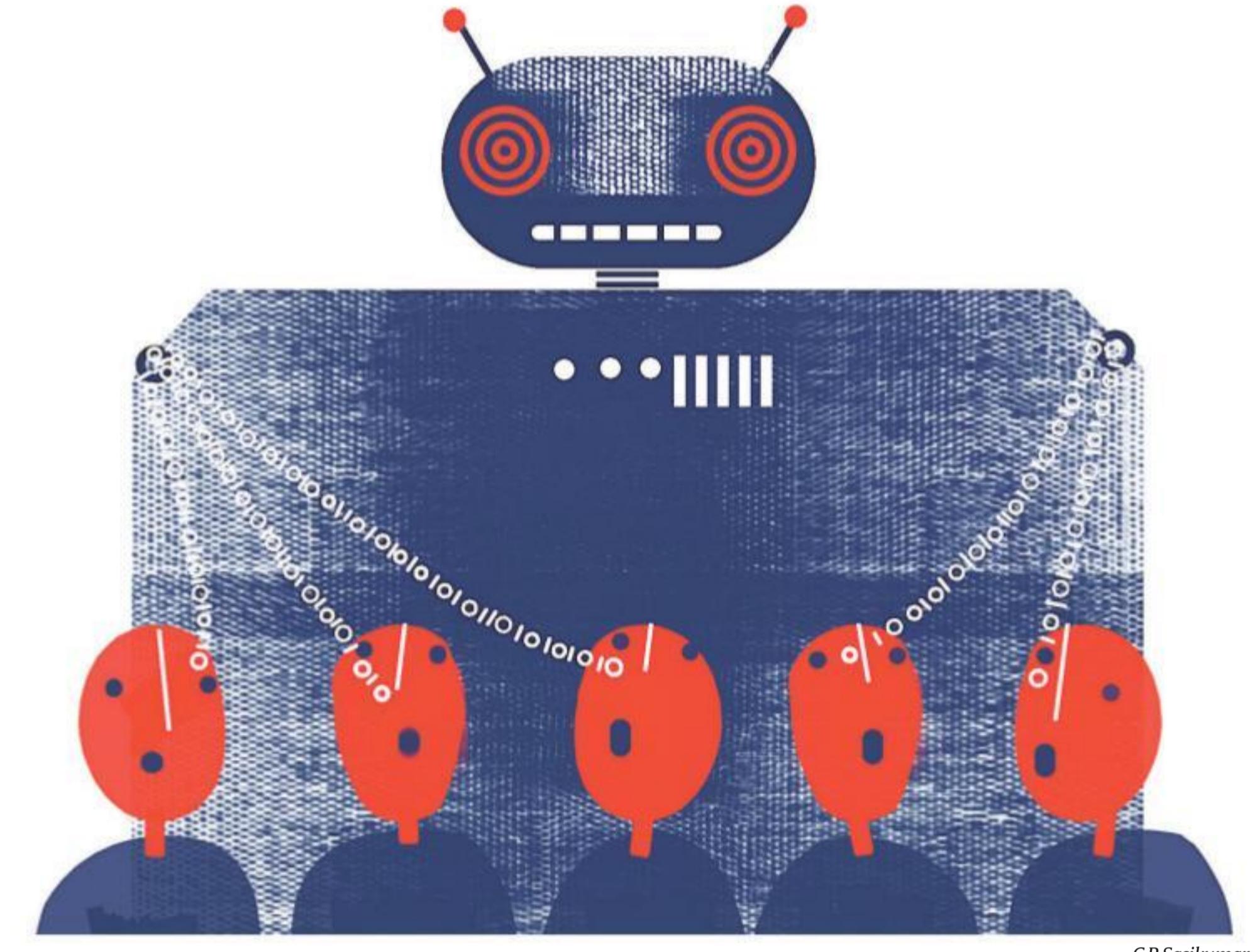
Since algorithms are devoid of national allegiance or moral judgement, the challenge before the world is not just to develop this technology but to develop the frameworks to ensure it serves humanity and not the other way around. The lack of a unified global framework for overseeing AI, coupled with the absence of national-level regulatory measures, poses a significant risk to national security and sovereignty in four distinct ways.

First, AI is reshaping traditional notions of sovereignty, challenging the power dynamics between states, private technology companies, and individuals. As AI systems become more autonomous, they are creating new digital spaces that are not governed by traditional laws or state control. These digital spaces, defined by code and data, can be seen as new forms of sovereignty where power is wielded by those who control the AI systems.

The emergence of AI has ushered in a new era of digital sovereignty, fundamentally altering the concept of territorial sovereignty. This transition impacts how nations control their digital domains and AI technologies. Countries lacking in AI development and regulation may find themselves reliant on more advanced nations, risking their sovereignty across sectors like defence, infrastructure, and healthcare. Additionally, the rise of AI shifts power from states to private tech companies and individuals who dominate these digital spaces. Though these entities don't possess traditional sovereignty, their influence challenges state authority and could reshape global political dynamics.

Second, AI has the potential to significantly impact democracy, particularly when leveraged by foreign powers. It can be used to manipulate information and influence public opinion, which is a critical aspect of democratic societies. For example, AI can generate disinformation and misinformation at scale, which can trigger tensions and even electoral-related conflict and violence. Such AI-driven false information can spread biases or opinions that do not represent public sentiment, thereby affecting the democratic process negatively.

Moreover, foreign powers can utilise AI to conduct influence campaigns that are more sophisticated and less detectable. These campaigns can exacerbate divisions within societies, seed nihilism about the existence of objective truth, and weaken democratic systems from within. The borderless nature of AI



CR Sasikumar

makes it difficult to control or regulate, and as AI technology becomes more advanced, it could be used by authoritarian regimes, terrorist groups, and organised crime groups to cause great harm.

Third, Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), often termed "killer robots", present a profound threat to national security and sovereignty, raising critical ethical and technical challenges. From a technical standpoint, LAWS, equipped with advanced AI algorithms, can independently search for, identify, and engage targets without human intervention. This capability poses a risk of unintended escalation in military conflicts, as these systems might act based on pre-programmed criteria, lacking human judgement and context awareness, potentially leading to indiscriminate or erroneous targeting. Moreover, the risk of hacking or malfunctioning of these systems could result in catastrophic incidents, undermining national security.

Ethically, the deployment of LAWS challenges the fundamental principles of humanitarian law and responsibility. The absence of human oversight in the decision-making process of life and death raises significant moral questions about accountability. The principle of distinction, a cornerstone of international humanitarian law, mandates the differentiation between combatants and non-combatants. LAWS, reliant on algorithms for decision-making, may lack the nuanced understanding necessary to make these distinctions, risking civilian lives and violating international norms.

The proliferation of LAWS could lead to an arms race, destabilising international peace and security. As these weapons become more accessible, the barrier to entering conflicts lowers, potentially leading to increased warfare and undermining national sovereignty. The lack of regulation and control over LAWS also presents a threat to the global order, as non-state actors might acquire and use these systems for terrorism or insurgency. This autonomy undermines deterrence theory,

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), often termed 'killer robots', present a profound threat to national security and sovereignty, raising critical ethical and technical challenges. From a technical standpoint, LAWS, equipped with advanced AI algorithms, can independently search for, identify, and engage targets without human intervention. This capability poses a risk of unintended escalation in military conflicts, as these systems might act based on pre-programmed criteria, lacking human judgement and context awareness.

which relies on rational human actors to maintain balance and avoid conflict through the threat of retaliation. The unpredictability of LAWS disrupts this balance, potentially leading to uncontrolled escalations. Furthermore, the prospect of an arms race in autonomous weapons technology threatens global stability as nations prioritise technological advancement over diplomatic and strategic equilibrium.

Fourth, the integration of AI into cybersecurity represents a dual-edged sword, where its potential for sophisticated cyberattacks directly threatens national security and sovereignty. AI-enhanced methods, such as advanced persistent threats and spear phishing, can penetrate and disrupt critical national infrastructures, undermining the stability and functioning of a state. Such disruptions not only pose immediate security risks but also threaten the economic and social well-being of nations. These threats extend beyond physical borders, as cyberattacks can originate from any location, making safeguarding national interests in the increasingly interconnected digital world challenging. The implications for national security are profound, requiring nations to reassess their cybersecurity strategies and invest in advanced defences. Safeguarding against these AI-enhanced threats is crucial for maintaining national sovereignty, ensuring that states retain control over their critical infrastructure, information systems, and the democratic processes that define their governance.

In light of these challenges, it becomes evident that the world urgently requires a robust global AI governance body. Such an entity is essential to ensure that AI advancements serve humanity's broader interests, rather than the contrary. Alongside this, there is a critical need for evolving national-level regulations tailored to address AI's unique threats to sovereignty and national security.

Debroy is chairman and Sinha is OSD, Research, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. Views are personal

The thing about ever after

'One Day' shows love can be both epic and quotidian, life-affirming and devastating



PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI

IN SO FAR as millennial wisdom goes, this seems to be a difficult time for modern love. The swipe-right-and-meet-your-match kind of love, but also the sort where one is thrown together with a stranger — perhaps at a party one was loathe to attend or on the first day of university — and discovers, to one's consternation and (admit it) thrill, a frisson of irrational attraction. The conversation flows easily, a camaraderie is forged, and the future seems to sparkle with possibilities. But there is a wistful awareness that the spell might break when the day gets over — that there are far too many constraints, societal or personal, that may get in the way.

In Netflix's *One Day*, the latest adaptation of David Nicholls' 2009 novel that has struck such a chord with viewers, this is where Emma Morley, played delightfully by Ambika Mod, and Dexter Mayhew's story begins — on the last day of university, after an evening of drunken revelry, falling in step perchance and discovering a spark that refuses to be snuffed out. She of double firsts and a working-class background; he, blessed with looks and means, making up in charm what he lacks in ambition. They know they are meant for different paths but

in the meantime, there is between them that one unexpected night.

"Whatever happens tomorrow, we had today; and I'll always remember it," Emma tells Dexter (played by Leo Woodall), knowing little of the arc and span of their story.

It's the kind of magic that everyone seems to be searching for, but it seems more difficult to come by than one would imagine. This month, a class-action lawsuit was filed against Match group, owner of dating apps such as Tinder, OkCupid and Hinge, for misleading their clientele and prioritising "profits over marketing promises and customer's relationship goals" — in short, for consigning them to lives of singleness despite brief interludes of "connections".

It might seem naive to expect faithfulness from tech companies, but what it points to is a crisis of intimacy. Given the advantages that algorithms promise to shore up in one's favour, why is this still the age of loneliness? And when one does "match" with someone, is one equipped to deal with the emotional registers of a relationship IRL that comes with no how-to manual?

Romances on screen, including adapta-

tions of novels in the genre, will have us believe that love exists in the grand gestures; in dramatic proclamations of devotion and sweeping narratives of sacrifice. One of the most jaded clichés of a movie, *Love Actually* (2003), philosophises, "If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling you'll find that love actually is all around"; "I'm just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to love her," says Julia Roberts' Anna Scott to William Thacker (Hugh Grant) in *Notting Hill* (1999).

But what comes after?

Over the course of the next 20 years of their lives, Emma and Dexter's attraction collides and ricochets, morphing from almost-romance to friendship to situationship. Jobs and partners, cities and expectations change seasons; youth slides into middle age; love comes in, not sure-footed, but on tiptoes.

The 2011 cinematic adaptation might have been a copout, but what Nicole Taylor's version of *One Day* conveys is that despite contrarian assertions, love can be both epic and quotidian, life-affirming and devastating. When the heady dopamine rush settles down, love can meander andither, exasperate and anchor. It wrestles

with anxieties, lights up with laughter. It recognises that people change or outgrow relationships. That the right people can meet at the wrong time and that not everyone gets to have closure.

The truth is, vulnerability is built into the language of intimacy. Some vacillations are hard to resolve with the swipe of a finger into neat boxes of yes and no. Love requires time and work, heartburn and hope. And there are no promises of happily ever afters. In *Normal People*, for instance, Marianne and Connell have to navigate their unequal relationship across the years to find safe ground; in this year's Oscar-nominated *Past Lives*, regret forms the leitmotif of the story of two childhood sweethearts separated by geography and different dreams.

