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UNIVERSITY
RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR

Prof. (Dr.) Balvir S. Tomar

Founder & Chancellor
OF NIMS UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR

proudly welcomes

HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



H.E. Prof. PETR FIALA

ON 11TH JANUARY 2024

for

FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY OF

"PETR FIALA GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH RESEARCH INNOVATION"

**VISITING NEWLY BUILT "MARIK INSTITUTE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ROBOTICS & CYBERNETICS
(ESTABLISHED IN ASSOCIATION WITH CIIRC - CZECH INSTITUTE OF INFORMATICS, ROBOTICS AND CYBERNETICS)**

**COOPERATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) PROJECT
"INDO-PACIFIC-EUROPEAN HUB FOR DIGITAL PARTNERSHIPS**

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National Security Advisor
Government of the Czech Republic



Jiří KOZÁK
Hon'ble Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Government of the Czech Republic



H.E. Eliška ŽIGOVÁ
Ambassador of the Czech Republic in India



Petra FOJtíková
Director of the Office of the Prime Minister
Government of the Czech Republic



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NIMS TRANSFORMING UNDER DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP OF



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MARIK INSTITUTE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ROBOTICS & CYBERNETICS

THE WORLD

TOP OF THE
WORLD



Rishi Sunak. Reuters

UNITED KINGDOM
Will acquit Post Office scandal victims, says PM

London: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday announced plans to introduce a new law to exonerate all those wrongly accused of theft and fraud in a Post Office scandal involving a faulty accounting system and also a new upfront compensation payment for those affected, including many British Indians. Sunak, in the House of Commons, said those part of a Group Litigation Order against Post Office will be eligible for a payment of GBP 75,000. It comes after he pledged action, after the issue was brought back into the limelight following a TV drama series. PTI

PAKISTAN
SC upholds late Musharraf's death sentence

Islamabad: In a landmark judgment, Pakistan's Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the death sentence of now-deceased former military ruler Pervez Musharraf given to him by a special court in a high treason case. In December 2019, Musharraf was sentenced to death in absentia by the special court which found him guilty of high treason, for imposing a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, by keeping the constitution in abeyance. However, the Lahore High Court in January 2020 had declared the special court and its proceeding as unconstitutional. AP

AFGHANISTAN
Minivan blast kills 3, IS takes responsibility

Islamabad: The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a minivan explosion in the Afghan capital on Tuesday that killed at least three people. The militant group said it detonated an explosive on a vehicle belonging to employees of Afghanistan's main prison in Kabul, killing and wounding about 10 people, according to a statement released by the group shortly after the attack. Police spokesman Khalid Zadran confirmed that a bomb had exploded but said three civilians were killed and four others wounded. AP

GERMANY
Defence missile sales to Saudi Arabia gets nod

Berlin: The German government has approved the export of air-defence missiles to Saudi Arabia, underlining a softening of its hard line of recent years toward arms exports to the kingdom. In 2018, then-Chancellor Angela Merkel's administration imposed ban on arms exports to Saudi Arabia following Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's killing at their consulate in Istanbul. The Iris-Export approval comes after Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said Sunday Germany is open to selling Eurofighter jets to Saudi Arabia. AP

SAYS US BACKS 'TANGIBLE STEPS' TOWARDS PALESTINIAN STATE

Blinken seeks Palestinian governance reform for postwar Gaza as Israeli strikes continue

Asks Israel to stop limiting PA's ability to govern by expanding settlements

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT, JANUARY 10

SECRETARY OF STATE Antony Blinken spoke to President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday about reforming the Palestinian self-rule government, as part of U.S. efforts to rally the region behind postwar plans for Gaza that also include concrete steps toward a Palestinian state.

Blinken says he has secured commitments from multiple countries in the region to assist with rebuilding and governing Gaza after Israel's war against Hamas, and that wider Israeli-Arab normalization is still possible, but only if there is "a pathway to a Palestinian state."

Blinken delivered a stark message, saying Israel must stop undercutting the Palestinians' ability to govern themselves with its expansion of settlements, home demolitions and evictions in the West Bank.

But he also said the Palestinian Authority "has a responsibility to reform itself, to improve its governance,"

In their meeting Wednesday in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Blinken told Abbas that the U.S. supports "tangible

steps towards the creation of a Palestinian state," according to State Department spokesman Matthew Miller.

The vision outlined by Blinken faces serious obstacles.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government is adamantly opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and the Western-backed Palestinian leadership, whose forces were driven from Gaza when Hamas took over in 2007, lacks legitimacy in the view of many Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority has been powerless to prevent the expansion of settlements in the occupied territory of West Bank.

The war in Gaza is still raging with no end in sight, fueling a humanitarian catastrophe in the tiny coastal enclave. The fighting has also stoked escalating violence between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militants that has raised fears of a wider conflict.

Blinken has met in recent days with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey in his latest week-long Gaza diplomatic tour. He says the nations are open to contributing to post-war plans in return for progress on creating a Palestinian state.

The attack by Iranian-backed Houthi came despite a planned



A Palestinian child in a makeshift refugee camp in Rafah, south Gaza, on Wednesday. Reuters

Yemen's Houthis launch largest Red Sea strikes, UNSC to vote on issue

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, JANUARY 10

YEMEN'S HOUTHS rebels fired their largest-ever barrage of drones and missiles targeting shipping in the Red Sea, forcing the US and British navies to shoot down the projectiles in a major naval engagement, authorities said Wednesday. No damage was immediately reported.

The U.S. draft resolution to be voted on in the UNSC, obtained late Tuesday by The Associated

United Nations Security Council vote later Wednesday to potentially condemn and demand an immediate halt to the attacks by the rebels, who say their assaults are aimed at stopping Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

However, their targets increasingly have little — or no — connection to Israel and imperil a crucial trade route linking Asia and the Middle East with Europe.

The attack by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels is the largest ever by the group.

Press, says at least two dozen

Houthi attacks are impeding global commerce "and undermine navigational rights and freedoms as well as regional peace and security."

At an open Security Council meeting last week, Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said he called on Houthi leaders to halt attacks.

But he stressed that the Houthi's actions must be seen as a response to "Israel's brutal operation in Gaza."

ESCALATION AMID DRUG CRACKDOWN; EMERGENCY DECLARED

Ecuador reels from violence: Staff in 5 jails held hostage by inmates, TV station hijacked

REUTERS

GUAYAQUIL, JANUARY 10

MORE THAN 130 prison guards and other staff are being held hostage by inmates in at least five prisons around Ecuador, which is reeling from an escalation of violence in recent days.

President Daniel Noboa, who took office in November promising to tackle a growing security problem caused by drug trafficking gangs increasingly transporting cocaine through Ecuador, on Tuesday named 22 gang leaders as terrorist organizations, making them official military targets.

The hostage-taking, which began in the early hours of

Monday, and the apparent escape of Los Choneros gang leader Adolfo Macias from prison over the weekend, spurred Noboa to declare a 60-day state of emergency.

He hardened the decree on Tuesday after a series of explosions around the country and a dramatic takeover of a TV station by gunmen live on air.

The government has said the violence is a reaction to Noboa's plan to build a new high security prison for gang leaders.

Authorities have said little about the prison hostages, though the SNAI prisons agency has said guards account for 125 of the hostages, while 14 are administrative staff.

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of the hostages, while 14 are ad-

ministrative staff.

Eleven people were freed on

Tuesday, it said.

"The national police and the



Screen grab from live telecast of gunmen storming Ecuador's TC Television network studio on Wednesday. AP

armed forces are working to safeguard the integrity of the employees of the prison security service who are being held,"

SNAI said in a message to journalists on Wednesday. "We are awaiting official information about the situation."

Videos circulating on social media showed prison staff being subjected to extreme violence, including being shot and hanging.

Gunmen burst into live news broadcast

Gunmen with explosives stormed a TV station on-air in Ecuador on Tuesday during the wave of violence.

Police eventually rescued the

TV staff and arrested the 13 men

who burst into TC's studio dur-

ing a live broadcast with long-

range guns, grenades and dynamites, according to witnesses in the coastal city of Guayaquil.

The takeover of TC's studio in Guayaquil was broadcast for about 20 minutes, to the astonishment of viewers.

Men wearing balaclavas and mostly dressed in black wielded guns and accosted staffers huddling on the floor.

Gunshots and yelling were heard, before later police commandos arrived to rescue the terrified media employees. Police said they confiscated explosives and guns, and showed images of young men with their hands tied.

The channel was back on-air for its evening news broadcast with anchors saying the attorney general's office was on site collecting evidence.



X Jinping with Mohamed Muizzu in Beijing on Wednesday. PTI

Maldives, China sign 20 pacts as Muizzu meets Xi

'Comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership' declared by heads of state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, JANUARY 10

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping on Wednesday held in-depth talks with his Maldivian counterpart Mohamed Muizzu following which the two countries signed 20 "key" agreements, including one on tourism cooperation, and announced the elevation of their bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Muizzu said he was honored to pay his first state visit to China and become the first foreign head of state that China has hosted this year, fully demonstrating the great importance both sides attach to the development of bilateral relations.

Xi stressed that China respects and supports the Maldives in exploring a development path suited to its national conditions.

China also supports the Maldives firmly in safeguarding its national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national dignity, he said.

Xi and Muizzu announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic

partnership in the 2023 presidential elections in which Muizzu won.

An EU report also cast a shadow over Muizzu's Presidential election last November in which it says the ruling coalition of Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) and the People's National Congress (PNC) deployed anti-India sentiments and attempted to spread disinformation in the 2023 presidential elections in which Muizzu won.

Muizzu's visit to China is marred by the diplomatic row with India over derogatory remarks by his ministers against PM Narendra Modi.

A major relief for Imran Khan's party ahead of the general elections, a high court in Pakistan on Wednesday declared as unconstitutional the election commission's decision revoking the jailed former premier's party's cricket 'bat' electoral symbol and rejecting its organisational polls.

The Peshawar High Court directed the electoral body to return the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party its iconic cricket 'bat' electoral symbol back and upload the party's certificate of internal elections on its website.

The decision comes shortly after the party withdrew from the top Court its appeal seeking the restoration of symbol.

On December 22, the Election Commission of Pakistan decided against letting PTI retain its electoral symbol for the February 8 election, saying that it had failed to hold intra-party polls under its current Constitution and election

laws. A two-member PHC bench termed the order "incorrect".

Court quashes poll body order, lets PTI keep 'bat' as symbol

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PESHAWAR, JANUARY 10

INA major relief for Imran Khan's party ahead of the general elections, a high court in Pakistan on Wednesday declared as unconstitutional the election commission's decision revoking the jailed former premier's party's cricket 'bat' electoral symbol and rejecting its organisational polls.

Lahore: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Wednesday failed to get any relief from the court to contest next month's general elections. The appellate tribunals of the Lahore High Court upheld the returning officers' decision to reject Imran's nomination papers for two National Assembly constituencies in the Punjab province of the country. PTI



Former Pakistan president Imran Khan

NO RELIEF TO IMRAN FROM COURT TO RUN IN FEBRUARY 8 POLLS

Lahore: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Wednesday failed to get any relief from the court to contest next month's general elections. The appellate tribunals of the Lahore High Court upheld the returning officers' decision to reject Imran's nomination papers for two National Assembly constituencies in the Punjab province of the country. PTI

laws. A two-member PHC bench termed the order "incorrect".

UN chopper captured by Al Shabab in Somalia, 1 killed

Nairobi: A United Nations helicopter carrying nine passengers was captured in Somalia on Wednesday by the terrorist group Al Shabab after making an emergency landing in an area controlled by the group, two Somalis officials said.

Six of the passengers were captured, while two escaped and one was killed, according to the two officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. There were foreigners among passengers, one of

the officials said, though their nationalities were not known.

The helicopter, which was attached to the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, landed in the Galguduud region in central Somalia on Wednesday. It was not immediately clear why the helicopter had to land.

The fates of the two passengers who fled were still unknown, one of the officials said. The UN Support Office in Somalia did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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about the prison hostages,

though the SNAI prisons agency

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Eleven people were freed on

Tuesday, it said.

"The national police and the

armed forces are working to safeguard the integrity of the employees of the prison security service who are being held,"



Scan for more information

Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

CBT 22201/13/019/2324

Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

Empowering youth through skilling

Training of 1 crore 50 lakh youth under PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana, employment opportunities created



PM Narendra Modi at the inauguration of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar on Wednesday. PTI

World looks at India as an important pillar of stability: PM Modi

Green mobility to chips, Vibrant Gujarat gets over Rs 2 lakh cr in investment pledge

SOHINI GHOSH, PARIMAL DABHJI & LEENA MISRA GANDHINAGAR, JANUARY 10

FROM RENEWABLE ENERGY to green mobility and semiconductors, top corporates led by Suzuki Motors and the Adani Group pledged investments worth Rs 2,38,200 crore in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inaugural session of the tenth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGS) on Wednesday.

Held after five years, the

summit, themed as a 'gateway to the future', was pitched by the government as the 'first in Amrit Kaal'.

Addressing industry captains after inaugurating the tenth edition of the summit in Gandhinagar, Prime Minister Modi said, "People across the world can keep doing their analysis, but it is my guarantee that this (India among top three world economies) will happen." Those present included Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekharan, Reliance Industries CMD

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE WORLD
MALDIVES, CHINA SIGN 20 PACTS AFTER MUIZZU-XI MEETING AMID DIPLOMATIC ROW WITH INDIA

EU carbon tax: India flags risk of trade info getting compromised

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INDIA HAS FLAGGED concerns relating to sensitive and confidential trade data of its exporters getting compromised while complying with the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) – the world's first system that imposes carbon emission tariffs on iron, steel, aluminium and cement, among other such items imported into the 27-nation bloc.

Indian manufacturing ex-

ports in sectors such as steel, oil refining and cement align extremely favourably with global cost competitiveness benchmarks and the concerns flagged by Indian exporters pertain to sensitive trade secrets in these segments getting compromised.

While the CBAM is set to come into effect from 2026, the transition period requiring exporters to submit data to EU authorities began October 1, 2023. The CBAM requires EU importers to submit nearly 1,000 data points and methods used in production

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Cab driver shares trip details: Cop phone call, locating police station

PAGE 1
ANCHORPAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
PANAJI, JANUARY 10CONVERSING WITH Goa police in Konkani, a four-hour traffic jam on the way to Bengaluru, and the excuse of a quick washroom break – the cab driver who was ferrying Suchana Seth to her destination told *The Indian Express* how he managed to take her to the police station without arousing suspicion.

Suchana Seth was arrested for allegedly killing her 4-yr-old son

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

RELATED REPORT
PAGE 10

Karnataka's Chitradurga district while allegedly trying to flee in a cab with her son's body stuffed in a bag.

Royjohn D'Souza, a cab driver from North Goa's Anjuna, was instrumental in her arrest. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, he said that around 11 pm on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

RELATED REPORT
PAGE 10

ALLIES TMC, DMK, NCP LIKELY TO STAY AWAY TOO

Calling it 'BJP-RSS' event, Cong to skip Ram temple opening on Jan 22

After dithering for two weeks, Cong clears air before Rahul yatra on Jan 14

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

ARGUING THAT the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22 was "clearly an RSS-BJP event", the Congress Wednesday "respectfully declined" the invitation extended to its leaders Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury by the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust to attend what it called the inauguration of an "incomplete temple".

Among INDIA partners, the CPI(M) was the first to declare that its general secretary Sitaram Yechury, who received an invitation from the Trust, would not attend the event. With the

EXPLAINED
E Congress dilemma

THE CONGRESS in 2019 welcomed the Supreme Court verdict on the case, but was caught in a political dilemma over the invitation. A section felt it should not "give legitimacy" to the BJP-RSS project but another worried about the electoral fallout in the Hindi heartland.

Congress announcing its decision to stay away, other Opposition parties in the INDIA group such as the Trinamool

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

BJP hits back: Shows what INDIA bloc thinks about Sanatan Dharma

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

HITTING OUT at the Congress for declining the invitation extended to its leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury for the January 22 temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, the ruling BJP on Wednesday said the opposition party's move was yet another evidence of what it thought of Sanatan Dharma.

BJP spokesperson Nalin Kohli said, "Congress took no steps over the last few decades for a temple in Ayodhya. They denied the existence of Lord Ram and delayed the hearing in the Supreme Court. So, the Congress party officially stating that it is not going to attend Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha (consecration ceremony) should come as no surprise."

tence of Lord Ram and delayed the hearing in the Supreme Court. So, the Congress party officially stating that it is not going to attend Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha (consecration ceremony) should come as no surprise."

Union minister and senior BJP leader Smriti Irani said, "They (Congress) had filed an affidavit in court that Bhagwan Ram has no existence. Congress leaders turned down the invitation for the consecration of the Ram temple at Ayodhya Dham. For all devotees of Lord Ram, this moment is an important one from the point of view of religion, faith and belief.

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SENA VS SENA

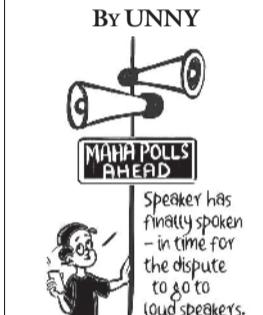
Speaker says Shinde Sena is 'real party', dismisses all pleas for disqualification

Uddhav: Will go to SC, murder of democracy



Shinde, Thackeray

BUSINESS AS USUAL

MAHA POLLS AHEAD
Speaker has finally spoken - in time for the dispute to go to loud speakers.VALLABH OZARKAR & OMKARGOKHALA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

IN A setback to the Shiv Sena faction led by Uddhav Thackeray, more than one-and-a-half years after the party split into two, Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar on Wednesday declared that the opposing faction led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was "the real political party".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

RELATED REPORTS
PAGE 6

NY court asks US Govt to show proof of Gupta's murder-for-hire charge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

A NEW York Court has ordered the US government to respond to a motion filed by Nikhil Gupta's lawyers seeking material relating to the charges against him. Gupta has been accused by the US authorities of plotting to kill Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannu.

"On January 4, 2024, defense counsel filed a motion to compel production of discovery, requesting that the Court enter an order directing the Government to begin providing defense counsel with discovery material. The Court hereby directs the Government to file a reply to the Motion to Compel within three days of the date of this order," US District Judge Victor Marrero said in the order on January 8.

In November last year, the US Department of Justice, in an indictment filed in a federal court in Manhattan, claimed that an Indian official was working with Gupta, an Indian citizen, in the foiled plot to kill Pannu.

Gupta, 52, has been charged

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

with murder-for-hire, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, and conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

IITs build consensus on not declaring top pay packages in placement report

IIT-Bombay revises Rs 1 cr-plus offer count from 85 to 22

DEEKSHA TERI & PALLAVI SMART
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, JAN 10IN VIEW of "pressure" on students during placement season, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are considering not disclosing the highest annual packages in their placement reports, focussing on mean and median salary figures instead, *The Indian Express* has learnt.nual packages in their placement reports, focussing on mean and median salary figures instead, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

This consensus emerged during a recent meeting of the All IITs Placement Committee (AIPC), where discussions included the IIT-Bombay placement report from last week which claimed

over 85 offers surpassing an annual package of Rs 1 crore. In a corrigendum issued on Wednesday, IIT-Bombay, while citing a "technical error", revised the number of Rs 1 crore-plus offers in the first phase of placement to 22.

On January 4, IIT-Bombay had announced that the first

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



UTTAR PRADESH

INDIA'S GROWTH ENGINE



Rapidly moving towards the target of becoming a trillion dollar economy, Uttar Pradesh has bagged leading positions on a number of indices tracking changes and transformations in states of the country. Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath has ensured continuity of sectorial policies framed in line with Ease of Doing Business and worked on a plan to bring investment to each of 75 district. The policy aims at creating a progressive, innovative, and competitive industrial ecosystem generating employment in the state while mobilising investments from across the world. The state is

developing a strong infrastructure base consisting of Highways, Expressways, Link Expressways and Airways along with East and West Dedicated Freight Corridors. Measures to improve tourism and pilgrimage infrastructure in Ayodhya, Kashi and Prayagraj are now poised to deliver good results. Growing almost 21% over the previous year's figures, UP's GST revenue in FY 2022-23 was Rs. 107,407 crore. A revenue surplus state, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the growth engine of the country with rapid development in all sectors.



World's longest solar street light project is being implemented in Ayodhya on a stretch of 10.2 km from Guptar Ghat to Lakshman Ghat.



Abhinandan Lodha group has partnered luxury hotel chain Leela Palaces to open **Ayodhya's first palatial hotel**.



- Rapid pace of development reflects in completion of large projects like the Purvanchal **Expressway** and Bundelkhand Expressway. Ganga Expressway to be completed by the end of 2024.
- **Metro rail services** operational in 6 cities- Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Lucknow, Kanpur and Agra. UP Govt has approved Rs. 5,881 crore for expansion of Lucknow Metro.
- **Greenfield Airport at Ayodhya** operational. Air services from Moradabad to start very soon. The state now has 10 operational airports.
- One of the most beautiful and **grand railway station** redeveloped at Ayodhya.
- **Ayodhya** is being developed as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Development projects worth Rs. 31,000 crore being implemented and will be completed over 10 years with an investment of over Rs. 85,000 crore.
- '**Noida International Greenfield Airport**' at Jewar to have multiple high-end connectivity options. Excellent road, metro & rapid rail will connect Jewar. A new railway line from Chola to Rundhi is also under consideration, Jewar lies in between.
- **Cruise services** operating in the Ganga River from Varanasi to Haldia.
- India's first **freight village**, developed on 100 acres in Varanasi.
- **Inland Waterway Authority** to operate cruise services in rivers like Rapti, Saryu, Ganga, and Yamuna.
- Country's first **rapid rail service** operational connecting Meerut to Delhi
- India's first public transport **ropeway** system being developed in Varanasi
- Government approves construction of 250-Km long six-lane **Vigyan Path** to connect the state capital with six surrounding districts. Many industrial parks, educational institutions and other facilities to be developed around 20 nodes on this circular road.
- Infrastructure development is underway in a 1000 acre **International Film City**, Noida.
- Work in progress at 350 acre **medical device park** at Gautam Buddha Nagar.
- 1000-acre **textile park** being established at Lucknow and Hardoi.
- Construction of **flatted factory complexes** in full swing in Agra, Kanpur and Gorakhpur.
- 6 nodes in Uttar Pradesh **Defence Industrial Corridor**: Aligarh, Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Chitrakoot and Jhansi construction in progress.
- North India's first hyper scale **data centre** established in Greater Noida.
- **Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor** and the **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor** pass through Uttar Pradesh. Also, the two corridors have a junction at Dadri.
- Lucknow to become the country's first '**AI City**' as Yogi Adityanath government has initiated a process to create an 'AI City' in 40 acres area in Nadarganj Industrial Area, Lucknow.
- Lalitpur **Bulk Drug Pharma Park** gains momentum. Government initiates development for phase-1 of the Bulk Drug Park to be constructed on 1472 acres.
- The **Nivesh Mitra** portal facilitating the investors as most robust single-window service provider in the country. It offers access to 454 services of 37 departments.
- UP tops list of country's leading **mobile phone manufacturing** state.
- In order to encourage non-traditional energy options, the state to soon introduce a **Green Hydrogen Policy**.
- Various supportive initiatives of Uttar Pradesh government has resulted in 9% growth rate in the **farm sector**.
- Uttar Pradesh has the **largest MSME base** in the country. The MSME sector has been mainstay of the new industrial environment in the state. It offers employment to more than 02 crore people.
- Grand success of '**One District One Product**' scheme has established UP as an export hub. Exports have grown three-folds in the last 6 years.
- Investment proposals received at and since the **UP Global Investor's Summit** in February have crossed Rs. 40 Lakh Crore mark. These investments are expected to create more than 1.10 crore jobs and employment opportunities.
- Preparations are on for **Ground Breaking Ceremony** with industrial projects worth Rs 15 lakh crore, at minimum. More than 8000 projects are ready to get off the ground.
- In the last 6 years, the number of **tourists** coming to the state increased from 3 crore per year to 32 crore per year.



Now, avail daily flights from Delhi to Ayodhya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

PEOPLE FROM Delhi can now take a direct flight to Ayodhya, with two airlines starting services this month. IndiGo started daily flights between Delhi and Ayodhya on Wednesday while Air India Express is slated to start operations on January 16. Both airlines will be scheduling one flight per day from Delhi.

According to Delhi Airport sources, IndiGo's flight to Ayodhya on Wednesday reported around 162 passengers.

Services within IndiGo said that the aviation company has received a positive response in bookings for the flight and they are expected to go up further, nearing the date of the Ram temple consecration on January 22.

The airlines had run their inaugural flights between the two cities on December 30. However, it was only meant for VIPs and attendees of the inauguration of Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in Ayodhya. IndiGo then ran its first commercial passenger flight from Delhi to Ayodhya on January 6. It will run daily from Wednesday onwards.

IndiGo Head of Global Sales, Vinay Malhotra, said: "The new flights connecting Delhi-Ayodhya and Ahmedabad-Ayodhya will bring Ayodhya onto the country's aviation map..."

On this list, Faridabad,

Delhi used only 28% of funds allotted under clean air plan: Report

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10



The report says the Capital has remained the most polluted among 92 cities in the country in 2023. Archive

In THE last five years, despite a fall PM 2.5 levels by around 5.9%, Delhi is still far from achieving targets under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and has remained the most polluted out of a list of 92 cities in the country in 2023.

The data is part of a five-year NCAP report prepared by Climate Trends and Respirer Living Sciences using data from the network of Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations in the country.

The report also pointed to Union government data that said only 28% or Rs 10.77 crore of the Rs 38.21 crore disbursed to the city by the Union government under NCAP has been utilised. The Delhi government did not respond to questions with regard to the expenditure.

Delhi's annual average PM 2.5 concentration of 102 µg/m³ in 2023, was the highest on a list of 92 cities, including state capitals like Mumbai, Bhopal, Lucknow, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru, for which sufficient air quality monitoring data was available, followed by Patna.

Meanwhile, the counsel appearing on behalf of the L-G submitted that she would have to seek instructions "because the respondent has only acted on a recommendation".

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the commission, said, "Allocation of funds has been brought to a grinding halt". The HC thereafter listed the matter on January 19. As per the plea, the L-G had in-

November last year issued the press note approving the Delhi Government's Women and Child Development (WCD) Department's proposal to "initiate an inquiry" and ordered a "special audit" over alleged misuse of government funds by DCPGRC.

"No further request for allocation of funds will be entertained till the completion of inquiry and special audit," the press note added.

Cong not attending Ram mandir event, AAP says Kejriwal yet to get invitation

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

AAP CHIEF Arvind Kejriwal has not received a formal invitation for the Ram Temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya on January 22, party sources told *The Indian Express*, soon after the Congress announced its leaders will not attend the event.

AAP sources said Kejriwal received a letter a few days ago asking him to block his dates for the ceremony, and that a formal invitation with details would follow. "But no formal invitation has been received yet," party officials said.

While Kejriwal will make the decision on whether or not to attend the ceremony only after the formal invitation is received, party sources said the call is go-

ing to be tricky, especially in light of the Congress decision.

"Several factors are involved. The invitation has not come from a government, but a Trust where members are from the RSS and the VHP. Had it come from the Uttar Pradesh government, it would have been far easier to accept. The second factor is that the Congress, which is an alliance partner, will not be in attendance," said a party leader.

Kejriwal had in 2019 welcomed the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute. "After hearing the arguments of all parties, the five judges of the SC Bench gave an unanimous verdict. We welcome the SC verdict. The decades-old dispute has ended today. I appeal to all to maintain peace and harmony," he had tweeted.

He also visited Ayodhya in 2021 and performed *aarti* at Sarayu Ghat. In 2020, he and his family had performed Diwali Puja at Akshardham Temple, which was telecast live on his social media channels. In 2022, he had joined Christmas celebrations in Punjab. The Delhi government, however, has not held its customary iftar since 2019.

"He has been walking a tight rope on the issue, and trying to ensure he cannot be accused of appeasement by critics. That adds to the complexity," a party insider said.

The AAP government in Delhi has, meanwhile, been sending pilgrims to Ayodhya since 2021 as part of its Mukhyamantri Teerth Yatra Yojna.

According to government data, 4,000 people from Delhi have visited Ayodhya since

December 2021 as part of the scheme. The first such train was flagged off by Kejriwal.

Under the scheme, MLAs recommend names of senior citizens for the pilgrimage. Arrangements for travel, board and lodging are made by the government. Each year, an MLA can recommend names of 1,100 people.

According to the government, 84 trains carrying 81,000 people have been sent on pilgrimages since 2018. The destinations include Rameshwaram, Dwarkadish, Somnath, Nageshwar, Jagannath Puri, Baba Mahakal, Shirdi, Kashi Vishwanath, Tirupati Balaji, Ayodhya, Mata Vaishno Devi, Pushkar, Fatehpur Sikri, Golden Temple in Amritsar, Kartarpur Sahib, Mathura-Vrindavan, and Haridwar.

EV policy will be put up for cabinet approval in a few days: Gahlot

GAYATHRIMANI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

PEOPLE WAITING to avail of the subsidy on e-vehicles purchased in January will soon get the benefits as the existing policy is expected to be extended for another three months. Officials said the Transport Department will put up a cabinet note in this regard.

Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot clarified, "People need not worry... the department is preparing a Cabinet note and it will be put for approval in a few days. All eligible vehicle owners who bought new e-vehicles and applied for the subsidy during the mean period will be given the benefit once the policy gets Cabinet approval and is extended."

According to data, a total of 25,497 vehicles have been registered in Delhi in January to date – 2,214 are electric and 954 are petrol-hybrid vehicles.

The EV policy came into effect in August 2020 and aimed to increase the EV share in total vehicle sales to 25% by 2024. After it completed three years last August, it was extended till December. This, too, has now expired and an extension is awaited, said officials. Sources, however, said the minister is yet to receive the note from the department.

Transport Commissioner Ashish Kundra said, "It will be done soon." Officials said the file to extend the policy will be sent to the Lieutenant Governor after the Cabinet gives its approval.

Under the EV policy, subsidies are given to encourage people to buy electric vehicles. Each category of vehicle gets subsidies/incentives based on the battery capacity.

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Ref. No. - 2579/NHMUK/HR/2023-24/E-10578(259)

Recruitment Notice

National Health Mission, Uttarakhand is conducting a Walk in Interview for the various vacant posts of **Medical Officers and Specialist Doctors**. The details are available on website www.nhm.uk.gov.in. For any query, please contact -9412080703.

The initial contractual appointment shall be for 11 months and further renewal shall be subjected to continuation of NHM/approval from GoI/satisfactory performance appraisal. This appointment shall purely be on contractual basis.

Dates of Interview

29/01/2024	For Medical Officers
30/01/2024	For Specialists

Reporting Time – 10:00 AM
Registration for the interview will be done till 12:00 Noon on the day of the interview.

Note:- The advertisement may be cancelled anytime by the competent authority. The appointment/ engagement under above posts does not confer any right/claim whatsoever either or implicitly for any regular appointment.

Mission Director,
National Health Mission Uttarakhand



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13TH JANUARY

MATCH#	TIME	POOL	MATCH
1	12:00		Germany vs Chile
2	14:30		Japan vs C.Rеспub
3	17:00		N. Zealand vs Italy
4	19:30		India vs USA

14TH JANUARY

MATCH#	TIME	POOL	MATCH
5	12:00		Chile vs C.Rеспub
6	14:30		Japan vs Germany
7	17:00		USA vs Italy
8	19:30		N. Zealand vs India

16TH JANUARY

MATCH#	TIME	POOL	MATCH
9	12:00		Germany vs C.Rеспub
10	14:30		Chile vs Japan
11	17:00		USA vs N. Zealand
12	19:30		India vs Italy

18TH JANUARY

M#	TIME	POOL	MATCH
13	10:30	5/8 ¹	3rd Pool A vs 4th Pool B
14	13:30	5/8 ¹	3rd Pool B vs 4th Pool A
15	16:30	SF ¹	1st Pool A vs 2nd Pool B
16	19:30	SF ¹	1st Pool B vs 2nd Pool A

19TH JANUARY

M#	TIME	POOL	MATCH
17	10:30	7/8	L. Match 13 vs L. Match 14
18	13:30	5/6	W. Match 13 vs W. Match 14
19	16:30	3/4	L. Match 15 vs L. Match 16
20	19:30	Final	W. Match 15 vs W. Match 16

STADIUM ENTRY (For Spectators)

13, 14 & 16 Jan 2024 1000 Hrs Onwards
18 & 19 Jan 2024 0830 Hrs Onwards

HEMANT SOREN
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► INDIA

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NSCN appoints Muivah successor, but new face unlikely to stray far from old line

DEEPTIMANT TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE NATIONAL Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) (NSCN-IM) has formally appointed its former army chief and a member of its 'Collective Leadership', VS Atem, as the successor to its head Th Muivah.

On Monday, Atem (72) took oath as Deputy Ato Kilsner (deputy prime minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland GPRN). He will succeed Muivah when the latter steps down or in the event of his death. Muivah's appointment is significant as it is likely to impact both the Naga people's movement and the Naga Peace Process, which has been stuck since the signing of the Framework Agreement between the Centre and the group in 2015.

Atem's appointment, said to be done with the approval of 89-year-old Muivah and the Collective Leadership, was announced on January 3, with the order saying it was done "in view of the national necessity and to further strengthen the administrative function of the government". Sources in the Indian security establishment said Atem's appointment was made keeping in mind Muivah's advancing age and with the aim to ease in a new leadership well in advance to take the movement forward. The NSCN-IM broke away in 1980 from the NSCN over the signing of the Shillong Accord

and aims to establish a "Greater Nagaland (Nagalim)" based on the ideology of Mao Tse Tung, the founder of the People's Republic of China.

Atem, who is in his sixties, is an old warhorse and is expected to steer the movement in a more harmonious manner due to his acceptability with most Naga groups. He is said to command the respect of the top leadership as well as the cadre.

"Muivah is not in the prime of his health anymore. So, naturally a succession plan had to be put in place. The choice was between Atem and R H Raising (another senior member of the Collective Leadership). The latter, however, is seen to be a bit unapproachable within the NSCN-IM," an officer who has dealt with the group said.

The ongoing internal turmoil in the outfit is also believed to have influenced the choice of Muivah's successor. "There is an ongoing conflict within the NSCN-IM. Its Myanmar module has taken a very hardline approach and is almost on the verge of severing ties with the outfit. The leadership sees Atem as someone who can keep the flock together at this crucial juncture of the movement," the officer said.