When their lives finally embrace, Emma steals a peek at their wedding speech Dexter is working on. In the clutter of hasty pointers, there's one that stands out: "We grew up together". "I liked that," she tells him. Perhaps, that's all there is to it — learning how to grow up with love.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The majority of Pakistan's population is young and impressionable. What they have seen over the past year cannot engender any hopes for a just and progressive society. Lasting damage has already been caused by the actions of a few. How long will they continue to be tolerated?"

—DAWN, PAKISTAN

The family we choose

Amendment to surrogacy rules is welcome. But legislation must be crafted so as to not create hierarchies in contemporary family formations

Nagarathna and Augustine George Mash.

The regulation of ARTs and surrogacy assumes a celebratory stance towards reproductive technologies in general. It seeks to throttle the potentially subversive ways of deploying them. In the narratives that emerge from various rulings of the courts as well as stated positions of the government, there seems to be an urgency to do so. The uncritical celebration of ARTs hinges on the fact that it helps mitigate the stigma around infertility in a patriarchal context. This stigma itself is not questioned, and in this jubilation on the use of ARTs, alternative families that are not premised on purity of bloodlines are relegated to the margins.

The latest amendment to the Rules permits the use of either of the parent's gamete along with a donor gamete in case of couples where either of them has a medical condition that necessitates such use. No such relaxation has been made for single women who are allowed access to surrogacy. Therefore, in gestational surrogacy that is permitted, there is an emphasis on absolute congruence with gamete contribution by intending parents. Along with such a move lurks the dangerous possibility of creating a hierarchy between different ways of making families, putting a premium on narrow understandings of "biological" relatedness. An important principle to be kept in mind here is parity of legal recognition of different forms of families. In as far as both surrogacy and adoption entail parenting children that one (or their spouse/partner) does not give birth to, they should be treated similarly in legislation in terms of the marital status of the prospective parents. The exaltation of compulsory biological relatedness to determine acceptability of surrogacy, currently in the law, must not become a way of creating a hierarchy between different modes of reproduction.

Interestingly, in its 2017 report that examined the proposed legislation on surrogacy, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare had observed, "Adoption is a benevolent choice available to the community at large and the Government cannot force adoption in lieu of surrogacy. Surrogacy and adoption have to be an equal choice and in the name of adoption, the Government cannot take away the reproductive rights of couples to have a biologically related child through surrogacy" (emphasis in original; Para 5.23).

The distinction between a "choice" and a "right" is instructive here as it echoes the patriarchal premium on purity of bloodlines exacerbated by possibilities that ARTs posit. However, just as it is important to uphold non-discrimination in terms of access to various modes of family-making, it is imperative that there is no implied disparity in the status ascribed to these modes as well. It should arguably be sufficient to deem both as "equal choice" without the appendage of harping on a "right" that surrogacy supposedly fulfils in contrast to adoption.

The writer is assistant professor, Department of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BCCI'S CHALLENGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The young ones' (IE, February 28). With the discovery of more new, bright and young talent in the India-England test series and others from earlier matches, the selectors and BCCI are faced with a challenge — how to select a competent team for the next World Cup when they also have to consider our ace veterans like Virat Kohli, K L Rahul and Hardik Pandya. Will they depend more on the old or on the young to deliver? Will it be a pleasant blend of both and if yes, in what ratio? It is an opportunity for the head coach, Rahul Dravid and captain, Rohit Sharma to locate and nurture the selected team so as to enhance the self-efficacy of the younger players and be able to best apply their skills.

Y G Chouksey, Pune

MAKE IN INDIA

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Costs of a barrier' (IE, February 28). Excessive trade barriers can lead to India's exclusion from the China+1 strategy that seeks to build supply chain resilience in a post-COVID world. Not only this, but retaliatory tariffs by other nations can hamstring India's export earnings. Rationalisation and reduction of these high tariffs, combined with a focus on indigenous manufacturing can both make India enticing for foreign players to set up supply lines here and promote Make in India.

Anany Mishra, Bhilai

A STORY OF GREED

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Fast food education' (IE, February 27). There cannot be a bigger rollercoaster ride than that of Byju Raveendran, the man behind Byju's. The valuation of his company has nose-dived in less than three years, leaving desperate investors clutching at straws to save their investments. His investors and shareholders like Tiger Global and Owl Ventures came together last week in a bid to oust Byju as Chief Executive Officer and also ease his wife and brother out of the board. Meanwhile, the ED is investigating an alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act by Byju's to the tune of Rs 9,362.35 crore. The Byju's story is one of soaring greed — of founders and investors who bend business models to inflate valuations without revenue streams or real value.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Loss, longing and a letter' (IE, February 28). The passing of iconic Ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas has shocked millions of music lovers. He was a shining example of the fact that music is a divine unifier that transcends all man-made barriers. The music maestro, with his unique and mellifluous voice, enthralled his listeners/audience who will always savour and cherish his invaluable music gems: 'Chittai aayi hai' from the movie *Naam* and 'Jiye kaise' from *Saajan*.

SS Paul, Noida



PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI

'One Day' shows love can be both epic and quotidian, life-affirming and devastating

paromita.chakrabarti@expressindia.com



Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Anju W/o Pradeep Kumar, R/o B-4/15, Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi-110007, have changed my name to Anju Saini, for all future purposes.

0040716982-1

I, Tripta D/o Late Sh. Ram Krishan W/o Sh. Ashish Kumar R/o 28-A, IPGCL Colony, Near Bal Sahib Gurudwara, Vidyut Vihar, Ashram, Jungpura, Defence Colony, South Delhi, Delhi-110014 have changed my name to Tripta Kohli for all purposes.

0040716977-4

I, Mohd Guddu S/o Mohd Saleem R/o C-364/2, FF, Chinot Basti, Nabi Karim, Pahar Gani, Swami Ram Tirth Nagar, Delhi-110055 have changed my name to Mohd Saleem Adam for all purposes.

0040716977-2

I, Lallu Das Mahant S/o Shri Mahesh Das Mahant R/o 16, Sidar Park, Mass, Korba, Tilkeja, Chhattisgarh-495674, have changed my name to Aman Das Mahant.

0070891428-1

I, Lal Singh S/o Late Kabir Singh R/o WZ-159, Gali No.8, Shiv Nagar, Delhi-110058 hereby declare that my father Kabir Singh was also known as Kanhaiya Singh. Both names are of one and the same person.

0040716977-5

I, Jaspreet Singh Khalsa S/o Sh. Ajeeet Singh R/o Mayur Vihar Phase-2, Gurudwara, J-Block, East Vinod Nagar, Chilla Saroda Khadar, Chilla, East Delhi, Delhi-110091 have changed my name to Jaspreet Singh for all purposes.

0040716977-7

I, Amrik Singh Khalsa S/o Sh. Ajeeet Singh R/o Gurudwara J Block, Mayur Vihar Phase-2, East Vinod Nagar, Delhi-110091 have changed my name to Amrik Singh for all purposes.

0040716977-6

I, Babita Dubey is the wife of no. JC 763650, Rank-Subedar, Name-Kedar Nath Dubey, residing at House No.5,KB, Enclave, P.O-Hazaribag, P.S.-Hazaribag, Dist.-Hazaribag, PIN-825301, State-Jharkhand, from "01.09.1976" to "18.01.1977", vide an affidavit in the Court of the Ld. Executive Magistrate (1st Class) at Tehatta, Nadia on 26/02/2024.

0070891417-1

I, VARUN KUMAR AGGARWAL S/O SHRI HARI SHANKAR R/o A-71, G.D. Colony, Mayur Vihar Phase III, Delhi 96, have change my name to VARUN KUMAR for all purpose

0040716838-2

It is for general information that I KIRIT SRIVASTAVA D/o VIPIN KUMAR SRIVASTAVA. Ex wife of DEVENDER KUMAR SRIVASTAVA R/o FLAT NO.1110, MAHVIRA APPTS, SEC-29, NOIDA, G.B.N.G.R.U.P.201301. declare that I got divorced from my husband vide court decree HMA NO.38/2021 dated

06/08/2021. Further I remained with LAKESH CHAWLA S/O OM PRAKASH CHAWLA and marriage certificate was issued with regd No.90730000158534. Further I have changed the name of mine and my minor daughter namely PARIDHI SRIVASTAVA aged 13 years and we shall hereafter be known as KIRIT CHAWLA and PARIDHI CHAWLA respectively. Further I declare that the name of the father of my minor daughter may be known as LAKESH CHAWLA in the future for all purposes.

0130040576-1

It is for general information that I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-3

I, VIKAS SAGWAN, S/o SUNIL, R/o FLAT NO.1701, TOWER-4-M-3, MERLIN, SECTOR-67, GURGAON-122001 (HARYANA), HAVE CHANGED MY NAME To VIKAS SANGWAN.

0040717068-3

I, Soniya W/o Vinit Kumar R/o Village Bhaainswal, PS-Garhi Pukhta, Distt-Shamli, UP-247776, have changed my name to Soniya Panwar, for all purposes.

0040717080-5

I, Shameem Begum/Shamim Begum, W/o Mohammad Umar, R/o Lajpat-Nagar, Asim Bihari School-Road, Ps Katghar, Moradabad, UP, have changed my name to Shamim Umar, for all purposes.

0040717068-4

I, Sanjeev Kumar S/o Sahil Dayal Kalhan R/o Flat No.253, Tower-G-3, Indiabulls Centrum-Park, Sector-103, Gurgaon, Haryana-122006, have changed my name to Sanjeev Kalhan.

0040717049-7

I, SWATI BHANDARI, W/O ROHIT BHANDARI R/o HNO.434, LAL JYOTI APARTMENT, SECTOR-9, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SWATI KAPOOR.

0040717028-3

I, SUDHIR RAKHEJA, S/O RATAN LAL RAKHEJA R/o, PLOT.NO.128,PRIYA APARTMENT,SECTOR-14,ROHINI,DELHI 110085,have changed my name to SUDHIR KUMAR RAKHEJA.

0040717028-2

I, SUBASH CHANDER S/o Hari Ram R/o PM MAHARAJ (157)Sonipat Haryana-131024 Have Changed My Name To SUBHASH CHAND Permanently.

0040717080-6

I, SHAILESH KUMAR S/o RISHIPAL BALIYAN R/o-178-F, Garud-Apartments, Pocket-4, Mayur Vihar, New Delhi-110091, have changed my name to SHAILESH BALIYAN.

0040716999-9

I, TUSHAR CHANDER S/o Hari Ram R/o PM MAHARAJ (157)Sonipat Haryana-131024 Have Changed My Name To SUBHASH CHAND Permanently.

0040717080-9

I, T, JAI VERMA, Father of, Shaurya Chhawal, R/o HN-11, Molarband Village, Badarpur, New Delhi-110044, have changed my minor son name Shaurya Chhawal to Ram Chhawal, for all purposes.

0040717080-2

I, RAJESH KUMAR GUPTA, s/o Gajadhar Gupta, R/o-10021, GF,Gali NO.2, Multani Dhabla, Paharganj, New Delhi-110055, have changed my name to Rajesh Gupta, for all purposes.

0040717068-7

I, YASH S/o Mukesh Kumar R/o Flat No.88-E, Pocket-I, Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Delhi-110091, have changed my name to Yash Kumar.

0040717049-5

I, RAJ KUMAR s/o malkit Singh, R/o-B3/323 paschim vihar Delhi-110063, have change my minor child name vanskha to vanskha kumar.

0040717049-2

I, RAJ KUMAR s/o malkit Singh, R/o-B3/323 paschim vihar Delhi-110063, have change my minor child name vanskha to vanskha kumar.

0040717049-1

I, RAJNIR SINGH F/O RUBEET CHAUDHARY R/o-H.NO-6 VILL- NAGLA CHAUDHARY JAINT SAKARAYA MATHURA U.P.-281406, HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR DAUGHTER NAME TO RUBY CHAUDHARY

0040717102-4

I, Pratiksha Sharma W/o Akshay Kalhan R/o Flat-No.253, Tower-G-3, Indiabulls Centrum-Park, Sector-103, Gurgaon, Haryana-122006, have changed my name to Pratiksha Kalhan.