Another officer said the Myanmar module believes that barring Muivah, all other leaders of the NSCN-IM have sold out to the Indian government. "Among the discredited, Atem enjoys more credibility," he said.

All states, UTs to get equal chance to display tableaux on R-Day: Govt

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

ALL THE states and union territories will get equal opportunity to display their tableaux in the next three Republic Day celebrations at Kartavya Path, under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the Ministry of Defence and governments concerned, said senior government officials on Wednesday.

This year's Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path will see the participation of upto 75 per cent women in marching contingents of the three defence services and other uniformed forces, the officials told The Indian Express on Wednesday.

The clarification over the new selection process for the tableaux comes amid criticism from states with the opposition in power, including Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah (Congress) and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann (Aam Aadmi Party), over the rejection of their tableaux.

According to the officials, the three-year rolling plan for the display of tableaux on Republic Day happened last year, following a consultative process for their selection between defence secretary Giridhar Aramane and senior officials of the states and union territories. They also said that after four meetings held by an expert committee, the tableaux of 16 states and union territories were selected for display during the Republic Day celebrations, on January 26, while emphasising that the selection was "transparent" and "consultative", and provides everyone with an "equal opportunity".

So far, 28 states including Karnataka are a signatory to the

MoU, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Ladakh, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, and Telangana will be displaying their tableaux this year. Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Goa, Assam, and Uttarakhand will participate in Bharat Parv at Red Fort from January 23 to 31.

According to the MoU provisions, the three-year plan was finalised so that every state and union territory gets a chance – on a rotational basis – to showcase its tableau during the Republic Day parade. An expert committee, comprising reputed artists recommended by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Indian Council for Cultural Relations was constituted for selecting the tableaux, the officials said.

While the three-year plan for participation at the parade in 2024-2026 is being drafted at the Centre, comments were sought from the states on the draft MoU. "Compared to previous years, all the states will be aware, well in advance, about the tableaux to be displayed under the new three-year programme. Under this, tableaux omitted for display this year will get preference for display over the next two years," said an official, requesting anonymity.

The officials, meanwhile, also said 30 agencies for design and fabrication of tableaux through an open selection process and the states have been asked to engage these agencies. To encourage 'Nari Shakti', majority of the marching contingents will see participation of women, the officials said.

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FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Calling it 'BJP-RSS' event, Cong to skip Ram temple opening on Jan 22

Congress and RJD also indicated they might keep off. While declining the invite, the Congress – which has oscillated and vacillated on the issue historically – argued that "religion is a personal matter" but that the Ram Temple was a political project of the BJP and the RSS, which was being turned into a Sangh event on the eve of the Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress dithered for two weeks, but the leadership felt it should clear the air before Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra kicks off on January 14 to avoid the inevitable decision diverting attention from the yatra. The choice, sources said, was between "the core values of secularism and principles" that the party claims to represent and "getting sucked into the euphoria to neutralise so-called electoral losses", and that the party took a "long-term view".

"After all, we are a 139-year-old party... we cannot take knee-jerk stands..." a leader said.

Announcing the Congress decision on Wednesday, Congress communications head Jairam Ramesh said: "Lord Ram is worshipped by millions in our country. Religion is a personal matter. But the RSS, BJP have long made a political project of the temple in Ayodhya. The inauguration of the incomplete temple by the leaders of the BJP and the RSS has been obviously brought forward for electoral gain."

Sources said the Congress had

gauged the sense of parties in the INDIA bloc before announcing its decision. And that top party leaders might visit the temple after the consecration, thus conveying that its move was always about opposing BJP politics and not about faith.

Sources in the Trinamool Congress said its chief and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee will not attend the inauguration either. On Tuesday, Mamata had criticised the BJP for building up the Ram Mandir inauguration as a "gimmick" ahead of the polls.

RJD national spokesperson Subodh Kumar Mehta said: "We endorse the Congress line, which is in consonance with what we have been saying all along."

DMK spokesperson T K S Elangovan said the party would not attend, though it was unclear whether its leadership had been invited for the January 22 event. "Ours is a party that strongly condemned the Babri demolition," he told *The Indian Express*. Sources said an invitation had come from a local RSS office-bearer to the late DMK chief M Karunanidhi's Gopalapuram residence 10 days ago. Sources close to the family also said nobody will attend.

The AAP was non-committal on whether it would attend or not, while saying that its national convenor Arvind Kejriwal was yet to receive the invitation. Party sources said Kejriwal had received a letter a few days ago saying he should block his dates for the cer-

emony and that a formal invite along with details would follow.

No formal invitation has been received yet, party sources said.

Asked about its stand, the JD(U) said the party will be making it clear on Thursday.

NCP chief Sharad Pawar said Tuesday that he had not received any invitation for the January 22 programme, but that he was unlikely to attend if he did. "I will go to Ayodhya in coming time, but will not be going on January 22 as it will be too crowded," he said.

CPI general secretary D Raja said he had received a communication informing him about a formal invitation, which would be extended to him. "Whatever may be, we will not go. They are turning it into a State-sponsored event..." he said.

Sources in the VHP had earlier said the heads of all national parties as also SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray are on the list of invitees. Apart from the Congress and the CPI(M), TMC, BSP, CPI and NCP are recognised national parties in the Opposition space.

BSP chief Mayawati too had hinted earlier that she may skip the event. Commenting on the consecration ceremony, she had said on December 21: "Our party has no objection to the Ram Temple... and whenever the mosque being built in Ayodhya on orders of the court is completed and inaugurated, our party will

have no objection to that too." However, she said, in the last few years, "politics being done over this is disgusting and worrying".

At the same time, Mayawati has not clearly said what she plans to do. "Seeing her focus on Muslim votes as she fielded many Muslim candidates in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls and in UP urban local body elections last year, she is unlikely to attend the ceremony," a BSP leader said.

The Congress had in 2019 welcomed the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit case, saying it respects the decision and was in favour of construction of a Ram Temple, but was caught in a political dilemma over the invitation after a section argued that the leaders should not "give legitimacy" to the BJP-RSS project and another worried about the electoral fallout staying away would have in the Hindu heartland.

Mamata said on Tuesday: "I was asked, 'What is your opinion about Ram Mandir?' Don't I have anything else to do?... I said religion belongs to different individuals, a festival is for everyone. I believe in the festival," she said, adding that PM Narendra Modi was indulging in a gimmick. On Wednesday, a senior TMC leader, said, "The CM clearly hinted that she is not ready to go to Ayodhya. However, we think she was waiting for the Congress's decision."

- WITH ENS INPUTS

EU carbon tax: India flags concerns

by exporters. While the EU says the data collection is aimed at ascertaining carbon emission, Indian exporters fear losing competitive edge by revealing such crucial information. This assumes significance as India exports over 15 per cent of its total goods exports to the EU. In 2022-23, India exported goods worth \$75 billion to the EU.

The move also comes at a time when India's exports to the EU are slowing this year due to weakening demand in the west. The recent crisis in the Red Sea area is also feared to have a bearing on exports of textile and agri products to the EU.

Trade experts have warned that data collection by the EU under the CBAM must be looked into by the government as Brussels largely aims to revive manufacturing in its territory and wipe out the trade deficit with developing countries such as India and China. The government has already flagged this to the EU. They have also asked why the EU industry is not subject to parting with such information. The relevant Ministry of Taiwan and Thai businesses have also flagged the same concern. Thus, globally, data privacy concerns have been a source of worry," said Sangeeta Godbole, a former revenue service officer who was part of the Indian team negotiating the India-EU free trade deal.

India is not the only country to have flagged concerns. "The Argentinian industry and Brazilian industry associations have already flagged this to the EU. They have also asked why the EU industry is not subject to parting with such information. The relevant Ministry of Taiwan and Thai businesses have also flagged the same concern. Thus, globally, data privacy concerns have been a source of worry," said Sangeeta Godbole, a former revenue service officer who was part of the Indian team negotiating the India-EU free trade deal.

"Every company has process improvement engineers. Their job is to look for ways to make each process cost effective. That is how they become more competitive than rival companies. For instance, the blast furnace was invented 100 years ago but every company sells steel at competitive prices. It is a closely guarded trade secret how yield is improved. With CBAM's data requirement, this could come out," former Indian Trade Service officer Ajay Srivastava said. He said the process of data collection by the European Union via an auditor also poses significant risk of trade secrets being compromised.

India's discussions under TTC assume significance as the EU has a bilateral forum only with the US. And the first ministerial meeting took place in May last year that saw India's commerce ministry, external affairs ministry

and union minister of state for electronics and Information Technology engaging with the EU.

The government official said that while the EU has agreed to include solutions regarding CBAM in the FTA under negotiations, however, the final contours of the same have not yet been agreed upon. "FTA is a legal document. We are seeking various kinds of relief including a longer transition timeline, concessions for MSMEs..." the official said.

India is not the only country to have flagged concerns. "The Argentinian industry and Brazilian industry associations have already flagged this to the EU. They have also asked why the EU industry is not subject to parting with such information. The relevant Ministry of Taiwan and Thai businesses have also flagged the same concern. Thus, globally, data privacy concerns have been a source of worry," said Sangeeta Godbole, a former revenue service officer who was part of the Indian team negotiating the India-EU free trade deal.

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Describing it as a "matter of concern", India had announced a high-level probe. Pannun is wanted by Indian probe agencies on various terror charges.

WITH PTI

Show proof, NY court tells US Govt

which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Matthew G Olsen, said.

Prosecutors said that Czech authorities arrested and detained Gupta on June 30, 2023, pursuant to the bilateral extradition treaty between the US and the Czech Republic. Gupta was arrested in the Czech Republic at the request of the US in connection with his participation in the murder plot.

Earlier, the Financial Times, citing multiple sources, had reported that the US had "thwarted a conspiracy to assassinate" Pannun on American soil and "issued a warning to India's government over concerns it was involved in the plot".

Describing it as a "matter of concern", India had announced a high-level probe. Pannun is wanted by Indian probe agencies on various terror charges.

WITH PTI

Cab driver shares trip details: Cop phone call, locating police station

January 7, he got a call from the reception of Hotel Sol Banyan Grande in Candolim, asking him to ferry Seth "urgently" to Bengaluru.

He was told to reach the hotel at 12.30 am, and a fare of Rs 30,000 was agreed upon. "My co-driver and I reached the parking area. She said she was travelling alone and told me to put a red trolley bag in the boot. The suitcase was unusually heavy, but I didn't think much of it," he said.

The cab left Candolim around 12.30 am and reached Chorla Ghat – on the Goa-Karnataka border – at 2 am. There, a truck had overturned, creating a four-hour jam, he said. "I told her we could be stuck here for four to six hours... Since I was told that she had to reach Bengaluru for some urgent work, I offered to drop her at the airport using an alternate route, and told her that a flight may be a better option. But she insisted that she

wanted to go by road... I found that odd, considering she was in a hurry, but then I was getting paid..." he said.

During the journey, Seth remained silent, barring one time when he asked if he wanted to drink water, he said. For the next few hours, he continued to drive non-stop, till he got a call from a Calangute police inspector around 11 am.

"The inspector asked me if the passenger I was ferrying was alone or if a child was with her. The officer was talking in Konkani, and I figured that she could not understand our conversation. I told him she was alone. He said police had found bloodstains in her hotel room and they had a suspicion about her. Then, I passed the phone to her and said that someone wanted to speak to her. The officer spoke to her for a couple of minutes. She mentioned an address. She did not seem to be in

any sort of panic," D'Souza said.

After confirming that the address mentioned by Seth, about the whereabouts of her son, was fake, the inspector called the driver, this time directing him to "immediately drive to the nearest police station".

The police said their suspicion was very strong. At the time, we were on the expressway, and I could only see villages... all signboards were in Kannada, so I didn't know where to go. I discreetly Googled the nearest police station and, somehow, the map showed one at a distance of 150 km. That would have been too far. So, I told her that my co-driver and I need to use a washroom, and stopped the car," he said. Along the roadside, the duo found a restaurant, where the watchman informed them that Aimangala police station in Karnataka's Chitradurga district was just 500 metres away. "I verified from

the watchman if it was a police outpost or a big police station since the matter was sensitive. I called Goa police and kept them on standby on the call, and drove via a service road on the highway to the police station."

D'Souza said Seth asked him why he had stopped the car outside the police station. "I made up an excuse, and handed my phone to the in-charge of the police station at Aimangala. The police officers of both states then coordinated and, in the next 10 minutes, the police checked the luggage and found the body of her son. I didn't have time to process what was happening and just did what the police asked. She did not show any emotion while the police were conducting the check," he said. "I didn't imagine this could ever happen. I was just happy to get a late night ride," he said, adding that he was yet to be paid.

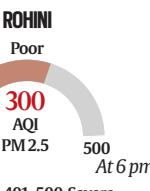
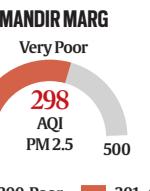
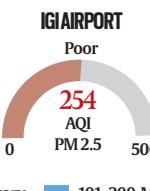
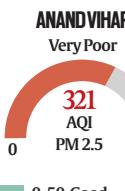
– WITH PTI

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<p

**BRIEFLY**

Playing cricket, engineer dies of heart attack

Noida: A 36-year-old engineer died of a heart attack while playing cricket in Noida last week. A video of the incident went viral on social media showing the man, Vikas Negi, collapsing on the pitch after running towards the striker's end. Hailing from Uttarakhand, Negi lived with his family in Rohini, Delhi, and was working in a private company in Noida, police said Wednesday. They said the incident took place around 11.40 am on January 6 at Arena Cricket Ground in Sector 135. "He was admitted to Jaypee Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. He died because of a heart attack," said a police officer.

Angithi left burning, couple suffocate to death in room

New Delhi: A couple died due to suffocation caused by a coal brazier (*angithi*) burning inside their room in Dwarka Sector 23, officers said. Their two-month-old child survived. Police reached Pochanpur village and found Manav, his wife Neha and their two-month-old baby, who were shifted to the IG Hospital. The couple, who were labourers, was declared brought dead. DCP (Dwarka) Harsh Vardhan said, "The incident occurred due to smoke and suffocation caused by burning angithi in a closed room." ENS

Supertech chairman seeks interim bail

New Delhi: RK Arora, the chairman of real estate major Supertech Group, Wednesday urged a Delhi court to grant him interim bail for three months in a money laundering case, claiming he was suffering from ailments. Arora told Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala he has lost around 10 kg since his arrest and required "urgent medical assistance". PTI

Rs 25 CRORE HEIST CASE

Jangpura jewel thief hid tools in false ceiling inside basement: Chargesheet

ARNABJIT SURI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE LONE thief who carried out the Rs 25 crore gold and diamond jewellery heist at Southeast Delhi's Jangpura last year had gained access to the three-storey store through the adjacent building, but found the terrace door locked. So he shimmied down to the giant store sign, broke the glass pane behind it with a hammer, and gained access to the third floor. These details of how the crime was planned and executed are part of the chargesheet filed in the case by the Delhi Police in Saket court last month.

It goes on to state that the accused, Lokesh Shrivats alias Golu (31), used a cutting wheel, wire, and a hammer to break into Umrao Singh Jewellers. He had made a hole in the强room that's connected to the basement where the shop stored gold and jewellery worth at least Rs 24-25 crore and Rs 5 lakh in cash.

The chargesheet, accessed by *The Indian Express*, stated, "He hid the weapons of offence in the false ceiling of the basement after carrying out the burglary... on his instance, we recovered a grinder machine with a cutting wheel, wire, and a hammer..."

"He stayed inside the shop



Lokesh Shrivats broke into Umrao Singh Jewellers last September. Archive

for nearly 18 hours... he entered the premises around 10.45 pm on Sunday (September 23) and left around 7 pm on Monday (September 25) when the market stayed shut," the chargesheet further said. The theft came to light the next day, 48 hours later.

The report added that Shrivats found the terrace door's key hanging on a hook behind the front counter on the ground floor, and left the premises that way.

Police said Lokesh disclosed that he stayed at Hotel Super Residency on Bhogal Road a day before committing the burglary. "He also stayed at Rajdhani



Guest House in Chandni Chowk on his first visit to Delhi to carry out a recce between September 10 and 12," added the

chargesheet. According to the police report, Shrivats bought the grinding cutter and wheel from a tiles

and tapes gallery on GB Road while he purchased the hammer from a *patri* at Chandni Chowk for Rs 100. He brought a screwdriver and pliers from his home.

The chargesheet stated, "CCTV footage shows Shrivats roaming outside the jewellery shop with a black backpack after the incident for 10 minutes before leaving the area." It states that he then took an auto to Kashmere Gate ISBT and left for Sagar in Madhya Pradesh.

Police said after his first visit, Shrivats took a train from Delhi to Mathura Vrindavan while on his last recce, and after the incident, he took buses from Kashmere Gate.

Apart from CCTV footage, police also attached the Shrivats's call detail records which showed that he came to Jangpura for his first recce on the morning of September 9 and stayed in Chandni Chowk till September 12. "He came back to Delhi on September 15 and stayed till September 17... He came for a final visit on September 21 at 7.33 pm, arriving at Sarai Kale Khanvia NH2," added the chargesheet.

Shrivats was arrested from Kabirdham district in Chhattisgarh in a joint operation by the Chhattisgarh and Delhi Police. He has several other burglary cases lodged against him in the state.

Divya Pahuja murder: LOC against 2 men who 'disposed of her body'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 10

ISSUING A lookout circular against two men who allegedly disposed of the body of Divya Pahuja, a 27-year-old former model who was shot dead in a hotel room last week, the Gurgaon Police have announced two rewards of Rs 50,000 each for any information on the duo and the body.

Police said the men, Balraj Singh Gill and Ravi Banga, were allegedly tasked by the main accused, Abhijeet Singh, to dispose of the body.

According to police, during the investigation, it was found that Gill, a resident of Panchkula Sector 5, and Banga, a resident of Gurdwara Road, Model Town in Hisar, were also involved in the murder. The Crime Branch has deployed six teams to arrest them.

"Both wanted suspects are making every effort to evade arrest and might even flee abroad. Hence, an LOC has been issued for them to prevent them from leaving the country," police said in a statement.

Police, meanwhile, are yet to find the body. Police said Divya was wearing a black and red mesh top, deep blue jeans, and a golden watch at the time of the incident. "She had tattoos on her waist and right shoulder... and an old scar on her left thigh and a fresh bullet wound on her forehead," police said in their statement.

Divya, a resident of Baldev Nagar, was killed at City Point Hotel on January 2. Three men, including hotel owner Singh and two staffers Hemraj and Om Prakash, were arrested in the case. A 20-year-old woman, Megha, was also arrested.

Teens stab man over 25 times, drag body onto road in SE Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

A 22-YEAR-OLD man was brutally stabbed over 25 times allegedly by a group of teenagers, who then proceeded to drag his body onto the road in a Southeast Delhi locality.

The chargesheet stated,

"CCTV footage shows Shrivats roaming outside the jewellery shop with a black backpack after the incident for 10 minutes before leaving the area." It states that he then took an auto to Kashmere Gate ISBT and left for Sagar in Madhya Pradesh.

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Shrivats was arrested from Kabirdham district in Chhattisgarh in a joint operation by the Chhattisgarh and Delhi Police. He has several other burglary cases lodged against him in the state.

Israel embassy blast: Crude bomb with a homemade timer used; report sent to MHA

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

DAYS AFTER a blast at the Israel Embassy, sources in the Delhi Police said investigation revealed that the accused used a crude bomb with a "homemade" timer to set it off. A post-blast analysis report from the National Security Guard (NSG) also showed that it was a chemical explosion that had ball bearings, metal pellets, nails, metal pieces.

Sources privy to the investigation said the report has been sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, no information about the components was further revealed. A crude bomb is a less sophisticated IED used for low-intensity blasts.

The Special Cell said multiple teams are working on the case to identify the accused and gather evidence.

The *Indian Express* had earlier reported about similar threats received by the Israel Embassy two months before the actual blast.

The threats were sent online and addressed to the Israel Embassy ambassador. An officer said they are yet to identify the accused who sent the threats since they were all sent by different users anonymously. However, police suspect it was the same group who sent the threats.

"In both, the accused talked about Palestine and destruction in Gaza. They used abusive language and issued threats," said the officer.

SPRUCING UP

A worker trims a tree near Parliament ahead of Republic Day celebrations, Wednesday. Praveen Khanna

'Leased just for trade-off': Noida, Gr Noida bodies to cancel plot allotment

DHEERAJ MISHRA

NOIDA, JANUARY 10

PLOTS ALLOTTED for industrial, institutional and IT purposes on which no construction has happened to date will be cancelled, said the Noida and Greater Noida authorities. Officials said only those allottees who leased the plot just for the trade-off and deliberately did not begin any work will face action.

The decision was taken in a meeting Monday chaired by Manoj Kumar Singh, Infrastructure & Industrial Development Commissioner (IIDC), UP government. "Those allotments should be cancelled where allottees have not begun any construction and plots are lying vacant. Also, where allottees have completed minimum construction as per the provision, the functional certificate should be issued to such units," Singh said.

Following the decision, the Greater Noida authority said it will conduct a survey to identify such plots. Officials said allotments have been made for around 2,700 industrial, around 650 institutional and around 300 IT/ITES plots in the area. Though the actual number of unused plots will known after the survey, sources said there could be around 300 such plots in the Greater Noida Authority.

"We will be cancelling allot-

Delhi GST (2nd Amendment) Bill gets L-G nod

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

L-G VK Singh has approved the Delhi Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, 2023, which will ensure uniformity between the central and state legislations on provisions of the GST.

The Bill was passed by the Delhi Legislative Assembly on December 18. It was introduced for consideration with prior recommendations of the L-G as required under Section 22 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991.

The Bill has made amendments in the Delhi Goods and Services Tax (DGST), 2017, to provide for a reference to the word "goods", certain time limits and input tax credits, according to the recommendations of the GST Council in its 47th meeting that was held on June 28 and 29, 2022, 48th meeting held on December 17, 2022, and 49th meeting on February 18, 2023.

The GST Council in its 47th, 48th and 49th meetings recommended various amendments in provisions of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 2017. Through the Finance Act, 2023, the Central Government amended the CGST Act, 2017.

The amendments in the DGST Act, 2017, is in sync with the Finance Act, 2023, notified in the Gazette of India on March 31, 2023.

Officials said after the cancellation, plots will be allotted to the new entrepreneurs to invest in the area.

"These are plots allotted for industrial, institutional and IT purposes on which no construction has happened till date

Bittu Bajrangi's brother dies of burns: Haryana CM pays his respects

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
FARIDABAD, JANUARY 10

TWO DAYS after cow vigilante Bittu Bajrangi's younger brother Mahesh Panchal succumbed to burn injuries, after allegedly being set on fire in December, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar visited their home in Faridabad Wednesday to express his condolences.

In a tweet on X, formerly Twitter, the CM said, "Visited Bittu Bajrangi's Faridabad house and expressed condolences on his brother Mahesh's demise. In this time of grief, consoled his bereaved family and prayed for the peace of his soul..."

According to district administration officials, Khattar reached the Parvatiya Colony home around 4 pm and left after paying respects to the deceased. An official said the CM paid the visit before the grievances committee meeting in the district.

Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma and Faridabad MLA Narendra Gupta also accompanied the CM.

Saran SHO Sangram Singh Dahiya said the CM and Bittu discussed the family's future. "Bittu sought a job for Mahesh's wife and financial assistance for the family. The CM... sat with the family for over half an hour before leaving," he said, adding that

police were informed of the visit and made preparations for it.

Meanwhile, VHP joint secretary Surendra Jain said a memorandum was submitted by the district units of the body to the CM regarding an investigation into Panchal's death.

Panchal, who had received around 50-60% burn injuries on December 13, died while undergoing treatment at AIIMS Delhi on Monday. In his complaint to police, he had alleged that a few men had poured petrol and set him on fire in Faridabad. Panchal said he had jumped into a canal to save himself.

According to police, the FIR in the case still stands, but no arrest has been made so far as the investigation is ongoing.

Police said the incident took place in La Residencia society around midnight Wednesday.

The infant didn't survive the fall,

police said. The woman was living with her family in the society. Police said she was suffering from depression and was undergoing treatment. Her husband works for a private company in Noida.

Arvind Singh, SHO of Bisrakh police station, said police were informed of the incident by a security guard at the residence.

"A team reached the spot and started an investigation. Her family said the woman got

married in 2021. Her brother said that since giving birth to her daughter six months ago, she had not been in good physical health and was also suffering from depression," said Singh.

The SHO further said no case has been registered in the matter.

"The family has given to us in writing that there is no crime in the incident and they do not want to file a case against anyone," added Singh.

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MAHARASHTRA SPEAKER'S DECISION ON 'REAL' SHIV SENA

Verdict not aimed at pleasing any party or person, says Speaker

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

Speaker
Rahul
Narwekar

MAHARASHTRA STATE Legislative Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar Wednesday said the verdict on the cross petition seeking disqualification of members by both Shiv Sena (Shinde) and Shiv Sena (UBT) was issued after carefully studying all aspects.

Speaking to the press on the issue, after issuing the verdict in Vidarbha Bhavan, he said, "I would like to make it clear that the order was not spelled to please any party or person. It was done purely on merit."

The Supreme Court had issued certain guidelines and aspects for consideration, he said, and only after consulting both sides and MLAs from both factions was the order issued. The free fair verdict will restore people's faith in democratic and legislative system, he said.

When his attention was drawn to criticism from Uddhav Thackeray who described it as "murder of democracy", Narwekar said, "I would urge people to go through the order carefully and not make baseless statements." My verdict was not

to please anybody, nor was it politically driven, he asserted.

Responding to Sena (UBT) decision to appeal against the order in Supreme Court, he said, "Every citizen has the right to approach the Supreme Court against any order, and so can they (Sena UBT)."

"Firstly, I want to know what is erroneous in my order. Instead of making baseless charges I should know what the lacunae are. Moreover, just because somebody is appealing in the Supreme Court does not mean the order is wrong," he said.

While justifying his decision to uphold qualifications of members representing both Senas, Shinde and Uddhav factions, Narwekar said, "Bharat Gogawale who was the chief whip of Sena (Shinde) faction did not follow proper procedure while issuing whip against the other faction members. Therefore, the order does not disqualify the Sena (UBT) MLAs.

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE

MUMBAI, JANUARY 10



Maharashtra Speaker Rahul Narwekar pronounces the verdict in Mumbai on Wednesday. ANI

ALTHOUGH MAHARASHTRA Speaker Rahul Narwekar did not disqualify the 54 MLAs and upheld the members of both the factions, Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde and Shiv Sena (UBT), the verdict raised question marks on the leadership of Uddhav Thackeray and undermined his position as an unquestioned leader of his party.

The verdict veered around the discrepancies between Shiv Sena's constitution and the role of the high command in the party. It clearly dented the widely perceived perception that Uddhav was supreme when it came to decision-making within the organisation.

The Speaker, while reading the verdict, said, "Paksha pramukh (party chief) is only a presiding member in the highest authority of the party, that is rashtriya karyakarini (national executive). The will of the paksha pramukh is synonymous to the will of the party which cannot be accepted."

It further noted that the party president does not have the right to remove anyone from the po-

sition saying, "The removal of Eknath Shinde, leader of Shiv Sena by party president Uddhav Thackeray is not accepted."

On June 19, 1966, when the Shiv Sena was founded by Bal Thackeray, he was addressed by one and all as party supremo. His

was the final word in the party and its policies. Notwithstanding the existing organisational structure, it was the general perception amongst sainiks that the party's organisation functions on the writ of the high command.

In 2002, the reins of the party

changed hands from father to son, when Uddhav was appointed executive president of the party. In 2012, after Bal Thackeray's death, it was understood the undisputed high command in the party was Uddhav. And true to the organisation's inbuilt character his was the final word.

At 63, Thackeray finds his image dented over a leadership issue. It was the larger setback as the verdict pointed out he was not above the executive working committee structure in the party. The observations that Thackeray

had no right to disqualify Eknath Shinde proved politically detrimental for the image of the leader who is not subject to anybody's questioning.

In June 2022, when Eknath Shinde had raised the banner of revolt leading to a vertical split in the party, it was the biggest blow for the Shiv Sena and Uddhav Thackeray. Out of 56 MLAs, 40 switched loyalties to become part of the Shinde-led Sena. Out of 19 MPs, almost 13 walked over to the Shinde-led Sena faction.

The split in the Shiv Sena took place when Uddhav was CM. He took charge of the high office on November 28, 2019.

Even as control of the MVA was in the hands of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP faction, Uddhav survived the administrative challenges with supportive allies, Congress and NCP. But what he failed to tackle was a revolt within the Shiv Sena. At the end of two and a half years of MVA rule, the Thackeray government finally settled with a split in the Shiv Sena. It paved the way for the formation of a two-party coalition, BJP and Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) in June 30, 2022. Shinde became the CM and Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy CM. A year later, the NCP split.

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Speaker violated instructions of SC, will fight this injustice: Uddhav

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI, JANUARY 10



Uddhav Thackeray at Balasaheb Bhavan in Mumbai, Wednesday. PTI

SHIV SENA (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday announced that his party will approach the Supreme Court against Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar's order declaring Shiv Sena under CM Eknath Shinde as the real party. Soon after the verdict, Uddhav addressed a press conference at his residence, where he trashed the verdict and attacked the Speaker for violating the mandate set by the Supreme Court. Excerpts:

On Rahul Narwekar's order

The Supreme Court had given clear instructions on which points were to be considered by the Speaker but all were violated. The order shows that he does not care for the Supreme Court only because a 'mahashakti' stands behind. He has not disqualified anyone, which was the core issue... He gave the order on whom does Shiv Sena belong to, based on the Election Commission's order, which has been challenged in the Supreme Court. He has disrespected the Supreme Court by taking undue advantage of protection he enjoys as Speaker.

On approaching top court

If a defamation suit cannot be filed, we feel the court should take suomotu cognisance because any such order can set a precedent. We will approach the Supreme Court. The Speaker merely sought more time. As we will approach the apex court, we expect a decision before the elections as these people (BJP) want to go ahead with the election.

The arguments in front of the assembly speaker in the NCP case are likely to be held in the coming week.

This will not sustain in the apex court. The order is not as per law. This will him that his slavery has begun.

I am ready and will fight against this injustice. The Speaker has brought an unnecessary trouble on himself. The people have risen in anger and they will not accept it. If Eknath Shinde thinks that he has challenged the nepotism, let me tell him that his slavery has begun.

Verdict may come as shot in the arm for Ajit-led NCP group

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

Deputy
Chief
Minister
Ajit Pawar

NCP rebelled against his uncle and NCP chief Sharad Pawar in July 2023. The Ajit camp staked claim on the party symbol and name and the litigation is pending in front of the Election Commission of India (ECI). Meanwhile, both sides of the NCP have filed disqualification petition against each side. The Supreme Court had directed the Speaker to give order on those petitions by January 31.

While there was no statement from Ajit Pawar or any spokesperson from his faction, his uncle Sharad Pawar, who

heads the other NCP group, termed Narvekar's verdict as a political one. Commenting on the order, NCP chief Sharad Pawar in Puna said, "This is not a judicial order but a political one. This order has created a favourable case for Uddhav Thackeray in the Supreme Court."

Pointing out that the Speaker also stressed on the legislative majority in the case, Pawar said that five judge bench of the Supreme Court, while hearing the Subhash Desai versus state government case,

stressed on the importance of the party organisation. "Party organisation chooses the candidates and ensures their victory. Therefore, party organisation is more important," he said.

Pawar's statement comes at a

time when his rival faction led by Ajit Pawar, too, enjoys legislative majority with a claim of support of 40-plus MLAs out of 53. Based on this, the Ajit faction has staked claim on the party and symbol.

The split within NCP is also on the lines of the Sena where a group of leaders chose to join hands with the BJP against the wishes of the party chief.

The Ajit group has claimed that Sharad Pawar was replaced as the party president with Ajit

Pawar before the decision joining hands with the BJP was taken with approval of majority of party leaders. The only difference between the cases is that the original whip of the NCP also switched sides with Ajit Pawar.

In case of the Sena, its original whip Sunil Prabhu remained with the Thackeray group and the rebel side appointed Bharat Gogawale as the new whip.

The arguments in front of the assembly speaker in the NCP case are likely to be held in the coming week.

These people want to win elections and are seeking time. But the people of Maharashtra will not accept Shinde's Sena. The order was a fixed match, based on the manner in which Speaker and the CM met, how PM's tour is planned on January 12 and how CM's Davos tour is being organised.

On future

I am ready and will fight against this injustice. The Speaker has brought an unnecessary trouble on himself. The people have risen in anger and they will not accept it. If Eknath Shinde thinks that he has challenged the nepotism, let me tell him that his slavery has begun.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



INVITED, FINALLY

RSS CHIEF Mohan Bhagwat Wednesday formally received the invitation for the January 22 Ram temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya. The invitation was handed to Bhagwat by VHP working president Alok Kumar and chairman of the temple construction committee Nripendra Mishra. According to Kumar, Bhagwat said the Ram Temple was a symbol of national self-respect and he felt fortunate to have been invited.

UPDATED CLARITY

THE 'ONE nation, one election' high-level committee has asked the public for suggestions. The public notice published on January 5 set January 15 as the deadline and gave the email address sc-hlc@gov.in for suggestions to be sent to. The committee's official website, however, showed that its email address was sc-hlc@nic.in. After media queries were sent to officials on Tuesday, asking for clarity, the committee's website was updated to show both email addresses.

YOUTH TAKE LEAD

EVEN AS INDIA bloc parties are yet to start their joint public meetings to unveil their common agenda for the Lok Sabha elections, leaders of their youth wings have made a start as they converged recently in Meerut for Rashtriya Lok Dal's 'Yuva Sansad'. Top leaders from the youth wings of NCP, Samajwadi Party (SP), RJD and CPI(ML) took part in the event that was addressed by RLD president and Rajya Sabha member Jayant Chaudhary. RLD has decided to invite the youth leaders of INDIA bloc parties again for a similar event on January 26.

PROLONGED SUSPENSION

THE TUESDAY meeting of the Privileges Committee of the Rajya Sabha had to be adjourned due to lack of quorum. According to sources, even the BJP members in the Privileges Committee were in a mood to let go of the 11 MPs whose suspension continued beyond the Winter Session pending the report of the committee. Congress members were aggrieved that the Left was unrepresented even as four of the 11 suspended MPs belong to it.