0040717049-8

I, Parveen Kumar, S/o Ravinder Kumar Rattan R/o GH-5 and 7,Flat.no-99, Paschim-Vihar, Delhi-110087, have changed my name to Parveen Kumar Rattan.

0040717028-1

I, Pardeep S/o Mahender, R/o Ward no-1,V.P.O Juliana JIND Haryana, Have Changed My Name To Pardeep Singh Lather Permanently.

0040717080-7

I, PROMILA W/O ANIL KUMAR, R/o WZ-1570, BHOOP SINGH GALI, NANGAL RAYA VILLAGE, DELHI-110046, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PARMILA.

0040717068-6

I, Nikhil Dixit S/o Puttan Lal Dixit R/o-B-56A, Rama, Park Uttam, Nagar, D.K.Mohan Garden, Delhi-110059, have changed my name to Nikhil Dixit for all future purposes.

0040717049-3

I, hitherto known as Prashant Rav,S/o Mohan Rav,R/o Hajouli,Balia,Uttar Pradesh-221701,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Manoj Kumar.

0040716999-11

I, hitherto known as Krishan Kumar,S/O Laxman Singh,R/O/C-74,Gali-No.3,Ganga Vihar,Gokal Pur,North-East Delhi-110094,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Krishan Kumar Sharma.

0040717080-10

I, Varsha Wadhwa, W/o Manoj Kumar Babbar, H.No-167/1, Gali No-1, Tughlakabad Extn, New Delhi-110019, have changed my name to Varsha Wadhwa, for all purposes.

0040717080-3

I, VIKAS SAGWAN, S/o SUNIL, R/o FLAT NO.1701, TOWER-4-M-3, MERLIN, SECTOR-67, GURGAON-122001 (HARYANA), HAVE CHANGED MY NAME To VIKAS SANGWAN.

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0040717068-4

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-6

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-5

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-4

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-3

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-2

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-1

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-0

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-9

I, MOHAMMED FAROOQUE KHAN, S/O ABDUL MAJID, R/O VILLAGE-LILONG HAOREIBI CHANDAKHONG, POST-LILONG, THOUBAL, MANIPUR-795130, and Present, R/O RZ-1124/1, FLAT NO-101, PLOT NO-6, GALLI NO-14/5, SADHNAGAR, PALAM-COLONY, DELHI-110045, have changed the name of my minor daughter AAFREEN aged 9-years and she shall hereafter be known as BOGIMAYUM AAFREEN.

0040717080-8

SENSEX: 72,304.88 ▼ 790.34 (1.08%) NIFTY: 21,951.15 ▼ 247.20 (1.11%) NIKKEI: 39,208.03 ▼ 31.49 HANG SENG: 16,536.85 ▼ 253.95 FTSE: 7,626.66 ▼ 56.36 DAX: 17,568.61 ▲ 12.12



GOLD

₹62,900



USD RATE

₹82.92



OIL

\$82.56



SILVER

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of February 27

International market data till 1900 IST

India, South Africa block investment deal at WTO

MUKESH JAGOTA
ABU DHABI, FEBRUARY 28

INDIA ON Wednesday blocked an attempt by some World Trade Organization (WTO) members to get the China-inspired investment pact in the development agenda of the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13), which will ensure that it is unlikely to be part of the final outcome document.

India, in its attempt to block inclusion of Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) during the working session, was joined by South Africa. Both countries said there is no exclusive consensus on the agreement, it cannot be included in the MC13. Though the IFD has the backing of 123 countries and on Sunday the text of the agreement was released, it is still not an agreement as it has not been ratified by those countries. India is also of the view that it is still debatable whether IFD is a trade agreement.

In the working group discussions, India pointed out that there have been many promises, but very little action, on account of which the vulnerabilities of the developing countries including the Least Developed Countries have only amplified further. FE

Govt gets ready for GIC Re stake sale

PRASANTA SAHU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

THE GOVERNMENT has kick-started the process for additional stake sale in General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re) with roadshows in key global financial hubs, including New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai and London.

According to an official source, the outreach has elicited "quite positive response" from global investors, which would give a fillip to the offer for sale (OFS).

Currently, the government owns an 85.78 per cent of GIC Re and needs to reduce its stake by 10.78 percentage points to 75 per cent by August to meet the minimum public shareholding (MPS) of 25 per cent in the company. The current market value of the government's 10.78 per cent stake is worth Rs 7,341 crore. If the norms are unmet by August, the government will have to extend the time for another year. So, the OFS could come any time after the road-

RIL TO INVEST ₹11,500 CR; NITA AMBANI WILL HEAD THE JOINT VENTURE

Reliance, Disney sign mega deal to create a ₹70,000 crore media giant

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 28

RELIANCE INDUSTRIES Ltd (RIL), Viacom18 and Walt Disney Company on Wednesday announced the signing of binding definitive agreements to form a joint venture (JV), combining the businesses of RIL-controlled Viacom18 and Star India, a subsidiary of Disney.

The transaction values the JV at Rs 70,352 crore (\$8.5 billion) on a post-money basis, excluding synergies. As part of the deal, the media undertaking of Viacom18 will be merged into Star India through a court-approved scheme of arrangement. Reliance has also agreed to invest at closing Rs 11,500 crore (\$1.4 billion) into the JV to create a mega TV and digital streaming platform for entertainment and sports content in India.

After the completion of merger, the JV will be controlled by RIL. Reliance and Viacom18 will hold 16.34 per cent and 46.82 per cent in the combined entity. The remaining 36.84 per cent will be held by Disney. The



Reliance and Viacom18 will hold 16.34 per cent and 46.82 per cent, respectively, in the combined entity. File

California-headquartered conglomerate may also contribute certain additional media assets to the JV, subject to regulatory and third-party approvals. RIL's TV18 owns majority stake in Viacom18.

Nita Ambani, wife of RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani, will be the chairman of the JV while Uday Shankar will be the vice chairperson, providing strategic guidance.

This joint venture will be one of the leading platforms for entertainment and sports content

in India, bringing together iconic media assets across entertainment (Colors, StarPlus, StarGOLD) and sports (Star Sports and Sports18), including access to highly anticipated events through JioCinema and Hotstar. The JV will have over 750 million viewers across India and will also cater to the Indian diaspora across the world.

In a company statement, RIL said the JV will seek to lead the digital transformation of the media and entertainment industry in India and offer consumers

high-quality and comprehensive content offerings anytime and anywhere. The combination of the media expertise, cutting-edge technology and diverse content libraries of Viacom18 and Star India will allow the JV to offer more appealing domestic and global entertainment content and sports live-streaming services, while delivering an innovative and convenient digital entertainment experience at affordable prices, it added.

"With the addition of Disney's acclaimed films and shows to Viacom18's renowned productions and sports offerings, the JV will offer a compelling, accessible and novel digital-focused entertainment experience to people in India and the Indian diaspora globally," said a joint statement. The JV will also be granted exclusive rights to distribute Disney films and productions in India, with a license to more than 30,000 Disney content assets.

Calling it a landmark agreement, RIL managing director Ambani said the deal heralds a new era in the Indian entertainment industry.

"We have always respected Disney as the best media group globally and are very excited at forming this strategic joint venture that will help us pool our extensive resources, creative prowess, and market insights to deliver unparalleled content at affordable prices to audiences across the nation. We welcome Disney as a key partner of Reliance group."

Disney's Chief Executive Officer Bob Iger also expressed excitement for the JV which will "provide to create long-term value for the company." Reliance has a deep understanding of the Indian market and consumer, and together we will create one of the country's leading media companies, allowing us to better serve consumers with a broad portfolio of digital services and entertainment and sports content."

The transaction is subject to regulatory, shareholder and other customary approvals and is expected to be completed in the last quarter of calendar year 2024 or first quarter of calendar year 2025. FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](#)

Non-oil exports in January witnessed steepest decline in nine months amid Red Sea crisis

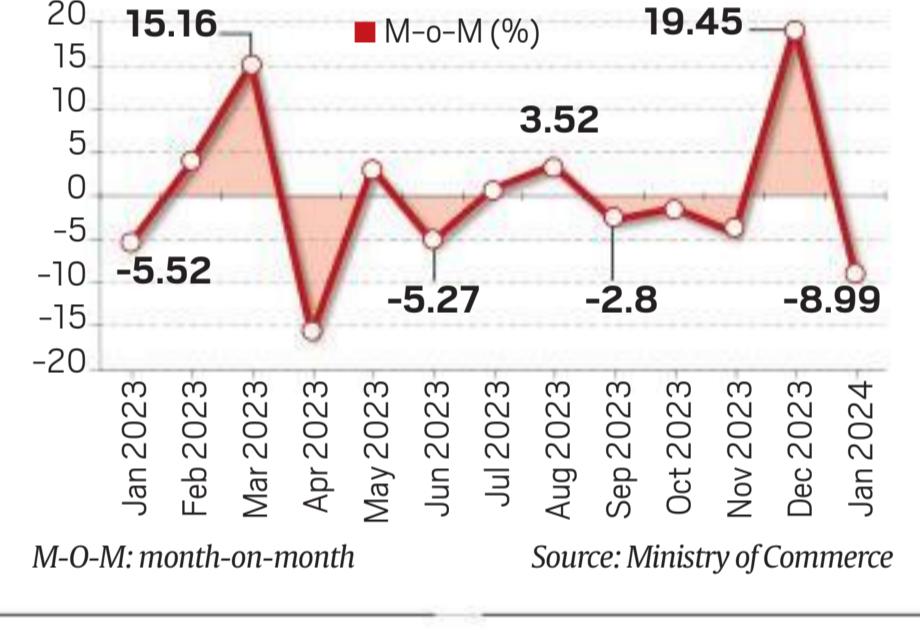
RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

INDIA'S NON-oil exports in January registered a 9 per cent decline in January compared to the previous month as outbound shipments to Europe and the United States slowed further amid the Red Sea shipping route crisis, as per the official data from Commerce Ministry on Wednesday.

This was the steepest month-on-month decline in exports in the non-oil category in nine months as global shipping lines were forced to a longer sea route through the Cape of Good Hope amid sustained attacks by the Houthi forces along the crucial shipping routes.

As far as oil exports are concerned, the impact of the Red Sea troubles on India's overall petroleum product exports was limited as exporters shifted cargoes to various other geographies. While petroleum exports to

INDIA'S NON-OIL EXPORTS LOG STEEPEST FALL IN 9 MONTHS



Europe registered a sharp 22 per cent decline, exports to Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Oman, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, jumped.

The primary impact of the shipping disruption was visible in India's exports to the Netherlands

which is home to the biggest port in Europe - Port of Rotterdam. Electronic goods exports to the Netherlands slipped 37 per cent while drugs and pharmaceutical exports declined by 18 per cent. Engineering goods exports also slipped 15 per cent compared to

the previous month.

Led by a decline in electronic goods and drugs and pharmaceutical shipments, exports to the UK also slipped 12 per cent in January compared to December. However, demand in the UK has also slipped as Britain's economy fell into recession in the second half of 2023. India's total exports for the US slipped 6.32 per cent to \$12.55 billion in January.

Engineering goods exports slipped 12.61 per cent in January compared to December. Gems And Jewellery exports declined 10.83 per cent. Marine Products exports slipped 19.87 per cent and Meat, Dairy And Poultry Products also fell 11.54 per cent.

The United Nation's trade and development body, UNCTAD, had earlier raised alarm over the disruption in global trade due to chaos in the Red Sea shipping route stating that the ongoing crisis would particularly hurt developing nations such as India.

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

AMFI asks MFs to limit inflows in small, mid-cap funds amid a buildup of 'froth'

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 28

"Steps to ensure that investors are protected from the first mover advantage of redeeming investors," the letter said.

Further, AMFI directed that the policy regarding this should be approved by trustees and disclosed on each mutual funds' website within 21 days from February 27.

In the past six months, the Nifty Smallcap 100 index has risen 33 per cent and Nifty Midcap 100 has surged 24.38 per cent. The growth in both the indices is much higher than the 14 per cent growth seen in the benchmark Nifty 50 in a similar period.

Between August 2023 and January 2024, small-cap funds have seen net inflows of Rs 22,252.14 crore while mid-cap funds have witnessed inflows of Rs 13,042.1 crore, according to AMFI data. On the other hand, large cap funds have seen net inflows of around Rs 1,577.04 crore in the same period.