BJP's 1st LS list likely by Jan-end, those over 70 may not make cut

LIZ MATHEW

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

GIVEN THE imperative of bringing in new, fresh faces – youth and women, the BJP is likely to keep out leaders aged over 70 from contesting in the Lok Sabha, sources told *The Indian Express*.

According to the sources, the ruling party is keen to contest maximum seats – it fielded 437 candidates in 2019 – with special focus on those it has never won, and is ready to announce the first list of 150-160 candidates by January end-February first week.

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The Prime Minister has already indicated that the party's focus would be on youth and women. To achieve this, the party could drop those MPs who

are over 70 years unless their exclusion creates intense negative consequences," said a source.

A total of 56 sitting BJP Lok Sabha MPs are aged either 70 or above, including Union ministers Rajnath Singh, V K Singh, Rao Inderjit Singh, Sripad Naik, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Giriraj Singh and senior leaders Rajendra Agrawal, Ravi Shankar Prasad, S S Ahluwalia, P P Chaudhary, Santosh Gangwar, Radha Mohan Singh and Jagadambika Pal.

The source pointed out that the decision to focus on leaders under-70 does not mean all "seniors" will be kept out. "Age

would not be the only criterion for candidate selection and leaders who uniquely contribute will still make the cut. The party needs experienced leaders in the Lok Sabha too," the source said.

Another senior leader said the age limit is a "golden rule with exceptions".

With the party setting a target of bettering its 2019 tally of 303, the BJP is looking to contest the maximum number of seats. "After being in power for 10 years, it does not make any sense to avoid constituencies," said a leader. The BJP is also likely to pay special attention to a few

seats which it has never won. The idea of early declaration of candidates for the Lok Sabha seats appears to have been inspired from the recent Assembly polls.

According to a leader, declaring candidates early not only gives the party an edge but also makes the leadership focus on tougher seats.

Keeping these objectives in mind, the meeting of the National Council – one of the highest bodies in the BJP's organisational structure – is expected to be held in the national capital and is likely to see the participation of 7,000 invitees, including those at the Zilla Parishad level.

One Nation, One Poll panel seeks ex-CECs' views, yet to ask EC

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE ONE Nation, One Election committee, chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind, has reached out to some former Chief Election Commissioners, who have retired recently, for suggestions on holding simultaneous elections, while it is yet to ask the Election Commission for its view, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The high-level committee, set up by the Law Ministry in September 2023, last week wrote to former CECs seeking their inputs on the administrative and legal aspects, according to two sources aware of the development.

The two most recent former CECs, Sushil Chandra and Sunil Arora, could not be reached for comment. O P Rawat, who was CEC in 2018, confirmed he had received the committee's letter dated January 4, and his reply was sought by January 15.

Meanwhile, the committee is yet to ask the ECI for its opinion, as per another source. The committee had invited suggestions from the general public via a public notice on January 5, with January 15 as the deadline.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with UK counterpart Grant Shapps at a defence industry meet in London, Wednesday. PTI

It said collaboration with industry is also key in the strategic defence partnership between the UK and India, with the two nations working together on electric propulsion systems that will power our future fleets, and cooperating on the development of complex weapons.

"There is absolutely no question that the world is becoming increasingly contested, so it's vital that we continue to build on our strategic relationships with key partners like India. Together we share the same security challenges and are steadfast on our commitment to maintaining a free and prosperous Indo-

Pacific," Shapps said.

Several new joint initiatives were announced amid Singh's visit to the UK and the bilateral talks he held with Shapps Tuesday. These include launching Defence Partnership-India to boost defence collaboration between the two countries.

On Wednesday, Singh spoke with top UK defence industry leaders and CEOs at an event in Trinity House, London. The defence minister welcomed the investment and technology collaboration from the UK, and stated that India is ready with a skilled human resource base and pro-business ecosystem.

ENS & PTI

NEW DELHI, IMPHAL, JANUARY 10

GIFT CITY CAMPUS INAUGURATED**Deakin varsity gets 500 applications for 100 seats**RITU SHARMA
AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 10

AS AUSTRALIA'S Deakin University inaugurated the GIFT City campus on Wednesday, the first day of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGS) 2024, the varsity said it has been receiving an "encouraging response" from aspirants. More than 500 applications have been received in 10 days for 100 seats of the two masters programmes being offered by the varsity. It is the first foreign university to set up an international branch campus at GIFT City.

The GIFT City campus' inauguration took place during the 10th Edition of the VGGS 2024 where Australian High Commissioner Philip Green is leading a 90-member delegation, including representatives from 36 Australian universities. "Over 500 applications in the first 10 days is an immensely encouraging response to the University," Ravneet Pawha, Deakin University vice-president (Global Alliances) and CEO (South Asia), told *The Indian Express* in an exclusive conversation.

Last month, the university launched the application process for its two postgraduate programmes — Masters in Cybersecurity (professional) and Masters in Business Analytics. The classes start in July at an annual course fee of AUD 19,000 (Rs 10.7 lakh). Both courses are cater to 50 students each.

Pawha said that the applica-



Deakin University CEO Ravneet Pawha, Australian High Commissioner Philip Green, and University Chancellor John Stanhope at the inauguration event. *Express*

tions were not restricted just to Gujarat. "Less than 20 per cent of these applications are from Gujarat... rest are from all across the states including Karnataka, Chennai, and Andhra Pradesh among others." Further, the university has also received applications from aspirants having work experience. "Nearly 15 per cent of these (aspirants) have a work experience of 1-3 years," she said.

Speaking about the admission criteria, University Chancellor John Stanhope told *The Indian Express*, "The selection process will be stringent. Other than the language requirement (for English), applicants' CAT score will also be considered in addition to the interview round." Stanhope said that the pick for the post of university director will soon be announced as the hiring process is almost complete. The recruitment for two out of a total of 18 academic staff members is done. The

staff will be required to undergo training sessions in Australia.

The 25,000-sq-ft campus of Deakin University boasts of creating a space for integrating academic and business pursuits. While the ground floor would have dedicated spaces for industry partners, start-ups, and entrepreneurs, the top floor would be the dedicated university campus with learning spaces.

The University of Wollongong, another Australian university coming up at GIFT City, will open its applications for a Masters in Computing (Data Analytics) programme in January, while an undergraduate programme in computing will be launched in 2025.

Priced at around Rs 21 lakh for the two-year course (fast-tracked to 18 months), the programme will be delivered by local and international staff, along with guest lecturers from leading industry figures, university officials said.

SC contempt notice to IO, magistrate over custody of Gujarat businessmanEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AHMEDABAD,
JANUARY 10

THE SUPREME Court Wednesday fumed over the police remand of a businessman in Gujarat despite the court granting him an anticipatory bail, and issued contempt of court notice to the state's Additional Chief Secretary (Home), police officials and the Additional Chief Magistrate who allowed the remand.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta was livid. "This is a gross contempt of the Court's order on the face of the record. How could he have been taken into custody? How could

the IO dare to seek the remand?" asked Justice Mehta. "...The Magistrate and IO must learn lessons from this. We will issue the notice for contempt to the magistrate also..." said Justice Gavai.

Justice Mehta said that "the very filing of the (remand) plea was contempt on the face of it" and exclaimed, "blatant illegal custody for four days!" Justice Gavai said, "Let the Magistrate and the IO be inside for four days". The bench, which dispensed with the personal presence for now, has asked them to file affidavits explaining their response by January 29.

The court was hearing a plea by businessman Tusharbhai Rajnikantbhai Shah, a resident of Surat, accused in a cheating case.

Notice from TN unit, Karti Chidambaram may meet Cong central leadership soonMANOJ CG &
ARUN JANARDHANAN
NEW DELHI, CHENNAI, JAN 10

Lok Sabha elections are round the corner. The notice, in fact, is being seen as part of the power struggle in the state Congress, with sources pointing out that the disciplinary committee of the state Congress did not have the jurisdiction to issue a show cause notice to Karti as he is a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC).

Sources said that the notice could be a bid to edge out Karti, the son of veteran Congress leader P. Chidambaram, from the race for

the PCC president's post in Tamil Nadu. PCC chief KS Alagiri was appointed just before the 2019 Lok Sabha election for a tenure of three years, and is on an extension as the party has so far not been able to find a face acceptable to all.

When contacted, Alagiri said he could not comment since it was an "internal matter" of the party. Karti has denied getting any notice. The controversy erupted after Karti's recent interview with a Tamil news channel, where his implicit critique of the Congress leadership and inadvertent praise of Modi's capabilities drew the ire of the party's disciplinary panel.

Teachers at UP madrasas set to intensify protestEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 10

NEARLY SIX years after salaries of teachers working under the Centre's Madrasa Modernisation Scheme across Uttar Pradesh were allegedly stopped, the UP government has now decided to stop paying the honorarium or "additional money" it was giving these teachers since 2016.

The "modern teachers", who allege they have not been paid since 2017, have been protesting at Lucknow's Eco Garden since December 18, 2023. After learning that the state government has stopped the "additional money", the teachers on Wednesday decided to intensify their protest.

Review pleas in SC on Article 370 verdict
New Delhi: Several petitions were filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking review of its December 11 verdict, upholding the revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution that gave special sta-

tus to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. The plea, while citing several "erroneous conclusions", said that "Article 370 was not a concession, but the outcome of the act of state".

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, 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
1	82241027	CETUXIMAB INJ. 100 MG	300 Nos.	08-02-2024
2	82244190	Bevacizumab inj. 300mg	550 Nos.	08-02-2024

Note : 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.reps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

Tender Notice No. Inj. Medicines Date: 10.01.2024 108/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

KIND ATTENTION: RAIL PASSENGER!**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Unreserved Special Train as per the schedule given below:-

09617/09618 Rewari-Rohtak-Rewari Unreserved Special Train (Daily)

Train No. 09617	STATIONS	Train No. 09618
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.
---	REWARI	04:15 ---
00:03 00:04	GOKALGARH	03:48 03:49
00:15 00:16	PALHAWAS	03:36 03:37
00:28 00:29	MACHHRAULI	03:23 03:24
00:40 00:42	JHAJJAR	03:09 03:11
00:57 00:58	DIGHAL	02:55 02:56
01:10 01:11	ASTHAL BOHAR	02:41 02:42
01:30 ---	ROHTAK	--- 02:35

Days of Run : 09617 Ex. Rewari upto to 31.03.2024 (Daily) and 09618 Ex. Rohtak from 11.01.2024 to 01.04.2024 (Daily)

Accommodation : General Class

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in) or NTES App.

Visit RailMadad website www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

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NORTHERN RAILWAY

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केनारा बैंक Canara Bank

A Government of India Undertaking

NARAYANPUR BRANCH

सिंडिकेट Syndicate

POSSESSION NOTICE [SECTION 13(4)] (For Immovable property)

Whereas: The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Canara Bank under Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 08th September 2023 calling upon the borrower, M/s Jai Durga Galla Bhandar Proprietor Sri Ashok Chaudhari situated at Vill-Bikramganj Road, Malyabag, P.O-Semari, P.S-Dawath, Dist-Rohats, Bihar, 802211 and Guarantor/Mortgagor Smt. Chandrakala W/o Late Beshal Chaudhari resident of Vill-Kharhi, P.O-Bahaura, P.S-Dawath, Dist-Rohats, Bihar, 802216 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, being, Rs.9,30,763.90 (Rupees Nine Lakhs thirty thousands seven hundreds sixty three and paisa nineteen only) in A/C NO 75811400000378 and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rule on this 09th JANUARY 2024.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Canara Bank for an amount Rs.9,86,292.39 (Rupees Nine lakhs eighty six thousands two hundreds ninety two and paisa thirty nine only) and interest thereon.

Description of the Immovable Property : All that part and parcel of the property in the name of Smt. Chandrakala w/o Late Beshal Chaudhary

Details of security assets:As per Registered Sale deed no 8850 dated:06/02/1993, The property is commercial property situated at Maiza - Semri, Thana No-381, Khata No-550, Plot No-3712, P.S-Dawath, Anchal-Dawath, Dist-Rohats, Bihar in the name of Smt. Chandrakala w/o Late Beshal Chaudhary, Total Extent Area- 4.5 decimal, Boundary as per deed: East-Chatt, West- Nij Moktan No Haja, North - Nij Mokiran No Haja, South - Shiv bachen sah, Name of title holder : Smt. Chandrakala w/o Late Beshal Chaudhary

PLACE: Narayanpur Branch

DATE: 09.01.2024

Authorized Officer Canara Bank

12/2024

Whereas: The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Canara Bank under Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 03rd August 2023 calling upon the borrower, M/s NEW MAHESH SHOES STORE Proprietor Sri Vinod Prasad Gupta S/o Late Gopal Prasad Resident of Vill-sasaram Road, Ward No-04, P.s-Bikramganj, Bihar, 802212 and Guarantor Smt. Fulkesari Devi W/o Gopal Prasad Resident of Vill + Po. Bikramganj, Dist-Rohats, Bihar, 802212 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, being, Rs. 14,15,339.59 (Rupees Fourteen Lakhs fifteen thousand three hundreds thirty nine and paisa fifty nine only) in A/C NO 75819450001116 and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rule on this 10th JANUARY 2024.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Canara Bank for an amount Rs. 14,92,140.00 [Rupees Fourteen lakhs ninety two thousands one hundreds forty only] and interest thereon.

Description of the Immovable Property : All that part and parcel of the property in the name of Smt. Fulkesari alias Faleshri w/o Gopal Prasad Sah resident of Vill-Tenduri, PO+PS-Bikramganj, Dist-Rohats, Bihar, 802212

Details of security assets: Mortgage of Residential Land, Khata No-391, Khasra No/Plot No-560, Thana No-526, Ward-17, Mauza- Dharupur, Anchal- Bikramganj, sub .regd.off- Bikramganj, Dist- Rohats, Area- 3.25 Decimil, Boundary: North- 8 ft Wide Rasta, South- Niz Mian Moker, East - Prabhu Tiwari & Others, West- Jeet Singh, Name of title holder : Smt. Fulkesari alias Faleshri w/o Gopal Prasad Sah

PLACE: Narayanpur Branch

DATE: 10.01.2024

Authorized Officer Canara Bank

12/2024

Whereas: The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the BANK OF INDIA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed in the table hereunder written calling upon the below mentioned borrowers to repay the amount shown in the respective notices mentioned against their names in the table within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers/guarantors mentioned below having failed to repay the amount shown in the respective notices issued u/s 13(2) within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the aforementioned borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property/ies (Secured Assets) described in the table given below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the date(s) mentioned against the respective property.

The aforesaid borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies mentioned in the table hereunder written and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF INDIA for the amount shown in the respective column of the table and interest thereon.



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

BAD WEATHER REPORT

Confirmation that 2023 was hottest year should lend urgency to decarbonisation, efforts to plug gaps in renewable energy

FOR THE BETTER part of 2023, it was all but certain that the year would be the warmest on record. Beginning June, the average global temperature registered a record high every month. Now the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (CCS) has confirmed that in 2023, the planet was 1.48 degrees hotter than the period when the large-scale burning of fossil fuels commenced. Scientists at the CCS have warned that the 12-month period ending in January or February 2024 could be 1.5 degrees above the 1850s. This does not mean that the threshold set by the Paris Pact is likely to be breached soon — the landmark agreement pertains to averages over a much longer time. But the weather pattern this year sets a worrying precedent, especially because the average temperature in 2023 was 0.17 degrees higher than in 2016, the previous record year — in global warming terms, a very large increase.

By all accounts, renewable energy installations have increased appreciably in the past five years. However, this does not seem to have had a meaningful impact on the decarbonisation of the planet. CCS data show that GHG concentrations in the atmosphere reached a record level in 2023 — this along with El Nino has driven most of the warming. The rate of increase in methane emissions was lower than in the past three years. But carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increased at a rate similar to that observed in recent years, indicating that RE deployment is being offset by the use of unclean energy. Blaming the Third World and emerging economies for this increase in the emissions burden would be simplistic, and unfair. According to a study published in the journal Nature last year, historically, the combined share of emissions (1850–2021) of the US and the EU is more than 32 per cent. India's share, in contrast, is less than 3.5 per cent.

Of course, this does not mean that countries in the Global South do not have work to do. India's remarkable growth in total RE capacity in the last nine years — from 35 GW in 2014 to close to 180 GW — means that it is well placed to attain its goal of 500 GW RE capacity by 2030. However, like most parts of the world, India is yet to develop technology that enables storing of excess energy when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing. In recent times, the US-China rivalry has hobbled RE supply chains. Last year, China wielded its national security rules to impose export bans on rare earth minerals — it dominates the world market in these commodities that are critical to the green energy transition. In a somewhat similar vein, the Biden administration has blocked US subsidies to Chinese battery manufacturers. In the last two months, the two countries have indicated their willingness to overcome tensions on the climate front. The weather record of the last year indicates that climate diplomats, especially in the big powers, need to be much more nimble.