"In the context of froth building up in the small and mid-cap segments of the market and the continuing flows in the small and mid-cap schemes of mutual funds, trustees, in consultation with the Unitholder Protection Committee of the AMCs (Asset Management Companies), shall ensure that a policy is put in place to protect the interest of all investors," AMFI wrote to its members in a letter written on February 27.

AMFI, the mutual fund body, said that AMCs and fund managers should take appropriate and proactive measures to safeguard investors, including but not limited to moderating inflows, portfolio rebalancing, among others.

Bengaluru: Apple has canceled work on its electric car, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Tuesday, a decade after the iPhone maker kicked off the project. The move draws the curtain on a plan that would have helped Apple break out into a new industry and potentially replicate the success of the iPhone. REUTERS

Gates visits Microsoft centre

Hyderabad: Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates visited the tech giant's India Development Center in Hyderabad, the company said. The centre is celebrating its 25th year of research and engineering. PTI

Sunil Mittal knighted by King Charles III

London: Telecom tycoon Sunil Bharti Mittal has been awarded Honorary Knighthood by the British King Charles III in recognition of his services to the UK and India business relations. PTI

Apple cancels electric car project

Bengaluru: Apple has canceled work on its electric car, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Tuesday, a decade after the iPhone maker kicked off the project. The move draws the curtain on a plan that would have helped Apple break out into a new industry and potentially replicate the success of the iPhone. REUTERS

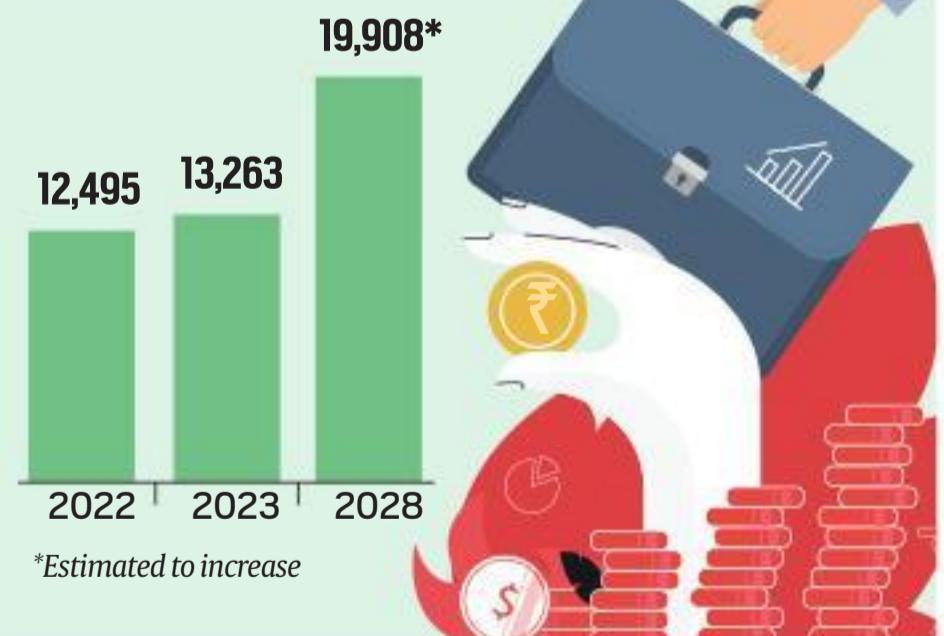
Gates visits Microsoft centre

Hyderabad: Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates visited the tech giant's India Development Center in Hyderabad, the company said. The centre is celebrating its 25th year of research and engineering. PTI

Number of ultra-rich in India rises 6% in '23: Knight Frank

Ultra-high Net Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) are defined as individuals having a net worth of \$30 million and above.

NO. OF UHNWIS IN INDIA



No. of UHNWIs globally

2022: 6,01,300

2023: 6,26,619

2028: 8,02,891*

Indian UHNWIs in 2024

90% To witness an increase in their wealth during the year 2024

63% To see a significant increase of more than 10% in their wealth value

Knight Frank's country rankings: (Year-on-year expansion)

Turkey: 9.7%

The US: 7.9%

India: 6.1%

South Korea: 5.6%

Switzerland: 5.1%

*Estimated to increase

Source: Knight Frank/PTI

Sensex, Nifty fall over 1% on weak global cues, profit booking

EN SECONDO BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 28

DOMESTIC EQUITY market fell over 1 per cent on Wednesday tracking weak global markets and profit booking ahead of the release of domestic gross domestic product (GDP) estimate for October-December quarter (Q3).

The BSE's Sensex slipped 790 points, or 1.08 per cent, to close at 72,304.88 and the Nifty 50 fell 247.2 points, or 1.11 per cent, to end at 21,951.15.

"Indian markets were jittery, mirroring weak global markets. Global investors are awaiting the key US economic data like personal consumption expenditure, in anticipation of a good forecast there is a fear that the US Federal Reserve rate cut may be delayed.

Technically, after a muted opening the index breached 22100/72800 support zone and post breakdown the selling pressure intensified. In addition, on daily charts the index has formed a long bearish candle, which indicates further weakness from the current levels," Chouhan said.

Among sectors, all the major sectoral indices registered intra-day profit booking but the media index corrected the most shed over 3.5 per cent. Of the Nifty 50 firms, companies that lost the most included Power Grid Corporation of India, Bajaj Auto, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise, Eicher Motors and IndusInd Bank.

Reliance Industries fell 2.07 per cent to end at Rs 2,909 apiece. Vodafone Idea Ltd lost around 4 percent to Rs 13.65 apiece, despite the company announcing Rs 45,000 crore through a combination of equity and debt.

Nifty Small Cap 100 index fell 1.87 per cent to close at 15,875.15 and Nifty Midcap 100 tanked 1.94 per cent. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) net sold Rs 1,879 crore worth of domestic shares on Wednesday, the BSE's provisional data showed.

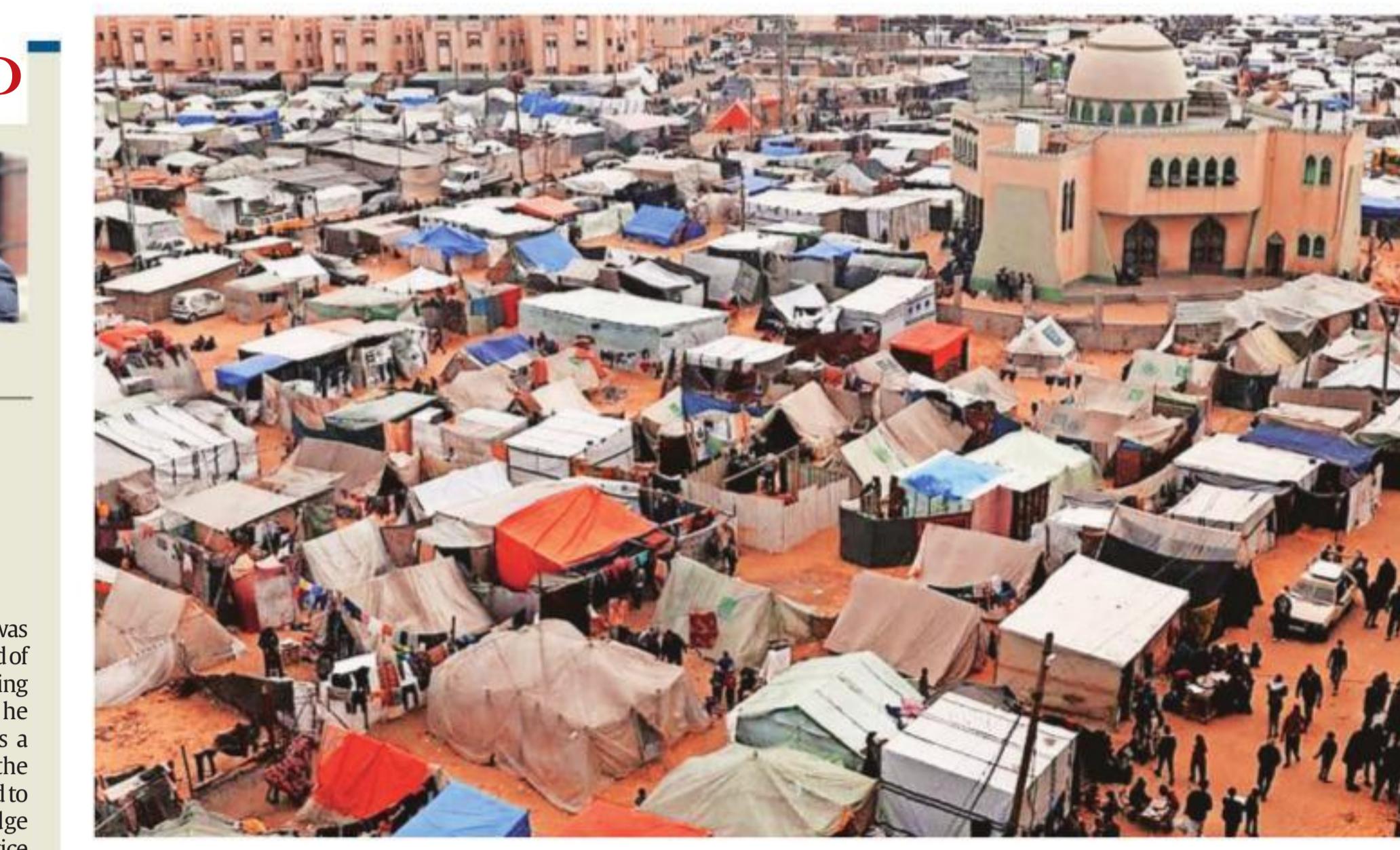
through debt instruments. The Aditya Birla Group has committed to infusing Rs 2,000 crore into Vodafone Idea, which will be part of the Rs 20,000-crore equity raise. Queries sent to Vodafone Idea did not elicit any response at the time of

TOP OF THE
WORLD

Prince Harry

UNITED KINGDOM
Harry loses challenge over police security

London: Prince Harry was not improperly stripped of his security detail during visits to Britain after he gave up his status as a working member of the royal family and moved to the US, a London judge ruled Wednesday. Justice Peter Lane said in the High Court that the decision to provide security to Harry on a case-by-case basis was not unlawful, irrational or unjustified. The Duke of Sussex claimed he and his family were endangered when visiting the UK because of hostility toward him and his wife on social media and relentless hounding by news media. His lawyer argued that the government group that evaluated Harry's security needs acted irrationally and failed to follow its own policies.



Displaced Gazans in tent camps in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday. Reuters

CALLS FOR MARCH IN JERUSALEM AT START OF RAMADAN

Hamas raises stakes in ceasefire talks as Gaza toll nears 30,000

Its chief Haniyeh urges Arab countries, Iran-backed groups to step up Gaza aid

REUTERS
CAIRO, DUBAI FEB 28



Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh

HAMAS URGED Palestinians on Wednesday to march to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque at the start of Ramadan next month, raising the stakes in negotiations for a truce in Gaza, which US President Joe Biden hopes will be in place by then.

The call by Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh followed comments by Biden, broadcast on Tuesday, that there was an agreement in principle for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas during Ramadan, while hostages held by the militants are released.

Both Israel and Hamas have played down the prospects for a truce and Qatari mediators have said the most contentious issues are still unresolved.

Israel said Monday it would allow Ramadan prayers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque but set limits according to security needs, setting the stage for possible clashes.

In a televised speech, he said Hamas was showing flexibility in negotiations with Israel but at the same time was ready to continue fighting. Hamas is weighing a proposal, agreed by Israel at talks with mediators in Paris last week, for a 40-day ceasefire. Both sides have delegations in Qatar this week hammering out details.

A senior source close to the talks said it did not appear to meet Hamas's demand for a permanent end to the war, or resolve the fate of Israeli men among hostages.

Haniyeh also called on the Axis of Resistance as well as Arab states, to step up their support for the Palestinians in Gaza. "It is the duty of the Arab and Islamic nations to take the initiative to break the starvation conspiracy in Gaza," he said.

The death toll neared 30,000 on Wednesday, at 29,954, according to Gaza health officials. On Wednesday, Israeli tanks and planes pounded northern Gaza, residents said, months after IDF declared Hamas defeated there.