TIGHTEN YOUR SEATBELTS

As another US presidential election cycle kicks off, there will be drama and spectacle. And long echoes

SOME ELECTIONS MATTER more than others. As the long US presidential election season kicks off with the Iowa caucuses — both the Democratic and Republican candidates are chosen through an internal party election — and the Republican debate, the riveting run-up to the November polls has begun. US elections generate global interest for two reasons. First, America continues to be the largest economy, with considerable military and strategic heft. What happens in the US election will have a bearing on how other countries, particularly middle powers like India, orient themselves on the global stage. Second, the US's immense soft power — particularly in the English-speaking world — has meant that America's culture wars have a reach and influence far beyond its borders. Unfortunately, however, interest in American politics does not always translate into a reasoned engagement based on information and perspective. The impact of the US presidential elections on other countries, like India, is either over-determined or understood too little.

It is clear that Donald Trump — and the idea of "Trumpism" — is the elephant that isn't in the room. Trump is not part of the Republican debate. The two "frontrunners" participating in the Republican debate this week — Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis — are far behind the former president. Trump's judicial troubles — he is facing multiple criminal charges, including for inciting an insurrection — seem to have had little effect on his popularity so far. For the Democrats, barring any major surprises, President Joe Biden is likely to be the nominee, as incumbents are rarely defeated in the primaries.

Given the political polarisation in the US, it is not surprising that the election is being framed as a do-or-die battle by both sides. However, a reality check is called for, in America, and outside. The fear that an election result will completely alter the US's foreign policy stance — its engagement with partners in the Indo-Pacific, for example — is greatly exaggerated. Nor will the fundamental nature of geopolitical competition with China alter with a change in the White House: Vis a vis globalisation and Beijing, Biden has continued in large part with Trump's policies. It is important for the intellectual and strategic class in India to understand and analyse US politics through its own lens, not one borrowed from US media, or the diaspora. An objective understanding — with New Delhi's interests as the basis — is needed from a policy and strategic perspective.

MUSIC CUT SHORT

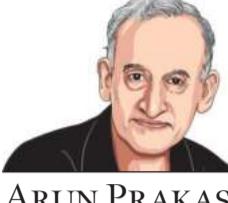
Ustad Rashid Khan became a link between the traditional and modern spaces and styles of classical music

IN THE EARLY '80s, when Ustad Rashid Khan was just Rashid Khan, a young, curious student at Kolkata's ITC Sangeet Research Akademi, a concert by Pandit Bhimsen Joshi at the prestigious Doverlane Music Conference changed the direction of his struggle to become a classical musician. Khan sat listening to the stalwart in rapt attention from the wings when he was asked to get off the stage and sit at the back. While it hurt deeply, as Khan would mention in interviews later, it also galvanised a strength of will, pushing him towards working harder so that he could sing on the same stage one day.

Not only did Khan, who died in Kolkata on Tuesday after battling prostate cancer and a cerebral attack, sing at the well-known music conference, he became perhaps the only classical vocalist to find appreciation on a public stage from Joshi. Khan became the link between the traditional and modern spaces and styles of classical music. Armed with a voice emblematic of a musical era now lost, Khan ventured onto the traditional proscenium like an old-fashioned, paan-chewing ustad and one could only marvel at the technical skill of his *khayal* and *thumris*. But unlike the older, traditional classical artistes, he wasn't averse to probing his art form in contemporary and popular spaces — films, music studios, world music. His Hamsadhwani was as powerful as the popular "Aaoje jab..." from Imtiaz Ali's *Jab We Met*.

Born in Badaun, Khan was the great-grandson of Ustad Inayat Hussain Khan, the founder of the Rampur-Sahaswan gharana. He learned under the aegis of his maternal grandmother and the exacting Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan and from his uncle Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan. After he was brought to Kolkata by Nissar Hussain at the age of 10, the city became home. A place where he found music, appreciation, a family, and where he breathed his last. The city loved him back. Among others, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee bid a poignant farewell to the "Sangeet Samrat" who left too soon.

Missing a maritime doctrine



ARUN PRAKASH

Row with Maldives frames need to flesh out SAGAR as a tool for India's regional diplomacy

THE INCIPENT TENSIONS between India and its tiny neighbour, Maldives, simmering for over a decade, finally came to a head when three junior ministers of the island nation's government made crude and disparaging remarks on social media about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Lakshadweep islands. Once New Delhi conveyed its displeasure over this gross impropriety, the Maldivian government distanced itself from the remarks, and President Mohamed Muizzu "suspended" the errant ministers before departing for his maiden visit to Beijing.

While it may be tempting to dismiss this contretemps as a "storm in a teacup," there are a few dimensions to this episode, with implications that go beyond the transgressions of juvenile politicians. They could serve as lessons for the future.

First, the strategic dimension. The Maldives archipelago — consisting of 27 coral atolls dispersed north-to-south over 900 km of the southern Indian Ocean, with an exclusive economic zone of nearly a million square km — is an important element in India's maritime security matrix. While the Indian Navy (IN) has taken cognisance of this in formulating its doctrine and deployments, our decision-makers have continued to suffer from a "continental fixation", and in the absence of a national security strategy, our maritime initiatives have remained random and sporadic.

As far back as 1945, India's "oracle of maritime wisdom," KM Panikkar had pronounced that "an exclusively land-based defence policy for India will, in future, be nothing short of blindness... India's freedom will hardly be worth a day's purchase if Indian interests in the Indian Ocean are not defended." He had accurately predicted: "That China intends to embark on a policy of large-scale naval expansion is clear enough... with her bases extending as far south as Hainan, China will be in an advantageous position..." It also bears recalling that the British had maintained a Royal Air Force base on Maldives' Gan Island since 1942, which they vacated with reluctance only in 1976 and then moved 200 miles south to their Indian Ocean territory of Diego Garcia.

Second, our diplomatic approach to Maldives (and perhaps other neighbours) needs scrutiny. Politics in Muslim-majority Maldives has been influenced, as much by

hyper-nationalism and religious fervour, as by the India-China rivalry. Alarms should have rung in the MEA as early as 2011 when the relationship actually started fraying. A blunt signal was the peremptory cancellation of a contract to develop Male's international airport awarded to Indian conglomerate GMR, driven ostensibly by Opposition charges of "compromise of national sovereignty". But some questions remain unanswered: Did New Delhi receive a warning of emerging hostility from its Male representatives? If so, was anything done to stem the slide in relations?

While China's politico-economic seduction, coupled with Pakistan's religious incitement — using the "Islamic card" — has no doubt played an important role in alienating Maldives, there is room for introspection on India's part too. Given its population of just half a million, Maldives is Asia's smallest country and hyper-sensitivity to "big-brotherly" attitudes is to be expected. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Indian diplomats often arouse resentment, especially in neighbourhood capitals, by their condescending attitudes, over-emphasis on India's cultural dominance and projecting a "viceroy's" rather than envoy's image.

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Third, as India and China vie for influence in the Indo-Pacific, we need to shift exclusive focus from border disputes to the larger geopolitical competition. In the Indian Ocean Region, China suffers from the "tyranny of distance." For example, Male is about 6,000 km from the nearest Chinese port of Hainan and only 700 km from Kochi. To reach Male a ship, at 15 knots, would take just a day and a half from Kochi and more than 10 days from Hainan.

The distinct advantages of having a friendly neighbour next-door should have become obvious to Maldivians during the 1988 abortive "coup d'état", the 2004 tsunami, and the 2014 drinking-water crisis, when the Indian Navy was the "first responder" in each case. One is confident that India's good-neighbourly attitude will endure, regardless of transient diplomatic hiccups.

The writer is a retired chief of naval staff



AMIT CHAUDHURI

I MUST HAVE first heard Rashid Khan sing in 1991, when he was emerging as a singer of note and repute. I was living in England at the time, and, while visiting my parents in Kolkata, I would go sometimes to the ITC Sangeet Research Academy. I performed there and made a connection with a singer I greatly respected, Pandit A T Kanan. That was where I heard Rashid Khan perform, singing either a Madhuvanti or Multani, at one of their evening recitals. He sang beautifully. We were introduced to each other one afternoon outside the SRA library by Ustad Aslam Khan, who used to accompany me on the tabla and knew him well. Pandit Ananda Gopal Bandhopadhyay, who often played tabla with Rashid Khan, was present too, chiding him affectionately. Rashid Khan was about 23 at the time, but looked even younger, probably because he was so thin. I was 29. Around the same time, I had also got hold of a commercially released cassette of two ragas he'd sung, including, I recall, Raga Lalit.

In those first encounters with Rashid Khan's singing, I was struck by a few things. He sang in the style handed down by Ustad Amir Khan, of exploratory development: A particularly modern way of imagining the khayal. I see Rashid Khan not so much as an experimenter as a superlative inheritor of the experiments of the early to mid-twentieth century. Amir Khan's impact was especially

For practitioners and listeners of Hindustani classical music, it feels like something formative in our time has ended. It's not as if it will not come again or that it isn't already there among us. It's just that in our period, for one reason or another, listeners have had access to that immersion in sur largely through Rashid Khan.

evident in the *aalap* as well as the complexity of his *taans*, while his rhythmic way of approaching the *tarana* owed a great deal to his grand-uncle, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan. His *tayari*, his virtuosity, was remarkable. He was a great *taankar*, the *taans* beautifully integrated into his aesthetic. They were startling, but not ostentatious. Finally — or perhaps primarily — I was struck by his tunefulness: There was a veracity to the way he embraced each note.

This is Rashid Khan's legacy — to make achieving a sort of perfection a matter of dailiness. Even during his lifetime — cut off so tragically — one could hear young singers around Kolkata trying to emulate his style, his skill, and even his consistency. He was — I mean this as high praise — reliably excellent. Among his various recordings and performances, there is little one could describe as being less than very good. And one almost started taking for granted some of these qualities, like fidelity to *sur*, which is, in the end, what makes one a singer.

Such excellence was not so rare even in the 1970s. By the time Rashid Khan started singing, it was becoming increasingly hard to come by. It's not just that talent disappeared. Perhaps the habitat that allowed such excellence to flourish was narrowing.

No doubt Rashid Khan would have been celebrated even in the 1960s and 1970s when there were many other great singers around.

Chaudhuri is a novelist, essayist and musician. As told to Pooja Pillai



JANUARY 11, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

AKALI GROUPS CLASH

SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE injured in a clash between two rival Akali groups at Gurdwara Rakabganj in Delhi at the start of the birthday celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh. Two shots were fired, and swords, kirpans, bricks and stones were freely used. The mob set fire to a car belonging to Harbans Singh Manchanda, president of the Delhi SGPC.

AKALI PLAN OF ACTION

MEMBERS OF THE Akali Dal high command, party MPs and MLAs and different presidents

of the Shiromani Akali Dal will meet on January 17 to chalk out the next line of action in their agitation. The plan will be announced on Republic Day. The party chief, Harchand Singh Longowal, refused to disclose the agenda of the meeting.

SLFP ENDS BOYCOTT

ENDING ITS BOYCOTT, former Premier Sirimavo Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) has decided to attend the all-party peace conference to resolve the ethnic conflict. The announcement came at the end of a day of swift developments, which began

WORDLY WISE
THAT GOVERNMENT IS THE STRONGEST OF WHICH
EVERY MAN FEELS HIMSELF A PART.

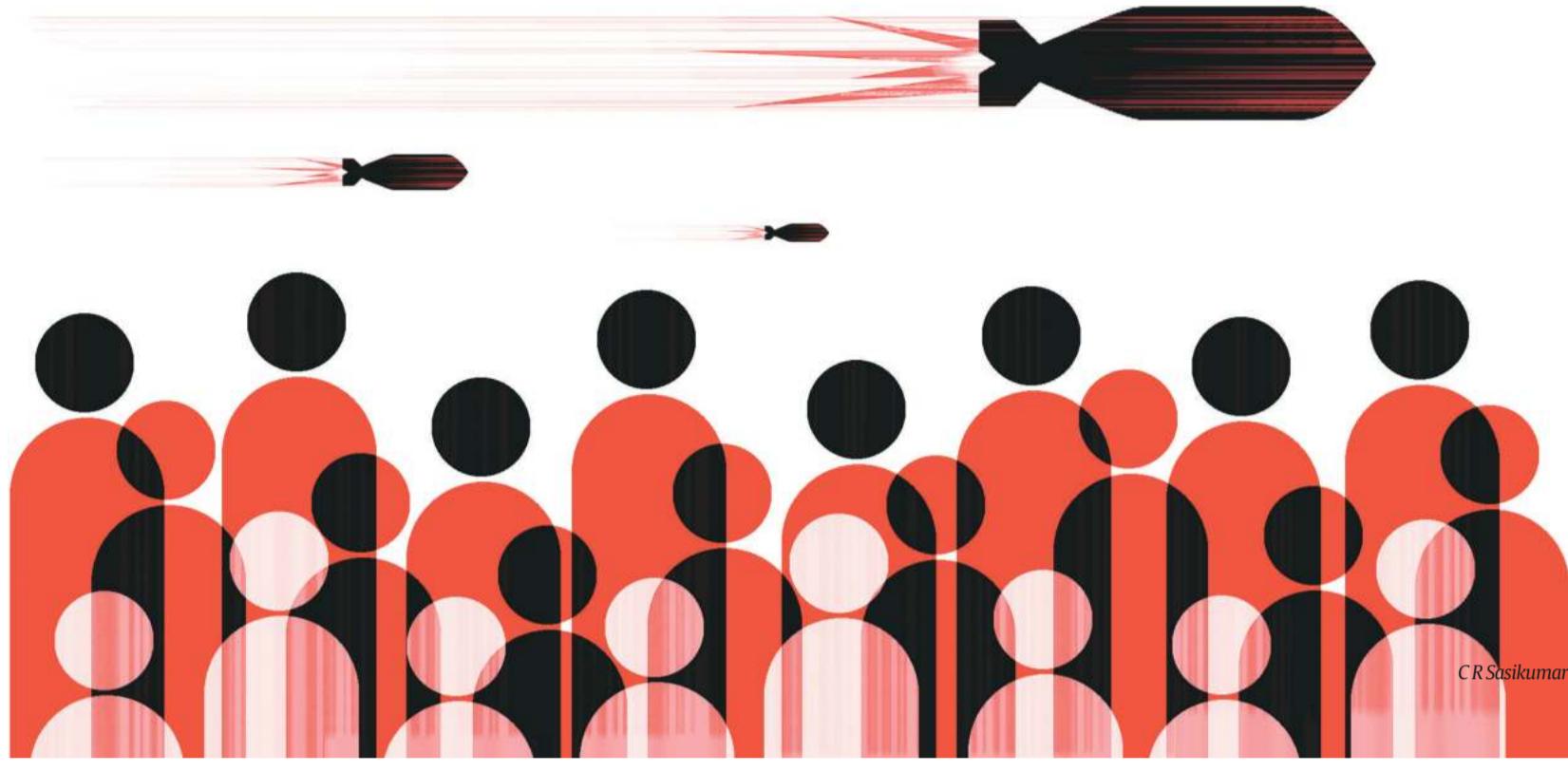
— THOMAS JEFFERSON

THE IDEAS PAGE

DIS/AGREE

THE BEST OF BOTH SIDES

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



CR Sasikumar

South Africa is taking Israel to the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention. Does it have a case?

Israel is only defending itself

South Africa's claims at ICJ do not hold. The accusation is part of an old pattern of blaming Jewish people for their suffering

as human shields and strives for a high casualty count to galvanise public opinion against Israel.

Hamas had prepared to fight in a dense urban landscape for over a decade; in particular by using an unparalleled tunnel network deployed beneath civilian areas in which Israeli forces are compelled to fight an asymmetric war.

On December 29, 2023, South Africa filed an application with the International Court of Justice instituting proceedings against Israel, alleging that Israel is committing genocide. The misuse of the Genocide Convention against Israel is outrageous.

South Africa bases its case on two claims, neither of which stands up to scrutiny. The first is the scale of civilian death and destruction in Gaza. There is no doubt that the war in Gaza has been devastating for the civilian population. However, this does not indicate that genocide has taken place.

The second are various statements by Israeli officials or former officials, which they claim prove the necessary special intent of committing genocide. The various quotes used to suggest Israel has the intention of committing genocide are not convincing. They do not reflect Israel's actions in practice, and many were said in the emotional aftermath of the mass slaughter and horrific atrocities committed on October 7, an event that would shake any civilised country to the core. It would have been better had they not

been said, but they are a far cry from any reasonable proof of intent. Moreover, they are a very selective collection of cherry-picked statements, ignoring numerous statements by Israel's top political and military leaders clarifying its actual and official policies of minimising harm to civilians and ensuring humanitarian aid.

However, the true evidence of any lack of intent to commit genocide is Israel's unwavering and continuous efforts to facilitate humanitarian aid (over 7,200 trucks since the beginning of the war) and the robust measures to minimise civilian casualties, including warnings of attacks and precautionary measures which often increased the risk to its own forces.

Indeed, the US's National Security Council spokesperson stated that Israel "has published online maps of places where people can go or not to go. That's basically telegraphing your punches, and there's very few modern militaries in the world that would do that. I don't know that we would do that." This is hardly genocidal intent.

With the Holocaust, where 6 million Jews were exterminated solely based on their religion, set as a backdrop and Israel's attachment to the values of sanctifying life, the accusation of genocide is especially painful. It is a modern case of the ancient racist habit of blaming the Jews for the very crimes committed against them.

In accordance with its right and obligation to defend itself and its citizens, Israel had to respond forcefully, seeking to secure the release of its infants, children, women, and men being held as hostages in Gaza, and to deny Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza the capacity to continue attacking its citizens and territory as they have explicitly vowed to do "again and again and again".