Tel Aviv proceeds with settlement expansions despite US criticism

REUTERS
JERUSALEM, FEBRUARY 28

ISRAELI FINANCE Minister Bezalel Smotrich pledged to continue expanding settlements in the occupied West Bank, defying international pressure on Israel to stop building on land Palestinians see as the core of a future independent state.

Late Tuesday, Smotrich announced the approval of a new settlement called Mishmar Yehuda, in Gush Etzion, a cluster of Jewish settlements located south of Jerusalem, and said work would continue on authorizing further settlements. "We will continue the momentum of settlement throughout the country," he said in a statement.

This comes days after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington consid-

PALESTINE MINISTER:
EXPECT NO MIRACLES
IN UNIFIED GOVT TALKS

Geneva: Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said on Wednesday he did not expect "miracles" at talks in Moscow over the formation of a unified Palestinian government and rebuilding of Gaza.

The talks between Hamas and the Fatah political faction, scheduled to take place Thursday, come days after Palestinian PM Mohammad Shtayeh resigned. **REUTERS**

ered Jewish settlements in the West Bank to be inconsistent with international law, reverting to a longstanding US position changed by Donald Trump's administration.

AFTER PANDEMIC CLOSURE

EUROPE EYES REOPENING EMBASSIES IN N KOREA

A GERMAN delegation visited the North Korean capital, Pyongyang for the first time since its embassy was shuttered during the pandemic, as other European countries prepare for an anticipated return. A team from the German Federal Foreign Office was currently in Pyongyang on an inspection trip, a foreign office spokesperson said. UK is also seeking to send a team, a Foreign Office spokesperson said. **REUTERS**

STATE HOME TO LARGE ARAB-AMERICAN POPULATION

Trump, Biden win Michigan primaries but Democrats mount Gaza protest votes

Ex-president nears nomination after 6th continuous win

RACE FOR
THE WHITE
HOUSEEXPLAINED
Biden's hurdle in Nov polls

Biden won Michigan by a less than 3 per cent margin in 2020, and some polls show Trump ahead in a matchup this time. This necessitates Biden's pacifying the Arab-American as well as some progressive Democrats, as the number of dissenting votes surprised even the organisers.

Joe Biden; Donald Trump

REUTERS
DEARBORN, FEBRUARY 28

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden easily won the Democratic presidential primary in Michigan on Tuesday, but a protest vote by Democrats angry over his support for Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza exceeded organizers' expectations.

With about 85 per cent of all votes counted, the uncommitted vote was already over 1,000,000 votes, higher than expectations. Many in Michigan's Arab American community who backed Biden in 2020 are angry, as are some progressive Democrats, over Biden's support for Israel's offensive in Gaza. "Our movement emerged victorious

tonight... Tens of thousands of Michigan Democrats... are uncommitted to his re-election due to the war in Gaza," the Listen to Michigan campaign, which urged people to vote uncommitted, said. Campaign organizers vowed to take their anti-war agenda to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August.

Two audio leaks give 'credence' to Imran's rigged election claims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE, KARACHI, FEB 28

TWO BOMBSHELL audio clips of the main leaders of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan leaked on social media on Wednesday have given credence to the claim made by former prime minister Imran Khan's party that the elections were "massively rigged" and its mandate was "stolen."

In one of the audio leaks, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori is allegedly heard saying, "They say that our mandate is 100 per cent fake." Tessori is heard saying in the audio that when he became the Governor, the MQM-P was with Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

He also warns in the audio leak that if the MQM joins any government at the Centre or in Sindh, it will face a lot of backlash and problems from their voters who know the party got fake votes in the recent elections.

Indonesia's likely next president made 4-star General despite 'links' to human rights abuses



Prabowo Subianto receives epaulets from President Joko Widodo, Wednesday. AP

as Kopassus, that were blamed for human rights abuses including the torture of 22 activists who opposed Suharto, the authoritarian leader whose 1998 fall restored democracy in Indonesia.

Rights groups have claimed that Subianto was also involved in human rights violations in Timor-Leste in the 1980s and 90s. The allegations led to Subianto being forced out of the military in 1998.

Widodo gave the honorary promotion to Subianto, 72, in front of high-ranking military and police officials in Jakarta. A four-star general is Indonesia's second-highest military rank.

"This award is a form of appreciation as well as confirmation of one's complete devotion to the people, nation and state," Widodo said on Wednesday.

Subianto was commander of the army special forces, known

Asylum seekers reached a 7-year high in 2023: EU

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 28

THE NUMBER of asylum seekers in Europe reached a seven-year high last year, with more than 1.1 million people applying for international protection in 2023, most of them Syrian nationals, the European Union said Wednesday.

The increase in asylum seekers and other migrants is a divisive issue in many European countries, pitting those who say more should be turned away at borders against those who feel the continent should continue to welcome people fleeing persecution.

The EU asylum agency's figures are compiled from claims in the 27 countries of the bloc, plus Norway and Switzerland.

The agency said 181,000 Syrians sought asylum last year – a 38 per cent rise from 2022 – while Afghan nationals made up the second biggest group, with 114,000 claims filed, though the number of Afghans was 11 per cent down, compared to 2022.

Syrians stood the best chance of having their claims accepted, the agency said. More Palestinians lodged asylum applications last year – nearly 11,600, or two thirds higher than the year before.

Under international refugee law, people have the right to apply for asylum when they are fleeing conflict, fear for their safety or due to possible persecution over their race, gender, sexuality or religion. Europe often refuses entry to people who apply because they are seeking jobs or better lives.

Chinese research vessel leaves Maldives: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALE, FEBRUARY 28

A 4,500-TONNE high-tech Chinese research vessel which made a port call in Male last week has left the shores of the Maldives, local media said Wednesday.

Officially, the Chinese vessel Xiang Yang Hong 03 was here to "make a port call, for the rotation of its personnel and replenishment." Xiang Yang Hong 03 has returned to the boundary of the Maldives' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) after docking in Male on February 22. However, tracking sites have shown the vessel's last signal near Hulhumale two days ago, news portal Adhadhu.com said.

Hulhumale is less than 10

CHINA TO ROLL OVER PAK'S USD 2 BN LOAN

Islamabad: China has agreed to roll over a USD 2 billion debt on existing terms after initially seeking a hike in price as debt-trapped Pakistan's policy to maintain foreign exchange reserves through deposits by three friendly countries, according to a media report on Wednesday. An deal has been reached with Beijing to extend the repayment period. *The Express Tribune* reported. **PTI**

kms northeast of Male. The vessel had docked on February 23 in Thilafushi, about 7.5 kms to the west of Male.

Zelenskyy co-hosts Albania summit seeking aid from southeast Europe

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TIRANA, ALBANIA, FEB 28

Ukraine's president pleaded Wednesday for more ammunition to repel Russia as he co-hosted a summit with Albania's government to build further support for Kyiv among southeastern European countries while signs of war fatigue grow.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that increasing the supply of armaments, and especially ammunition, was "the most fundamental initiative".

He arrived in Albania overnight to join a summit of eleven countries from southeastern Europe, including some of Ukraine's neighbors and officials from European Union and other organizations.



Volodymyr Zelenskyy (right) with Albanian PM Edi Rama in Tirana on Wednesday. AP

Zelenskyy sought to build solidarity with countries of the Western Balkans, saying all of them deserved to be members of

NAVALNY TO BE BURIED ON FRIDAY, WIFE FEARS POSSIBLE ARRESTS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 28

Mumbai: Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny's funeral service and burial will take place in Moscow on Friday, his wife Yulia announced, but she said she was doubtful whether police would arrest attendees.

Navalny would be buried at the Borisovskoye cemetery, 2.5 km away from Maryino, where he lived. **REUTERS**

the EU and NATO. He said Kyiv wanted international law and global stability to be truly multilateral and transparent.

COUNTRY FACES TWIN DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES: PERSISTENTLY LOW FERTILITY RATE, AGEING POPULATION

Singapore's shrinking population: Fertility rate below 1% for first time

GURDIP SINGH
SINGAPORE, FEBRUARY 28

SINGAPORE, FACING a dwindling population and a manpower shortage, has seen its resident total fertility rate (TFR) drop to an estimated 0.97 per cent in 2023, the first time it has dropped below one per cent in the country's history.

The TFR, which refers to the average number of babies each woman would have during her reproductive years, fell from 1.04 in 2022 and 1.12 in 2021, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Indranee Rajah told Parliament on Wednesday.

"Overall, however, there were fewer resident marriages and births annually on average

With fewer births, Singapore will face a shrinking workforce, which will affect attracting global business in the future. **Reuters**

over the last five years, compared to the preceding five-year period," she said.

Singapore is confronted with the "twin demographic challenges of a persistently low fertility rate and an ageing population", the daily quoted the minister as saying. These challenges are not unique to Singapore, she added.

Neighboring Malaysia and Thailand also saw their fertility rates fall in 2022.

Indranee gave various reasons for Singapore's low fertility, including the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting some couples' marriage and parenthood plans.

She added, "Others cite concerns about the financial costs of

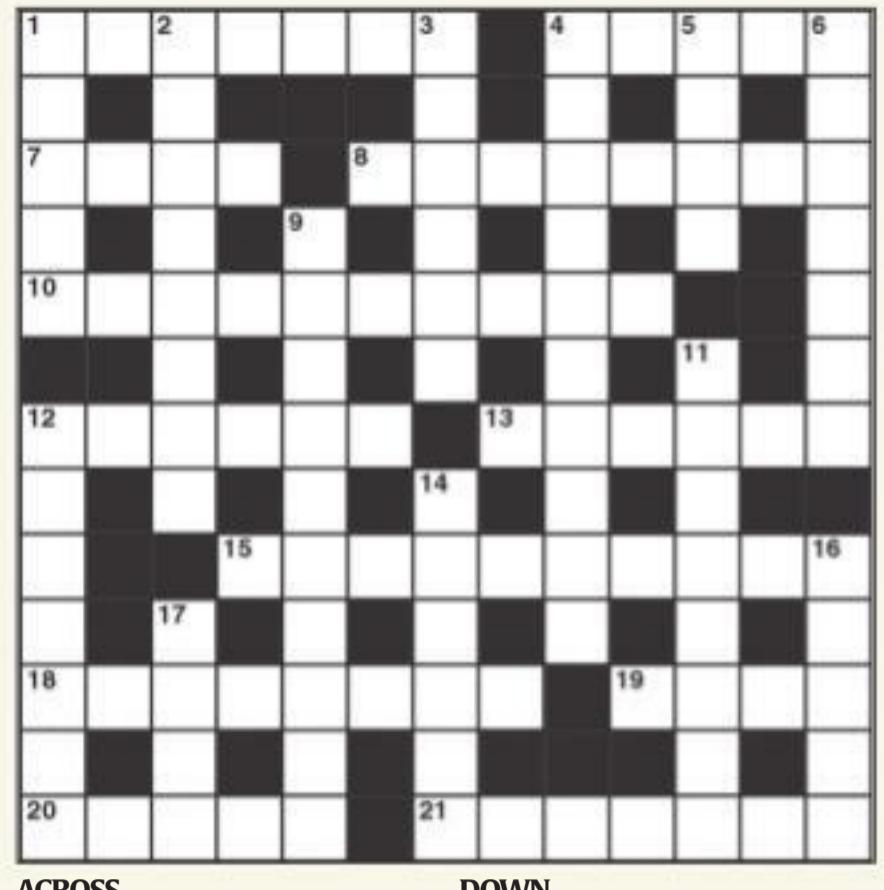
child-raising, pressures to be an excellent parent, or difficulties managing work and family commitments," she said.

Singapore announced various measures to support marriage and parenthood, including doubling the government-paid paternity leave and increasing Baby Bonus benefits. It has also supported the adoption of flexible work arrangements as part of efforts to help working parents manage jobs and families.

A tripartite work group is developing guidelines on flexible work arrangements that will be compulsory for employers to follow once they are implemented later in 2024, the *Singapore daily reported*. **PTI**



CROSSWORD 5300



ACROSS

- Hard worker succeeds on a barrier (7)
- Novel house but starting to let rain in (5)
- Current male desire (4)
- Line brought into use when one rings (4,4)
- Do they stop cars in record time? (4,6)
- Develop part of a revolver (6)
- Type of briefs used in the textile industry (6)
- Final notices (10)
- Be generous with some incriminating information? (4,4)
- Enjoy the same sort of things (4)
- Shoes repaired and disposed of we hear (5)
- Mother takes a long time to get compensation (7)

DOWN

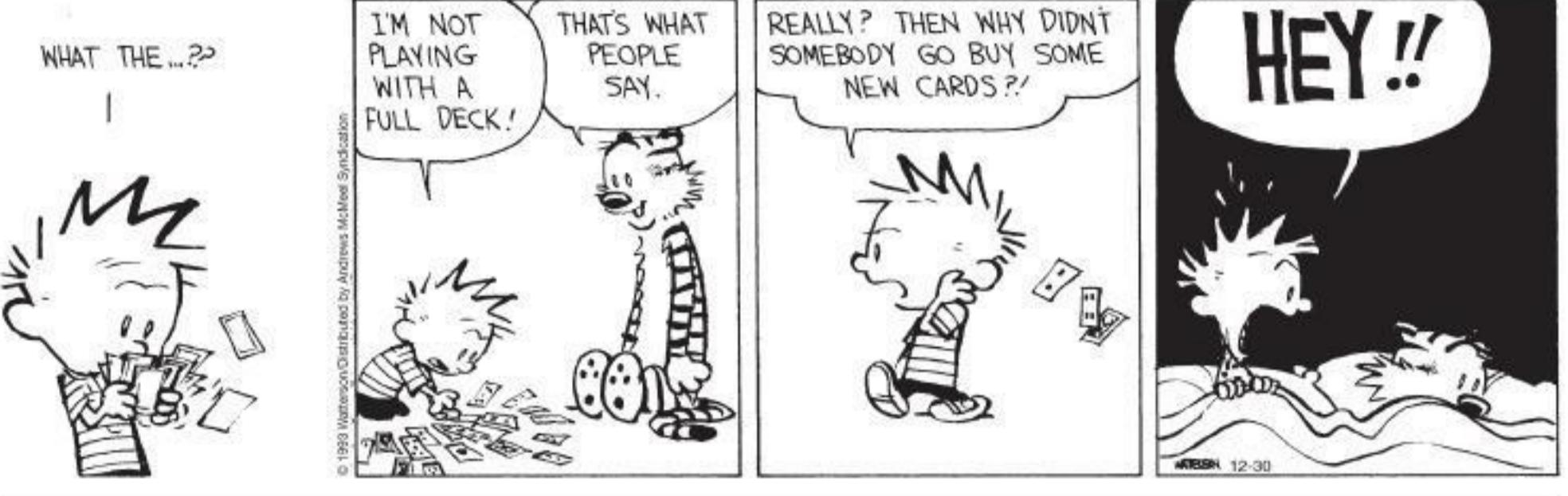
- Part of a hospital grant (5)
- So he and I form a strong attachment (8)
- Parent gets cut up by surgeon's saw (6)
- Perhaps all-in sabre dancing is their sphere (10)
- His influence may make Rose change her name (4)
- Magnetic holders? (7)
- Too proud to take lodgers - honest (5,5)
- I'd bring a form of decorative tape (8)
- Bind books (7)
- Bear right to enter the beach (6)
- Good players who make bloomers? (5)
- It's wrong to be stood on its head (4)

Solutions Crossword 5299 Across: 1 Residential, 9 Entreat, 10 Lie up, 11 Oval, 12 Reporter, 14 Deacon, 16 Debris, 18 Learning, 19 Oran, 22 Stiff, 23 Abridge, 24 Indoor games Down: 2 Extra, 3 Cled, 4 Esteem, 5 Talkover, 6 Abettor, 7 Second class, 8 Opera singer, 13 To and fro, 15 Arabian, 17 Unfair, 20 Ridge, 21 Aria

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & I Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLE WORDS

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

A— is written not to inform the reader but to protect the writer. — Dean Acheson (10)

HZAER
DHNOU

AESTDM
RRUUMM

SUDOKU 5487

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.

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5486

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

SOLUTION: HZAER, DHNOU, AESTDM, RRUUMM
Answer: AESTDM

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Office of the Principal Chief Material Manager
Headquarters Office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001
Mail ID: salenr365@gmail.com



Azadi Ka Mahotsav

Date - 28.02.2024

No. 117-S/Sales/Auction Programme/2023-24

Corrigendum in March-2024 Auction Programme of Northern Railway.

Following amended dates of the auction programme for the month of March-2024 will be as under

Sr. No.	Depot conducting auction	Time (hrs)	1st round	2nd round	3rd round	4th round	5th round	6th round	7th round	8th round	9th round	10th round	11th round	12th round
1.	Alambagh/Lucknow 0522-2451257	10.00	2	5	9	13	16	20	21	22	23	27	28	30
2.	Shakurbasti 011-27015387	10.00	2	6	9	14	16	20	21	22	23	27	28	30
3.	Jagadhari 01732-232888	10.00	2	6	9	14	16	20	21	22	23	27	28	30
4.	Sr.DMM/LKO 0522-234756	10.00	1	6	11	14	18	19	20	21	22	26	27	28
5.	Sr.DMM/FZR 01632-244154	11.00	4	7	12	15	18	19	20	21	22	26	27	28
6.	Sr.DMM/JMB 0171-2611203	11.00	1	5	11	13	18	19	20	21	22	26	27	28
7.	Sr.DMM/MB 0591-2413141	10.00	4	7	12	15	18	19	20	21	22	26	27	28
8.	Sr.DMM/DLI 011-23365311	11.00	1	5	11	13	18	19	20	21	22	26	27	28

Auctions dates advised earlier have been cancelled. All terms & conditions advised earlier will remain same. For further details regarding e-auction please visit Railway website "www.reps.gov.in".

641/24

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
SPORTS AUTHORITY OF JHARKHAND
(Department of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs)
Gate No - 28, Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morabadi, Ranchi
email- sajha9@gmail.com, Phone No- 8210598116

ADVERTISEMENT NO: 47

DATE: 27/02/2024

Sports Authority of Jharkhand (SAJHA) is an autonomous organization under Department of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs, Govt of Jharkhand with its Head office at, Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morabadi Ranchi, Jharkhand.
2. SAJHA invites applications from eligible, qualified and motivated Indian Citizens for providing consultancy as Sports Fellow-cum-Jr. Consultant on contract basis initially for a period of 02 Years and extendable on yearly basis up to maximum period of 05 years for SAJHA Head Office and all Regional Centres of Sports Authority of Jharkhand.

S. No.	Name of the post	Stream	Region for Vacancy	Number of Post
1.	Sports Fellow-cum-Jr. Consultant	General	SAJHA Head Office	1 [Unreserved]

3. SAJHA is at liberty to appoint Sports Fellow-cum-Jr. Consultant based on actual workload. The waitlist panel for each category will be maintained for deployment at All-Over Jharkhand basis to fill the vacancies arising throughout the year.
4. Date of opening of application form is 29.02.2024 from 11:00 A.M. and Last date of submitting application form is 07.03.2024 till 05:00 P.M. The details of recruitment along with application form is available on SAJHA website i.e., <https://www.sajha.in/>. Applicants must submit the filled up form available on the website and send it through given email-id (sajha9@gmail.com). No other mode of communication will be considered.
5. SAJHA reserves all the rights to withdraw this advertisement at any time without assigning any reason. For any recruitment related query, e-mail to sajha9@gmail.com.

Sd/-
Executive Director
Sports Authority of Jharkhand.

PR 320707 Art Culture Sports and Youth Affairs(23-24).D

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

As from today, children will be an important element in your life. You may take this literally or follow a metaphorical path and understand that it is time to liberate what psychologists call 'the inner child', the part of you which never grew up, becoming more joyful and spontaneous in the process.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Circumstances beyond your control may be compelling you into family arrangements which are not of your choosing. If you find current developments unwelcome, it would be very useful to check out any little way in which you have yourself contributed to the situation.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Life is moving on day by day and week by week, and you will soon need to be an expert on everything. The more you know, the better off you'll be, so keep the facts at your fingertips. You'll also need to understand the inner meaning of today's events.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

You needn't expect to have your usual amount of drive and determination over the next few weeks. It seems that you are heading for a period which is ideal for rest, reflection and recuperation. Your zest for life is soon to increase, so enjoy it.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

It is difficult not to be totally awestruck by the truly splendid pattern which is now building up in your sign. The good news is that there is more to come, but when you are showered with opportunities, as you will soon be, you must learn to discriminate between what is worthwhile and what is not.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

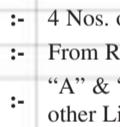
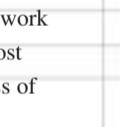
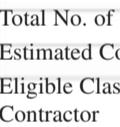
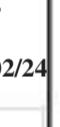
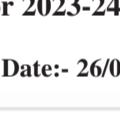
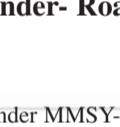
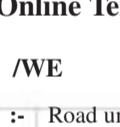
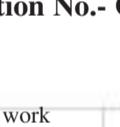
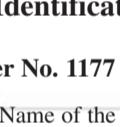
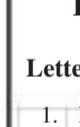
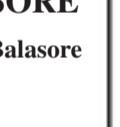
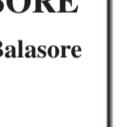
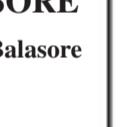
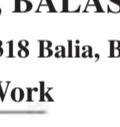
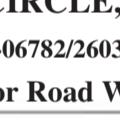
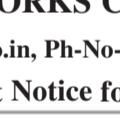
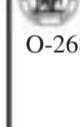
Astrological hadit is that you are deeply concerned with the movement and subtle phases of Mercury. According to this planet, your mood is now to become more analytical and communicative, which should do you a power of good. Look after yourself - you deserve only the best.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Your daily transits indicate the need to complete shopping and financial exercises first, and then discuss the relevant issues and consequences. Do yourself a favour and look for ways to make life more enjoyable. And don't be annoyed by unreliable partners or colleagues. They may not be able to help it.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

You must now convey your true feelings. It may be that you will do well if you concentrate on making the right impression, but if you are to convince family members, you must have a healthy grasp of the facts. It's no use relying on them to agree with you, just because you're you.



Make-shift opener Navgire's blitz to Warriorz's rescue

NAMIT KUMAR
FEBRUARY 28

KIRAN NAVGIRE had a lacklustre 2023 WPL. In the Senior Women's T20 Trophy that followed, she made just 88 runs in six games for Maharashtra. Yet, the UP Warriorz, in full faith of her big-hitting abilities, tweaked their lineup in the absence of regular opener Dinesh Vrinda to give Navgire a go at the top of the order in what looked like a challenging run chase against the Mumbai Indians on Wednesday.

Whether a stroke of luck, or an inspired choice, it is fair to assume she has now cemented her spot.

It had been a strikingly disappointing first innings for the UP Warriorz. Their limited, inexperienced, spin-heavy bowling lineup struggled to hit their spots despite a promising start and their misery was compounded by tragically sloppy fielding. But Navgire, alongside skipper Alyssa Healy, immediately put that in the rear-view mirror, hitting a blistering 94-run opening partnership to power their side to their first win of the season.

Navgire was the aggressor-in-chief. She smashed five fours and a six in the powerplay to lead UP to 61/0 in the first six - the highest powerplay score this season. She helped herself to a 25-ball 50, and departed at 57 with six boundaries and four sixes. Even though the innings came as an opener, Navgire's big-hitting ability, from ball one, makes her a potential candidate for the finisher role that India will be seeking someone to perform at this year's T20 World Cup. Lack of consistency had always been a niggling issue though.

Once Navgire lost her wicket, there had been a bit of a wobble - Issy Wong scalped both Healy and Tahilia McGrath in the same over. But an aggressive partnership from Grace Harris and Deepti Sharma allowed them to round out the run chase with over three overs to spare. The duo did not let the boundaries dry up; Harris' over-200 strike rate, despite arriving at a time the team was under pressure, will boost confidence in UP's middle order.

Healy's side had already built a strong platform early in the first innings, keeping Mumbai - who were without regular captain and middle-order enforcer Harmanpreet Kaur - down to 13/0 in the first four overs, and finding the timely wicket of Yastika Bhatia just as she had begun raining down boundaries.