Israel can hardly be blamed for using the military force available to legitimately defend its citizens from further attacks. It has been consistent in defining that the IDF is targeting terror operatives and military infrastructure, not Palestinian civilians.

In accordance with its right and obligation to defend itself and its citizens, Israel had to respond forcefully, seeking to secure the release of its infants, children, women, and men being held as hostages in Gaza, and to deny Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza the capacity to continue attacking its citizens and territory as they have explicitly vowed to do "again and again and again".

Israel can hardly be blamed for using military force available to it to legitimately defend its citizens from further attacks in accordance with the laws of war. Israel has been consistent in defining that the IDF is targeting terror operatives and military infrastructure and not Palestinian civilians.

The intense fighting and scope of the civilian damage in Gaza is in large part the outcome of Hamas' strategy to embed its combatants within the civilian population of Gaza, including in mosques, hospitals, schools, and UN facilities, which constitute obvious war crimes. Hamas uses civilians

The writer is Israel's ambassador to India

Israel must be held to account

The contention that it violates obligations under the Genocide Convention meets the threshold for seeking the ICJ's intervention



ANJOLIE SINGH

STARTING THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) will hold a two-day hearing to decide whether it will order "provisional measures" (the equivalent of seeking urgent interim relief in pending cases in Indian courts) in a case South Africa has filed against Israel for violating its obligations under the Genocide Convention in relation to Palestinians in Gaza. The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations that settles legal disputes between states. It is not a criminal court and it does not try individuals. That is the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Both courts are in The Hague.

The ICJ cannot automatically decide all cases involving breaches of international law. It can only decide cases that are brought before it by states that consent to its jurisdiction. This consent can be expressed in different ways. In this case, the consent stems from an article in the Genocide Convention that states that disputes between parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Convention, including disputes relating to the responsibility of a state for genocide, shall be submitted to the ICJ at the request of any of the parties to the dispute. Both South Africa and Israel are parties to the Convention.

The Genocide Convention defines genocide as the following five acts: killing members of a group; causing serious bodily or mental harm; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction; imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group and forcibly transferring children to another group "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." In other words, it contains two separate elements: The physical acts and the specific intent "to destroy, in whole or in part" a specific group. The need to demonstrate this specific intent to destroy is what distinguishes genocide from war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The commission of the acts is not enough. Also, the commission of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity do not provide an avenue for states to approach the ICJ because it does not have automatic jurisdiction over those crimes.

South Africa alleges that Israel has committed several of these acts and that the evidence of Israeli state officials' specific intent to commit and persist in committing genocidal acts or to fail to prevent them has been significant and overt since October 2023.

South Africa alleges that Israel has committed several of these acts and that the evidence of Israeli state officials' specific intent to commit and persist in committing genocidal acts or to fail to prevent them has been significant and overt since October 2023.

for all states that are parties to the Genocide Convention because it will create legally binding obligations.

This is not the first case the Court will hear under the Genocide Convention. In 2022, Ukraine filed a case against Russia, and in 2019, the Gambia filed a case against Myanmar with respect to the Rohingya people.

That was the first time a state invoked the Court's jurisdiction to seek redress for genocidal acts committed against the citizens of another state. The Court agreed that the Gambia had standing to bring the case. Like the Gambia, South Africa basis its jurisdiction under obligations *erga omnes partes*, namely that as a party to the Convention, it can bring this case because of its community interest in preventing genocide.

The writer is an international lawyer who represented Croatia in a case against Serbia, under the Genocide Convention, before the ICJ

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"What American chip companies fear the most is the unpredictable, erratic, and volatile nature of Washington's policies regarding the technology industry in relation to China. As long as Washington's efforts to suppress and restrain China persist, the 'uncertainty' in the rules will always be present." —GLOBAL TIMES

A plan to measure

Precise data on logistics costs will help India bring them down



BIBEK DEBROY

India. This is precise in its methodology and estimation. To quote from this paper, "in the context of India, there are no official estimates for logistics costs as a percentage of GDP. However, private sector institutions and academic institutions have computed logistics costs, which are widely quoted to stress the point that India is a country with high logistics costs." In addition to the ones I mentioned earlier, NCAER cites three — Armstrong and Associates (2017), an estimate of 13 per cent of GDP; CII (2015), an estimate of 10.9 per cent of GVA; and NCAER (2019), an estimate of 8.9 per cent of GVA. Clearly, there are variations in what is being measured and how. This new NCAER report uses supply and use tables. What does it find? In 2021–22, logistics costs had an estimated range of between 7.8 per cent and 8.9 per cent. In 2014–15, they had an estimated range of between 8.3 per cent and 9.4 per cent. There has been a decline over time (with a transient increase in 2017–18 and 2018–19). It cannot be anyone's case that this new NCAER report is the last word on the subject. But it is a beginning, with a clear methodology. And two points emerge: First, logistics costs aren't as bad as they are often made out to be, and second, they have declined over time (also evident from LPI).

Logistics, good or bad, are driven by states and the commerce ministry has a LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) report based on perceptions. The 2023 version was released in December. Since states are heterogeneous in the reporting, they are divided into four groups — coastal, landlocked, north-east and UTs. States that do well are called achievers. Nomenclature matters. Thus, states that are middling aren't called average. They are called fast movers. States that are sub-par are called aspirers. Let me highlight coastal states, since 75 per cent of export cargo is estimated to originate from them. Among coastal states, the ones that do well are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The ones that lag are Goa, Odisha and West Bengal. While India's logistics performance may have improved over time, that's not true of every state. Some have slipped. Most states have a state-level logistics policy, including Goa and Odisha. West Bengal, bottom of the pecking order in the coastal category, doesn't have one. To quote from LEADS 2023, "looking ahead, the state (West Bengal) could benefit from formulating a State Logistics Master Plan and State Logistics Policy to drive efficiency improvements and facilitate investments within the logistics sector and undertake consultation with the logistics stakeholders for educating and informing them about the initiatives state is undertaking for the development and improvement of logistics sector."

A cross-country ranking of logistics performance is one thing, estimating logistics cost is another. Economic Survey 2022–23 told us, "logistics costs in India have been in the range of 14–18 per cent of GDP against the global benchmark of 8 per cent." That kind of range floats around. In 2018, there was a port logistics report by Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), which found that the cost of doing business at sea ports was around 15–16 per cent of the consignment value — there was wide variation across ports. Before the Economic Survey 2022–23, in 2020, there was a CII-Arthur D Little report on India's supply chain. To quote, "logistics costs in the Indian supply chain amount to almost USD 400 billion, or 14 per cent of GDP. A comparison with global peers shows that logistics costs amount to 8–10 per cent of GDP in the US and Europe, and 9 per cent in China. The global average is close to 8 per cent of GDP, which reveals a competitiveness gap of USD 180 billion for India... Other South Asian countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam, also have high logistics costs. These countries' costs reach 14 and 16–17 per cent of GDP, respectively." The D&B methodology was clear. In any event, it computed the cost of doing business as a percentage of the consignment value. But when it comes to logistics costs such as the percentage of GDP, since methodology isn't clearly explained, numbers seem to be plucked out of thin air.

This brings one to a recent (December 2023) report by NCAER on logistics cost in

The writer is chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A WIN FOR BILKIS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The right thing' (IE, January 10). The Supreme Court verdict quashing the orders releasing the 11 convicts is an indictment of the state government.

It is a timely reiteration of the core principles that grant power of remission — fair and reasonable and based on a set of relevant parameters. Any rational remission policy should encompass humanitarian considerations and the convicts' scope for reform without violating the rule of law or societal interests. In this case, none of the conditions for remission was met.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The right thing' (IE, January 10). The Supreme Court judgment is an exemplification of the majesty of law. It reaffirmed that due process is a sine qua non for application of the rule of law, which the SC has declared as one of the basic features of the Constitution.

The verdict is a severe indictment of the Gujarat government, when it said the state "acted in tandem and was complicit with the convicts". This charge of complicity gets further credence given the SC's earlier intervention of transferring the case to CBI and shifting the trial from Gujarat to Maharashtra for fear of evidence tampering and doubt over fair trial. The judgement is unique because Bilkis won justice not only against convicts but also the state which forgot its constitutional obligation to uphold it.

SS Paul, New Delhi

STAND WITH ARMY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A note to security planners' (IE, January 10). While the attacking side will always have the element of surprise, the defender must have the ability to absorb the shock and respond as Israel did. IDF soldiers have demonstrated great combat skills while taking on an enemy in its own backyard.

Conservative estimates suggest that in an offensive battle, Israel has killed over 8,000 Hamas terrorists and has lost no more than 210 of its soldiers. The PLA may have material advantage vis-a-vis the Indian army, but the skill level and combat experience of Indian soldiers can be an asset that must be leveraged by military leaders. Most importantly, the resolve of the political leadership and the citizens of a nation is critical in allowing an army to move forward with its plan.

Shubhada H, via email

HEALING WOUNDS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Doing justice, reinforcing trust' (IE, January 10). The SC's ruling in the Bilkis Bano case has partially redeemed the Court's faltering record in correcting the injustices of our legal processes. It has established that the idea of justice and the spirit of the law are etched in the hearts of the people and are sustained in the consciousness of the nation, which must find reflection in judicial justice. The top court's decision will hopefully heal the wound inflicted on the nation's conscience.

SS Paul, New Delhi

BRIEFLY

NEW DELHI

News for higher TRP a challenge today: Kovind

New Delhi: Former President Ram Nath Kovind Wednesday said the sensationalisation of news for high TRP has become a challenge today, and urged new journalism graduates to stay away from such "shortcuts". Addressing the 55th convocation of Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Kovind said the "role of a journalist is to communicate to the public, not take sides or support any party". "Aaj unchi TRP prapt karne ke liye, sansanikhez ka rujhan ek badi chunauban gaya hai. (Today, to achieve high TRPs, the trend of sensationalism has become a big challenge)." ENS

ODISHA

Three held over fake job racket in six states

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Police's Economic Offence Wing (EOW) Wednesday arrested three persons, including a woman from Bhubaneswar, for their alleged involvement in a pan-India fake job racket operating in six states. The accused were identified as Mohammad Sanaullah and Sakshi Jain (from Hyderabad in Telangana) and Surat Dalai (Balasore in Odisha), said officers. The EOW has initiated a suo motu inquiry in connection with an ad in a local vernacular daily. ENS

JAMMU & KASHMIR
Four cellphones seized from Kot Bhalwal jail

Jammu: The CISF seized four cellphones from the high-security Kot Bhalwal jail in Jammu, sources said Wednesday. During a search, three cellphones were found abandoned on a ground on the jail premises, with one seized from an undertrial in the jail for the past 18 months in connection with "dropping of arms and ammunition in the plains of Jammu through drones from Pakistan", said sources. This is for the second time in last week that cellphones were found in the jail. ENS

KARNATAKA
Student held in cyber scam

Bengaluru: The Bengaluru city police have nabbed Nimshad (21), a third-year student from Kerala, for his alleged involvement in Fedex courier scam, where hundreds have been defrauded by callers claiming to possess their parcels containing illegal items. Police found he was handling 58 mule accounts to launder money in the multi-crore scam. The ST has arrested 14 people including three students. ENS

Should minority not have controlling voice in institution's administration: SC on AMU status

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday wondered whether a minority should not have the controlling voice in the administration of an educational institution for it to qualify as one administered by a minority, or would the mere presence of the community members in the governing body suffice?

"What is worrying is this. The test is of management right, for the purpose of administration. We take your point that as a university governed by law, you have to induct people who are representatives of various stakeholders in the university... But this would

lead to a de minimis argument that even though the controlling voice in the administration is not that of the minority, yet, we must still treat it as being administered by that minority. For treating an educational institution as administered by a minority, should the controlling voice in the administration not be of the minority? Or could it be the position in constitutional law that, even if the controlling voice in the administration is not of the minority yet, it should be treated as a minority education institution under Article 30...?" asked CJI D Y Chandrachud, presiding over a seven-judge Constitution bench.

The CJI posed the query as Senior Advocate Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for AMU, sought to



The test is of management right, said CJI Chandrachud

underscore the Muslim character of the university.

Explaining the administrative details in the 1981 amendment to the AMU Act of 1920, Dhavan told the bench it makes clear that the AMU court shall be the supreme governing body. To a query from the CJI, he informed the bench

that the total numerical strength of the court is about 180.

The CJI then asked, "expressly by the statute, there is requirement that 32 of the 180 odd must be ordinarily they would be Muslims. Then there are 5 representatives of the All India Muslim Education Conference. So, 37 of a total of 180... If we say that the test under Article 30 is that it must be administered (by minority), would it be sufficient that the administration is given to a composite body, a large body, a multi-member body out of which say in this case 32 or 37 out of 180 are Muslims. Does that then satisfy the administration test under Article 370?"

Dhavan replied that "the presence is there and that is enough. In this day and age you have to incorporate the other people... it's inevitable... it doesn't have to be 100%... Take the vice-chancellor, they all are Muslims. Therefore presence. They have not lost control entirely to secular forces".

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the AMU Old Boys Association, urged the court to interpret the 1920 AMU Act, a pre-Constitution law in terms of Article 30. The court, which is deciding a reference made to it in February 2019, however, pointed out that there has not been any challenge to the 1920 Act. Sibal referred to how there was provision of quota for SC/STs in the Constitution, but none for Muslims, Christians etc. The hearing will resume on Thursday.

Conflict may escalate: Kukis as Biren hints at ST tag rethink

Meitei-majority Manipur govt overtly, covertly supports Meiteis: Kuki group

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, JANUARY 10

THE SUGGESTION that the government could review the Scheduled Tribes status of Kukis in Manipur has drawn strong reactions from the Kuki-Zomi organisations in the state, including a threat that attempts to "use the State machinery to target" the community will further escalate the conflict.

On Tuesday, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh had said the government may consider setting up a committee to discuss the ST status of Kukis in the state.

This was in response to queries on a representation made to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs by the Meitei leader of the Republican Party of India (Athawale), Maheshwar Thounaojam, for the exclusion of Kukis from the state's ST list, on the grounds "they are not original inhabitants of Manipur".

The representation had been forwarded by the Ministry to the state government, stating the state government's recommendation was a prerequisite to process any such proposal.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), a Kuki-Zomi organisation based in Churachandpur, lashed out at the CM for "opening a new front" in the ongoing conflict. "It is no secret that the state government

in Manipur, controlled by the majority Meitei community, overtly and covertly supports the Meiteis in the current ethnic conflict. The communal Biren Singh administration has now opened a new front by pushing for the removal of the Kuki-Zo community from India's ST list," read a statement issued by the ITLF on Wednesday.

"Any further attempts by Biren Singh to use the State machinery to target the Kuki-Zo community will only escalate the conflict, which will ultimately be detrimental to him and the state," it added.

Kuki Inpi – the apex body of Kuki tribes in Manipur – said attempts to "alter the ST status of the community" should be immediately ceased. "Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills vehemently condemns any attempt to erase the Kuki community from Scheduled Tribe status, as it blatantly violates the principles enshrined in the Constitution...," a statement issued by it said.

The immediate trigger for the current round of the Manipur conflict, which began in early May, was a High Court order submitting that the government

should consider ST status for Meiteis. This was opposed by the Kukis, who see a dilution of their privileges if the ST bracket is extended to the Meiteis, who are politically and numerically dominant in the state.

NIA nabs key accused after 13 years Conspirators still free: Kerala prof whose hand was chopped

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 10

WITH THE man who chopped his right hand on alleged blasphemy charges arrested more than 13 years later, retired college professor T J Joseph told *The Indian Express* the "real conspirators" still need to be exposed. Since the attack, Joseph has abandoned his Christian faith and is now promoting free thinking.

Now, at 28, he is father to a four-year-old boy. He has never held a steady job and keeps himself engaged by working in a warehouse run by the activist.

Four years ago, after much persuasion, he visited his village Randhipur to attend the wedding of a relative. It was his first visit to his village since the 2002 riots.

Over the years, he has also fallen out with his older brothers and relatives. "We have not stayed in touch since we parted... I don't intend to go back to the village now. I am not in touch with anyone from Randhipur, not even Bilkis... All I want is for my nightmares to end," he says.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com



Joseph still under police security. File

Ernakulam rural district. His attack was one of the cases that led to the ban on the PFI.

Joseph, who retired from Newman College at Thodupuzha in Idukki district, said, "He (Savad) is the person who had inflicted maximum injury on me. In the case diary... he is the first accused. For me, the key accused are those who made Savad attack me, those who hatched the conspiracy. Savad used an axe to chop my palm. He was also a weapon in hands of the real culprits. I don't differentiate between the roles of Savad and the weapon he used to attack me."

"The investigating agencies are yet to reach the conspirators. I don't think they will. Police, investigating agencies and the government will face pressure in such cases of extremism in which religion is involved. I know the probe into the conspiracy did not make any headway," he said.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

TN woman 'killed by family for marrying Dalit man' hours after police sent her home

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JANUARY 10

A YOUNG WOMAN from the Kallar community in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district was allegedly killed by her family for marrying a Dalit man. This incident took place on January 3.