Through problems of their own making, however, they conceded the initiative. Hayley Matthews was dropped thrice as she ploughed her way to a 47-ball 55. With only one seamer in use, their spinners failed to find the right length and leaked boundaries. They failed to capitalise on the fortune (and presence of mind of Sophie Ecclestone) of a mix up that led to Nat Sciver-Brunt being run out. Their sloppiness took Mumbai to an above-par total of 162.

Navgire's blistering innings, ably supported by Healy, rendered that sloppiness irrelevant. But it would leave concerns the team will hope to address in the future.

BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai Indians 161 for 6 in 20 overs (Hayley Matthews 55; Grace Harris 1/20) lost to UP Warriorz 163 for 3 in 16.3 overs (Kiran Navgire 57; Issy Wong 2/30).



Kiran Navgire of UP Warriorz scored 57 runs to help her team beat Mumbai Indians on Wednesday. Sportspics

Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan lose central contracts as BCCI comes down heavily on those avoiding domestic tournament

VENKATA KRISHNAB
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 28

IN A move that is expected to send a strong message to those skipping domestic cricket, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has dropped two young India internationals - Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan - from the annual contract list.

The decision comes after the two failed to turn up for their state sides despite BCCI secretary Jay Shah sending a strongly-worded letter to all contracted players, asking them to feature in Ranji Trophy games. It is learnt that while Iyer had blamed a niggle for not turning up for Mumbai, Ishan was said to be taking a break because of mental fatigue.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya, another player who hasn't played any cricket since the World Cup and was recovering from an ankle injury, though kept his place in Grade A.

It is understood that the call to drop Iyer and Ishan, who were integral parts of the Indian team across formats in 2023, was taken by the BCCI secretary in consultation with the selectors. Missing out on a central contract is significant for both with the T20 World Cup coming up in three months. It is understood that the chances of the two making the cut for the event in the US and the Caribbean are bleak and could potentially have an impact on their immediate future with the national team.

The contract snub comes at a crucial juncture for both the players, who were part of India's scheme of things, especially in white-ball cricket. *The Indian Express* understands that even if Iyer and Ishan return to the team later this year and fulfill the pro-rata criteria (minimum of 3 Tests or 8 ODIs or 10 T20Is within the contract cycle), they won't be considered for a contract. Instead, they would be paid only the match fee depending on the format.

Though both players are expected to feature in the IPL, it is understood that they would be considered for national selection only when they feature in domestic cricket. "Ishan was granted a break that he sought. But he hasn't reported to the NCA or his state unit, and continues to train alone. Under the circumstances, there was no chance for the BCCI to offer a central contract. Similarly with Shreyas, we went by the medical reports. The door is still open for them provided they play domestic cricket regularly," sources in the know told this paper.

Shreyas, in particular, had a good outing at the World Cup in October-November, where he scored 468 runs, including two centuries and three fifties, and was one of India's stars. Though he was struggling in Tests, he was given a long rope before being dropped midway through the ongoing series against



The decision comes after the two players refused to turn up for their domestic sides despite BCCI secretary Jay Shah sending a strongly-worded letter to all the contracted players to feature in domestic cricket. Sportspics

England. As reported by this newspaper, though Shreyas cited back and groin pain for missing out on Ranji matches for Mumbai, the BCCI's medical team headed by Nitin Patel - the sports science in-charge at the National Cricket Academy - found no issues with his fitness. The middle-order batsman has been included in Mumbai's squad for the Ranji Trophy semi-final against Tamil Nadu beginning on Saturday.

With regards to Ishan, there has been displeasure in the way he has gone about his break. Citing personal reasons, he had asked for a break during the South Africa tour.

While he was granted rest for the Test tour, sources close to the player revealed that he was unhappy about being constantly benched across formats. And since January, the wicketkeeper-batsman has been training with Hardik Pandya and Krunal Pandya at Vadodara and has missed the entire Ranji campaign for Jharkhand.

The team management's position on Ishan hasn't changed with head coach Rahul Dravid clearly stating that for the player to be considered for selection, he has to play domestic cricket. Other than this, there were hardly any surprises in the contract list.

CONTRACT LIST

GRADE A+ (4 players)

Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja.

GRADE A (6 players)

R. Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, K.L. Rahul, Shubman Gill and Hardik Pandya.

GRADE B (5 players)

Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

GRADE C (15 players)

Rinku Singh, Tilak Verma, Ruturaj Gaekwad, Shardul Thakur, Shivam Dube, Ravi Bishnoi, Jitesh Sharma, Washington Sundar, Mukesh Kumar, Sanju Samson, Arshdeep Singh, KS Bharat, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan and Rajat Patidar.

FAST BOWLING CONTRACTS

Akash Deep, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Umran Malik, Yash Dayal and Vidhwat Kaverappa.

E.

What the snub means for Shreyas, Ishan

NON-INCLUSION in the central contract pool impacts a cricketer's earnings. While those with contracts have a fixed annual retainer based on the Grade they fall in, the others only get match fees for their international outings. Example: If a non-contracted cricketer plays 2 Tests in a year, he will get Rs 30 lakh, at the rate of Rs 15 lakh per Test. But for the same number of Tests, a Grade A cricketer will get Rs 5 crore plus Rs 30 lakh. While a centrally-contracted player can make use of BCCI facilities, including the NCA, as and when they want, those not among the elite group will have to go through their state units to avail the NCA facilities. A contracted player also has a comprehensive insurance cover. So if he misses out on the IPL due to an injury suffered while playing for India, as has been the case with Mohammed Shami, they will be compensated for the financial loss. The medical expenses too will be taken care of by the board.

Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane missing out after being dropped from the Test team.

The Grade A+ continues to be the top tier and includes only four players - Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja.

Grade A has six players in the list, as against the five who were in it in the previous cycle. Apart from R Ashwin, Mohammed Shami and Hardik Pandya, the three new entrants in the list are K.L. Rahul, Mohammed Siraj and Shubman Gill. All three were in Grade B the previous season. Suryakumar Yadav continues to remain in Grade B as he couldn't make impressive returns in 50-over cricket. The other three players in Grade B are new to the category - Kuldeep Yadav, Yashasvi Yadav and Axar Patel. Among them, Axar has been demoted from Grade A to Grade B.

Pujara misses out

Virat Kohli, who has been unavailable for selection because of personal reasons, has been retained in Grade A+. In total, 30 players have been offered central contracts in four categories. There are four in Grade A+, which offered Rs 7 crore last season, six players in Grade A (Rs 5 crore), five players in Grade B (Rs 3 crore) and 15 in Grade C that fetches Rs 1 crore.

Rishabh Pant, who is out of action after a car accident, has been moved from Grade A to Grade B. Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Verma, Rinku Singh, Ravi Bishnoi and Shivam Dube are also included in the list with the likes of Cheteshwar

Chill, rain prediction make Dharamsala pitch preparation a challenge

VENKATA KRISHNAB
FEBRUARY 28

a lot more at home than India, the 22 yards will be more to the liking of the hosts, said a source.

"It all depends on moisture levels. If it is on the higher side, it would aid the seamers. And since the natural conditions would definitely bring more moisture, one needs to start the preparations early. Instead of starting it 10 days before the Test, the work began 15-20 days in advance. It will also give everyone a fair picture of how the pitch behaves and the ground staff can prepare accordingly. There could be movement because of overhead conditions, but there won't be seam movement off the pitch," sources in the know told *The Indian Express*.

So far in this series, India have preferred to play on traditional slow pitches, which has offered turn as the Test progresses. However, India were unhappy with the conditions at Ranchi, where the ball began to keep low from Day 2, making it a challenging final day.

While he was granted rest for the Test tour, sources close to the player revealed that he was unhappy about being constantly benched across formats. And since January, the wicketkeeper-batsman has been training with Hardik Pandya and Krunal Pandya at Vadodara and has missed the entire Ranji campaign for Jharkhand.

The team management's position on Ishan hasn't changed with head coach Rahul Dravid clearly stating that for the player to be considered for selection, he has to play domestic cricket. Other than this, there were hardly any surprises in the contract list.

and Australia - coming up after this.

So despite sealing a series win, India are keen on a 4-1 scoreline and are not willing to take any chances with the pitch.

The weather is a factor. As per the forecast, in the lead up to the Test, the city's day time temperatures are expected to touch only 15 degree Celsius, with the night temperatures around 7 degree Celsius. There is also forecasts of rain - especially during match-days.

It is understood that despite the weather, the only chance of Dharamsala having a green track for the Test is if something goes wrong during the pitch preparations. And according to those in the know, since the pitch is also made of black soil content, making a slow surface will not be an issue. But the amount of moisture the pitch retains will be key.

At Hyderabad and Vizag, with Tests being played towards the end of winter, because of

the dew and fog, there was good moisture content in the first session. And with the afternoon sun being harsh, on India's request, the ground staff used only the sack cloth instead of tarpaulin to cover the pitch so that the moisture evaporates and to prevent sweating.

At Dharamsala, with the moisture likely to last longer because of the low temperature levels, extra attention is being given to the amount of watering. If it is on the higher side, then the ground staff would stop watering it as they don't need to worry about the pitch breaking apart. "Since it is going to remain cold, one need not worry about it crumbling under the sun and the cracks opening up. For all you know, in the lead up to the Test, if the temperatures remain the same (13-15 degree C) then the ground staff can also let the pitch bake under the sun and let the moisture levels decrease," the official said.



HPCA Stadium, Dharamsala. File

Even though India have already sealed the series, a win here is essential as it would place them better in the WTC points percentage. At present India are in the second spot and have three more series - Bangladesh, New Zealand

Sathish, Aakarshi enter German Open 2nd Rd

INDIAN SHUTTLERS Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Aakarshi Kashyap progressed to the second round of the men's and women's singles competition at the German Open Super 300 badminton tournament. World no. 50 Karunakaran, who had won his maiden super 100 title at the Odisha Open last December, outwitted Israel's world no. 45 Mischa Zilberman 21-18 19-21 21-19 in his campaign opener to set up a clash with Ireland's Nhat Nguyen. Kashyap, who won the Uganda International challenge, beat Ukraine's Polina Buhrova 21-23 21-17 21-11 in a 63-minute opening round clash. PTI

Swimming: Dhinidhi clocks best Indian time

ALL OF 14, Dhinidhi Desinghu on Wednesday produced a record-breaking swim to clock the 'Best Indian Time' in the girl's 100m freestyle event on way to a fourth place finish at the 11th Asian Group Aquatics Championships in Philippines. Dhinidhi broke the previous record of 57.35s set by Kenisha Gupta, clocking a new Indian best time of 57.33s competing in the 'C' category at New Clark City in Capas, Philippines. The teenager's performance was better than what senior Olympian Maana Patel (58.42s) and 21-year-old Shivangi Sarma (59.05s) could manage in the women's 100m freestyle event. PTI



Puneri Paltan led 20-11 at the half and never let go of their advantage. PKL

Paltan seal final berth after 37-21 win

PUNERI PALTAN became the first finalist of Pro Kabaddi League Season 10 after a 37-21 victory over three-time winners Patna Pirates here on Wednesday. Paltan's heroics were led by their skipper Aslam Inamdar who secured seven raid points. They will now face the winner of semi-final 2 in the summit clash on Friday. Sachin was the pick of the raiders for the Patna Pirates once again but on the other side of the mat, an all-round performance from the Puneri Paltan slightly kept them ahead of their opponents, as they eventually began to get a hold of the game. Mohit Goyal's successful do-or-die raid in the sixth minute started a flurry of points towards the end of the first half for the Paltan, inflicting an all out on the Patna Pirates. Continuing his form in season 10, Mohammadzaad Shadlou led the defence with his tackling, while Aslam Inamdar's raiding giving his team a 20-11 point at the end of the first half. The Paltan carried the same momentum into the second half, getting the Patna Pirates all out once again. In the other semi-final, Haryana Steelers beat the Jaipur Pink Panthers 31-27 to book their place in the finals. PTI

Praggnanandhaa beats Keymer in opener

INDIA'S R PRAGGNANANDHA came up with a scintillating performance to grind down German Vincent Keymer in the first round of the Prague Masters Chess tournament that got underway on Wednesday. With this win Praggnanandhaa also added some spice to the tale around the highest rated Indian as he again overtook Viswanathan Anand in live rating to clinch the top spot. In other games of the day, D Gukesh had a chance to fight for more but had to settle for a draw with Richard Rapport of Romania, and Vidit Gujrathi split the point with David Navara of Czech Republic. PTI

Shooting trials: Ashi betters world record

INDIA'S STOP rifle shooters continued their impressive showing at the national selection trials as Paris Olympics quota holder Arjun Babuta won back-to-back competitions and triple Asian Games medallist Ashi Chouksey bettered the world record enroute to her win on Wednesday. Arjun shot 252.5 in the men's 10m air rifle T4 final, just 1.2 short of Divyansh Singh Panwar's world record (253.7), which he had equalled on Tuesday before winning the T3 trials. Ashi then dropped just one point in the second prone position and just two in the final standing position to post a jaw-dropping 597. She took that confidence to the final posting a facile win. PTI



Red Bull boss Horner cleared of misconduct

RED BULL has confirmed that Christian Horner will remain in charge of its champion Formula 1 team after an investigation cleared him of alleged misconduct toward a team employee. Horner will stay on as chief executive and team principal after the announcement, which came three days before the first race of the season. "The independent investigation into the allegations made against Mr. Horner is complete, and Red Bull can confirm that the grievance has been dismissed. The complainant has a right of appeal. "Red Bull is confident that the investigation has been fair, rigorous and impartial," the Red Bull parent company said in a statement. Horner had remained in his post during the investigation as part of what he called a "business as normal" approach, and was in charge of the team for pre-season tests last week, even as he admitted the investigation was a distraction. AP

Saudi Arabia's PIF and ATP ink 5-year deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS
FEBRUARY 28

SAUDI ARABIA'S Public Investment Fund and the men's professional tennis tour have agreed to a five-year partnership that includes naming rights for the ATP rankings, the latest move by the kingdom into that sport and others.

The ATP already had a deal that placed its Next Gen ATP Finals – a tournament for players 21 and under – in Jeddah from 2023 through 2027. The arrangement announced Wednesday includes courtside branding for the PIF at the season-ending ATP Finals and tournaments in Indian Wells, California; Miami, Madrid and Beijing.

Pepperstone had sponsored the ATP rankings since 2022.

ATP chief executive Massimo Calvelli called the new agreement "a major moment for tennis," and the tour's announcement touted ways in which it hopes the sport will continue to grow in Saudi Arabia.

Tennis has been consumed lately by the debate over whether the sport should follow golf and others in making deals with the wealthy kingdom, where rights groups say women continue to face discrimination in most aspects of family life and homosexuality is a major taboo, as it is in much of the rest of the Middle East.

The WTA women's tennis tour has been in negotiations to partner with Saudi Arabia, including possibly placing its season-ending WTA Finals there.

"As part of our plans to grow the value of women's tennis, we regularly speak to both existing and potential commercial partners about possible new forms of collaboration. While we don't rule anything out for the future, there is no new update at this time," a WTA spokesperson wrote in an email Wednesday. Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova are among those who have urged the WTA to stay out of Saudi Arabia, while another former star player and Hall of Famer, equal rights pioneer Billie Jean King, has advocated for engagement.

In January, 22-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal was introduced as an ambassador for the Saudi Tennis Federation. This month, plans were announced for Nadal, Novak Djokovic and four other stars of men's tennis to participate in an exhibition event in Riyadh in October.

The Olympic qualifier was to take place

END OF A LOVE AFFAIR

Why Mbappe can become the greatest Galactico from France since Zidane

SANDIP G
FEBRUARY 28

A LOVELESS marriage would soon end. Kylian Mbappe would, potentially, unite with his true love, Real Madrid; Paris Saint-Germain would seek its true path to footballing glory. The Mbappe-PSG wedlock, despite the ingredients for a long and successful bond, even a symbolic bond of romance – the boy from the banlieue of Bondy, the city's grimy alley, at the heart of PSG renaissance – was always forced and inorganic. That it did not end bitterly – even if it threatened to, at times – is a mini-wonder in itself.

For Mbappe, it was always Real Madrid – the love of his life. The group that fired up his imagination were always the galacticos. In his comic-strip autobiography Je m'Appelle Kylian, Zinedine Zidane and Cristiano Ronaldo visit him in a dream, and Zidane hands him out a sparkling-white kit of Real Madrid. He plays keepie-uppie with them.

In school, when a teacher asks him about his best friends, he lists out the names Ronaldo, Zidane and Sergio Ramos. Later, in interviews, when probed on who he wants to be, it was always Ronaldo and Zidane. "If you're French, obviously you would have grown up with [Zinedine] Zidane as your idol. After that, it was Cristiano [Ronaldo]," he would say.

But between Mbappe and his dream came PSG. The money they offered was irresistible; the vision they sold was seductive. He could be more than a galactico; he could embody the club itself, give it an identity and character; even pedigree and culture. He could be the Parisian Cruyff. His acquisition was a symbol of power and ambition for PSG.

It was a statement buy – he was both the galactic and Cruyff. In the player-unveiling ceremony, Mbappe spoke glowingly about his love for Paris and his drive to guide PSG into exalted football company, a seat beside Real Madrid and Barcelona, Bayern Munich and Manchester City. He was the greatest French star to play in France since Michel Platini. Zinedine Zidane was not yet a superstar when he packed his bags to Juventus. He could be as big as both; perhaps bigger.

A Parisian Saga was being typed away. Mbappe scored goals, a lot of goals. In 291 games, he netted 244 goals. All types of goals – tap-ins, long-ranges, curlers, benders, and fizzers. He created hundreds more.

He hoarded trophies – five league titles and eight other less glittering medals; a Champions League runner-up medal. He was a commercial blockbuster – jersey sales shot through the roof, doubling almost every year; with his talent and aura

INTERVIEW: HOCKEY INDIA GEN SEC BHOLANATH SINGH

'Why did Schopman say she was disrespected only after team didn't qualify for the Olympics?'

Singh refutes claims of a rift between him and Tirkey and rubbishes Schopman's allegations of bias against the women's team

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 28

IN LESS than a week, the women's hockey team coach and Hockey India's CEO quit citing similar reasons – difficult working conditions. The first was women's coach Janneke Schopman, who said it was 'very, very difficult' to deal with people in Hockey India. Then, on Tuesday, the body's CEO Elena Norman too resigned. While she told the *Press Trust of India* that factionalism within Hockey India was one of the reasons for her quitting, Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey in an email to the board pointed at the 'difficult working conditions'.

Both Schopman and Norman hailed Tirkey's support but did not mention the name of the other key office-bearer, the secretary-general Bholanath Singh, who is in the eye of the storm.

In an interview with *The Indian Express*, Bholanath Singh refuted claims of a rift between him and Tirkey, as Norman suggested, and dismissed Schopman's allegations of bias against the women's team.

Excerpts:

How do you react to the two resignations and the claims made?

Whatever is being said is false. The truth is something else.

Then what is the truth, according to you?

Now is not the right time for it. The day I speak... I won't say anything else. *Shanti hai, shanti rehne dijye* (It's peaceful now, let it remain like that). People say a lot of things about me and Dilip ji, none of which is true. We get along very well.

The women's team coach, too, said some things before resigning. Wasn't she respected here for four years? If she felt like that, she could have said it anytime during these four years. But when India didn't qualify for the Olympics, all these things came up.

BHOLANATH SINGH, ON COACH SCHOPMAN'S ALLEGATIONS



HAI general secretary Bholanath Singh with India captain Harmanpreet Singh. file

in China, from there we got it to India and held it in Ranchi where people were out in full force to support them.

What else can we do? Even after all this if the team can't qualify, can't we even ask where we fell short? And whom will we ask, the coach only right?

Kahan kuch na milein toh naariyal kahan phod do, toh Bhola ji k bagal mein jo pathar hai uspar maariye. (When you don't have anywhere to break a coconut, you hit it on the

stone next to Bhola [Shiv] ji).

Where did the team fall short?

Maybe we should have removed the coach before the Asian Games. Or she should have left. Maybe then the team would have qualified. All the players are good. After all, it was more or less the same set of players that finished fourth at the (Tokyo) Olympics.

Is it true that you wanted to sack the coach

The women's team coach, too, said some things before resigning. Wasn't she respected here for four years? If she felt like that, she could have said it anytime during these four years. But when India didn't qualify for the Olympics, all these things came up."

BHOLANATH SINGH, ON COACH SCHOPMAN'S ALLEGATIONS

(Laughs) In Jharkhand, hockey existed way before I was born. It doesn't matter whether you are from wrestling or hockey. It's how you think, what's your ambition, how will athletes give a good result... that's the main thing. Planning and system for most sports is almost the same.

So what is your plan for Indian hockey?

When I took over, I wanted the women's team to qualify for the Olympics and feature in the top five. And from the men's team, there was a clear expectation of a medal, colour doesn't matter. I only care about the Olympics, the Asian Games and the World Cup. At the Asian Games, I hoped both teams would win a gold medal. We did not doubt that the men's team wouldn't win gold.

Women's team, we were wary of China (to whom India eventually lost). I won't lie about that. But in the qualifier that took place in Ranchi, I wasn't expecting that India would lose to Japan and the USA.

I was the coach of India's wrestling team. In 2002-03, of the freestyle India team. I coach even today. What do you think I am? Even I am an India coach!"
BHOLANATH SINGH
ON HIS COACHING CREDENTIALS

Was there anything in the review that led you to believe that?
I am a coach, too. Even I know what coaching is, what the systems are.

What's your experience in coaching?
I was the coach of India's wrestling team. In 2002-03, of the freestyle India team. I coach even today. What do you think I am? Even I am an India coach!

Will Hockey India have a new CEO?
Dilip Ji and I will sit and decide that.

And will the women's team's new coach be a foreigner or an Indian?
You'll have to wait and watch. But whatever will happen, it'll be for the best.

Have you started the process yet?
Yes, I can say the talks are at an advanced stage. Very soon everything will be done.



Kylian Mbappe arrives for a state dinner hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris on Tuesday.

Reuters

In 291 games, he has netted 244 goals. He created hundreds more. He's also hoarded trophies – five league titles and eight other less glittering medals; a Champions League runner-up medal.

he drove masses to the stadium. He won love and adulation.

Made for each other

But his heart still longed for Madrid. He was on the edge of separation several times. PSG, though, were adamant on keeping him, bestowing him immense player-power in the dressing room, raising his wages manifold, inserting incredible release clauses, and trying every way to pin him to Paris. He could decide the players, he could design the tactics. He had outgrown the club. They could not buy his love, his heart.

It was always with Madrid. The marriage has, officially, not been solemnised.

Every year, rumours would swirl around,

before pen could be put to paper. But this

time, it looks closer than ever before. From

a footballing perspective, Mbappe is made

for Madrid than Paris, the grandest talent in

the world on the grandest stage.

He would land in Madrid at a time

when the storied Spanish Club is searching for a face. In no club is an individual deified as much as he is in Madrid. And the club has always acquired the global stars, from Alfredo di Stefano to Zinedine Zidane and Cristiano Ronaldo, sniffing out most from the noses of some of the other European powerhouses.

Now, though, Ronaldo has gone. So has Gareth Bale. Luka Modric and Toni Kroos have aged. They have acquired Jude Bellingham, arguably the most talented and versatile midfielder around, they possess the Brazilian pin-up boy Vinicius Junior. All they now need is Mbappe to usher in the neo-galactico era.

All perhaps PSG need is the Mbappe divorce too. After the star-declutter last season, PSG has become a coherent, vibrant side under Spanish manager Luis Enrique.

They are without egos and clashes,

without baggage and pressure, without ridicule and parody – a team now, rather than an accumulation of disjointed stars.

Although Mbappe was still central to their fortunes, there are other budding stars too,

like 17-year-old homegrown midfielder Warren-Zaire Emery, forward Kolo Mulani and Mbappe's own brother Ethan.

Emery, last week, would emphasise on the "club being bigger than individual."

But Paris was always a stage too small for Mbappe's talents. Madrid is his grand theatre. And the divorce would leave both liberated.

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