The victim, 19-year-old Aishwarya from Neyyavidduthi in Pattukkottai, had fallen in love with Naveen, a 19-year-old Dalit man from Poovaloor village, Thanjavur. Naveen belongs to the Devendra Kula Vellar community, a Scheduled Caste, while Aishwarya hailed from the Kallar (backward) community, a dominant caste and a subgroup of Thevar community.

A senior officer said their love story began in school. "Their relationship blossomed over a year and a half, and they married on December 31, 2023, in a temple in Avarampalayam near Coimbatore. The couple's residence was a rented house in Veerapandi locality, Tirupur.

On January 2, Palladam police, acting on a missing person complaint filed by Aishwarya's father Perumal, took her from the couple's residence. Naveen followed the police team and waited outside the station. According to a complaint he filed later, around 2 pm that day Perumal and his associates reached the station and took her home within 30 minutes.

Naveen was told she agreed to go with her parents. He received the news of her death next morning. Naveen lodged a complaint on January 7, accusing Aishwarya's family of murder. Police detained six family members, including her father. According to Tirupur SP's office, she agreed to go with her parents after a negotiation with them before the police.

On Tuesday, Dr Kumar Naik, a government doctor who conducted the postmortem, had said, "The child was killed more than 36 hours earlier. He has been smothered or strangled. There are no wounds or signs of struggle."

Police sources said two empty bottles of cough syrup were recovered from the service apartment at Hotel Sol Banyan Grande in North Goa's Candolim. Seth, 39, was caught from Karnataka's Chitradurga district while allegedly trying to flee in a cab with her son's body stuffed in a bag. Two bottles – one small and one large – of cough syrup have been recovered from the service

apartment. She had carried one bottle of cough syrup in her luggage. At the hotel, she requested the receptionist to get another bottle of cough syrup," said a police officer.

On Tuesday, Dr Kumar Naik, a government doctor who conducted the postmortem, had said, "The child was killed more than 36 hours earlier. He has been smothered or strangled. There are no wounds or signs of struggle."

Alluding to this, the Goa police officer said: "The autopsy mentioned that there were no signs of struggle. We are probing if the child was given a heavy dosage of cough syrup to the child before smothering him."

Police said Seth has so far maintained she did not kill her son. "She claimed her son was asleep and she did not know how he died," said a police officer.

According to Seth, he was part of the group that was attacked by a mob in Limkheda taluka of Gujarat's Dahod district on March 3, 2002, days after the Godhra incident.

In its 2017 verdict upholding the CBI court verdict declaring the 11 guilty, the Bombay High Court said the witness's testimony had been crucial to the case.

According to Bilkis's evidence in court, her maternal aunt, the boy's mother, was also raped and killed – the court had upheld

the conviction of the 11 accused – Jaswant Nai, Kesharbai Vohania, Pradip Modhiya, Bakahabai Vohania and Rajabhai Soni.

In 2003, three snow leopards, named Rare, Morning, and Zima, gave birth to six healthy cubs and they survived. It was also a great fit. Zima gave birth to a male cub at the age of 13 years and 2 months. She is the oldest female snow leopard to become a mother in this facility. This is rare too," Basavraj S Holeyachi, director of PNHZP, told *The Indian Express* over the phone.

At the centre, care is taken to create a natural environment as well as to carefully pair the male and female snow leopards for

breeding. According to the zoo officials, a highlight of the breed-

INDIGENOUS UAV

Anadhi Defence and Aerospace Wednesday unveiled its indigenously manufactured Drishti 10 Starliner Unmanned Aerial Vehicle for the Navy. The flag-off ceremony was led by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar who was present at the event with 75 Navy personnel as the UAV left Hyderabad for Porbandar to be inducted into naval maritime operations. PTI

Now 28, youngest eyewitness in Bilkis case says: 'All I want is for my nightmares to end'

ADITI RAJA & SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 10

ON MONDAY, hours after the Supreme Court quashed the early release granted by the Gujarat government to the 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case, she said, "I smiled for the first time in over a year-and-a-half... It feels like a stone the size of a mountain has been lifted from my chest, and I can breathe again. This is what justice feels like."

But for the youngest prosecution witness in the case, Bilkis's death was a relief. She says, "I have seen their faces. They killed my Ammi... Every night, I see those images flash before my eyes... I wake up, scream and run,"

she says. His mother, then aged about 40, and sister were among the 14 killed by the mob that gangraped Bilkis. The 28-year-old is one of only three from the group who survived that day.

In the last year and a half since the 11 convicts walked free on August 15, 2022, he says he has stayed updated on the case. He says, "I actually had no hope they would return to jail again. But though the SC has asked for them to be sent to jail again, it has not made me happy. I do not think my pain can be lessened in this lifetime..."

He was about 12 when he first testified in the Special CBI court in Mumbai in June 2005. Corroborating the statement recorded by Bilkis Bano, he had identified five of the 11 accused – Jaswant Nai, Kesharbai Vohania, Pradip Modhiya, Bakahabai Vohania and Rajabhai Soni.

In its 2017 verdict upholding the CBI court verdict declaring the 11 guilty, the Bombay High Court said the witness's testimony had been crucial to the case.

According to Bilkis's evidence in court, her maternal aunt, the boy's mother, was also raped and killed – the court had upheld

that his evidence was "sufficient to generally corroborate the evidence of the prosecutrix".

Following the incident, the boy was taken from Dahod to a relief camp in Godhra, where he met his guardian, an activist who was involved in arranging legal assistance for victims of the riots. The guardian, on getting to know that the boy was the only eyewitness in the Bilkis case and an orphan (he lost his father in 1998), shifted him to a hostel in Kutch for several months, until the CBI took over the investigation.

Now, at 28, he is father to a four-year-old boy. He has never held a steady job and keeps himself engaged by working in a warehouse run by the activist.

Four years ago, after much persuasion, he visited his village Randhipur to attend the wedding of a relative. It was his first visit to his village since the 2002 riots.

Over the years, he has also fallen out with his older brothers and relatives. "We have not stayed in touch since we parted... I don't intend to go back to the village now. I am not in touch with anyone from Randhipur, not even Bilkis... All I want is for my nightmares to end," he says.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

"This is great news and an immense recognition from an international body, like the WAZA. It indicates and signifies the success of our conservation breeding programme. Darjeeling Zoo has the only conservation breeding programme for snow leopards in the entire country. Apart from snow leopards, we have conservative breeding programmes for red pandas, mountain orals and pheasants in the country. Some died of natural causes, others were transferred to other zoos in the country."

"In 2003, three snow leopards, named Rare, Morning, and Zima, gave birth to six healthy cubs and they survived. It was also a great fit. Zima gave birth to a male cub at the age of 13 years and 2 months. She is the oldest female snow leopard to become a mother in this facility. This is rare too," Basavraj S Holeyachi, director of PNHZP, told *The Indian Express* over the phone.

At the centre, care is taken to create a natural environment as well as to carefully pair the male and female snow leopards for

breeding. According to the zoo officials, a highlight of the breed-

ing programme is the use of a wide genetic pool while pairing

SENSEX: 71,657.71 ▲ 271.50 (0.38%) NIFTY: 21,618.70 ▲ 73.85 (0.34%) NIKKEI: 34,441.72 ▲ 678.54 HANG SENG: 16,097.28 ▼ 92.74 FTSE: 7,661.78 ▼ 22.18 DAX: 16,688.22 ▼ 0.14



GOLD

₹ 63,150



USD RATE

₹ 83.02



OIL

\$ 77.35



SILVER

₹ 76,300

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 9

International market data till 1900 IST

VIBRANT GUJARAT GLOBAL SUMMIT 2024

'India to be a \$5 trn economy by FY28; pushing for sunrise sectors'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
GANDHINAGAR, JANUARY 10

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday expressed confidence that India will be the third-largest economy in the world with a gross domestic product (GDP) of over \$5 trillion by 2027-28.

At the end of 2022-23, the Indian GDP stood at \$3.7 trillion, and its economy is now the fifth-largest in the world.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected India to become a \$5 trillion economy with the third-largest GDP in 2027-28, by overtaking Japan and Germany.

"It is possible that we will be the third-largest economy by 2027-28, and our GDP will cross \$5 trillion by that time. By 2047, it is a conservative estimate that we will reach at least \$30 trillion in terms of economy," Sitharaman said while addressing a seminar of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024 at Gandhinagar.

During the 'Amritkali', which will mark 100 years of India's Independence in 2047, emphasis is being given to sunrise industries, the minister said. The liberal foreign direct investment (FDI) policy of the Centre has helped attract foreign investment, with \$595 billion coming in the past nine years.

Stressing that the people of India have met with the challenges post-Covid and recovery is on a strong footing, she said Gujarat will be one of the engines of growth in India's march to become a developed economy by 2047.

Despite having 5 per cent of India's population, Gujarat contributes 8.5 per cent to the country's GDP. It is rapidly moving forward at 12% compounded annual growth rate between 2011 and 2021 against a national average of 10.4 per cent, the minister said. Between April 2000 and March 2023, in 23 years, India has attracted \$ 919 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI), 65 per cent of this has come in the last eight-nine years, Sitharaman said.

"FDI is coming in... where policies bring in greater certainty,



FM Nirmala Sitharaman speaks at a session during the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024. @nsitharamanoffc

convenience, ease of doing business, FDI flows in. Of course, disruptions of higher US Fed rate and other things can divert it elsewhere. But despite that, we have been receiving (high) inflow of FDI. It is not as if it's coming only for manufacturing, it is coming in the service sector (as well)," she said.

Sitharaman said India is on track to become an in-house producer of semiconductors, and electric vehicle adoption is happening in a big way. All of these are the result of the FDI policy being pursued by the government.

Speaking about financial inclusion, Sitharaman said 80 per cent of people have bank accounts. The number of bank account holders increased to 50 crore from 15 crore in 2014. FE

The NITI Aayog CEO noted that massive expansion in physical and digital infrastructure has

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In 2023, NITI Aayog was entrusted with the task of consolidating the 10 sectoral thematic visions into a combined vision for Viksit Bharat at the end of January.

"By most conservative estimates, India is going to be a \$30 trillion economy by 2047," Subrahmanyam said. He noted that if all states become 'viksit' (developed) then the nation can also become viksit.

The NITI Aayog CEO noted that massive expansion in physical and digital infrastructure has

taken place in India.

"India is outperforming other emerging economies," he said, adding that this is a turning point in the country's history.

In 2023, NITI Aayog was entrusted with the task of consolidating the 10 sectoral thematic visions into a combined vision for Viksit Bharat at the end of January.

The vision encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance, among others.

India, with a GDP of roughly \$3.4 trillion, is the fifth largest economy in the world, after the US, China, Japan and Germany.

The Indian economy is projected to grow by 7.3 per cent in the current fiscal, higher than 7.2 per cent in 2022-23.

Over 6,000 kg poppy straw seized; 2023 drugs haul at 70,000 kg

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

seized and one person was arrested under the relevant provisions of NDPS Act, 1985," a statement said.

In another instance, the authorities seized 1131.900 kg poppy straw in 57 plastic bags on Saturday after searching a house in village Dhakdi, Pipaliya Mandi in district Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh. The Central Bureau of Narcotics, which is responsible for supervision over licit cultivation of opium poppy, issuance of licence for narcotics drugs and investigation of cases under the NDPS Act, had earlier reported seizure of 3,025 kg of poppy straw on the Mandsaur-Nemuch road in October 2023 and 2,597 kg of seizure in Gujarat in June last year.

Poppy straw — the husk left after extraction of opium from the pods — has been seized by authorities of the Central Bureau of Narcotics mainly in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

In the latest seizure on Sunday, a vehicle was intercepted on the Udaipur-Bhilwara highway carrying 120 bags of cattle feed as cover cargo to conceal the poppy straw. "The truck was thoroughly searched at the CBN Office and a total of 267 plastic bags of Poppy Straw weighing 5057.300 kg was recovered. After completion of legal formalities, the recovered Poppy Straw along with cattle feed and trailer were

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

A solid start: Day 1 of Vibrant Gujarat Summit witnesses a slew of investments

The 10th Vibrant Gujarat Summit got off to an optimistic beginning on Wednesday, with a flurry of multi-billion investment pledges by the top guns of India Inc.



Maruti Suzuki unveiled plans to invest Rs 35,000 crore to build a second car plant and will add a new production line at an existing facility.

Toshihiro Suzuki, President, Suzuki Motor Corporation

Reliance Chairman Mukesh Ambani flaunted his group's Gujarati heritage and its over Rs 12 trillion investment in the last 10 years.

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Industries



Gautam Adani has pledged a staggering investment of Rs 2 trillion over the next five years, largely in setting up the world's largest clean energy project.

Gautam Adani, Chairman, Adani Group

Micron Technologies is looking at a colocation investment with Simmtech so that growth in the semiconductor ecosystem can be pushed.

Sanjay Mehrotra, CEO, Micron Technologies

Tata Group is planning to build a huge semiconductor fab in Gujarat's Dholera, and it will begin operations in 2024 itself, Chairman N Chandrasekaran said. He said the salt-to-software conglomerate is in the final stages of negotiations.

N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Group

Global logistics management and services firm DP World said the company has signed agreements worth Rs 25,000 crore with the government of Gujarat, as part of which it will develop new ports, terminals, and economic zones.

Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman, DP World

Compiled by ENS Economic Bureau & FE

Global computing major Nvidia said its partner Yotta is set to commission an "artificial intelligence data centre" in the GIFT City before end of March. Shankar Trivedi, Senior Vice President, Nvidia Global Field Operations

Compiled by ENS Economic Bureau & FE

NASDAQ talks to India about overseas listings

Gandhinagar: US stock exchange Nasdaq has held talks with Indian authorities on potentially allowing local Indian companies to list directly on foreign stock exchanges, a senior Nasdaq executive said.

Indian companies are currently not permitted to list their shares directly on overseas markets, but global investors and top Indian startups have been calling for this to change.

Allowing Indian companies to list abroad on exchanges like Nasdaq will give them wider access to capital, Nasdaq's Executive Vice Chairman Edward Knight said in an interview. **REUTERS**

There was a significant decline in mega-deal rounds from 42 in 2022 to 12 in 2023. File

and China (\$9.6 billion), as per the Tracxn report.

In 2023, 18 start-ups hit the bourses in India including firms like Honana Consumer Limited, the parent company of beauty and wellness brand Mamaearth, and drone manufacturer ideaForge. In both the US and China, 34 start-ups went public in 2023, as per Tracxn.

Older firms struggle

The biggest impact in the sharp decline in fundraising in 2023 was on late-stage investments, which according to the Nasscom-Zinnov report plunged significantly and were only at 29 per cent of the 2022 levels.

Over 20,000 people working at various start-ups were handed pink slips too. At the same time, a number of firms cropped up hoping to ride the ongoing generative artificial intelligence (AI) wave — another trend that could see increased traction in 2024 as AI becomes more mainstream.

How was 2023 for Indian start-ups?

Apart from registering a record low in fundraising sentiment in over half a decade, Indian start-ups also saw a decline of 72 per cent in the CAGR of funding in the last three years — signalling that the venture capital-fuelled boom that followed the pandemic has now come to a halt. According to another report by Nasscom and Zinnov, tech start-up founders reaffirmed the challenging market environment — cash flow issues, funding availability and low customer demand were cited as top challenges in 2023.

India vs the world

India

continued to be fourth on the list of countries where businesses raised money. The United States tops that list, with start-ups from there scoring \$113 billion in 2023, followed by the United Kingdom (\$17. billion).

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As per the Nasscom-Zinnov report

seed-stage funding struggled in 2023 despite massive influx and announcement of several funds in 2022. In 2023, Indian start-ups raised \$700 million

lion in seed stage funding, compared to \$1.2 billion in 2022.

Were there some sectors where start-ups fared better?

Funding in the Indian automotive tech start-ups grew by 16 per cent in 2023, resulting in a 4.5X increase in the sector's share of total funding as compared to 2022, as per the Nasscom-Zinnov report. There was a 57 per cent increase in mega-deal value in 2023 from that in 2020, with the deals primarily involving funding raised by EV manufacturers.

Start-ups in the supply chain and logistics sector experienced a rise in deal value driven by funding raised by unicorns — firms valued at over \$1 billion — or businesses that are close to being unicorns. Investors are betting on the growth of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) ecosystem, which they hope will boost the growth of start-ups in the logistics space.

Were there any promising trends?

Though 2023 was a difficult year for tech start-ups, there were some silver linings on the horizon. Tech start-ups increased their focus on business fundamentals, with nearly 60 per cent of start-up founders reporting an increase in revenue and profitability in 2023, as per the Nasscom-Zinnov report.

Over a hundred generalist AI start-ups are now active in India's start-up ecosystem, building horizontal and vertical applications.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No: Re-E-Tender No 268/2023-24/SE/PHC/CHN
Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)-PWD ROAD RESTORATION WORKS FOR KARUMALLOOR AND KUNNUKARA PANCHAYATS-ROAD RESTORATION WORKS-General Civil Work. EMD: Rs. 5,00,000/-, Tender fee: Rs. 19518. Last Date for submitting Tender: 22-01-2024 03:00:pm, Phone: 0484-2360645 Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Superintending Engineer PH Circle Kochi

KWA-JB-GL-6-2029-2023-24

भारतीय कंटेनर लिमिटेड Container Corporation of India Ltd. (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

CONCOR invites E-Tender in Single Packet System of tendering for the following work:-

Tender No. CON/AREA-III/ENG/ICD WFD/ROAD WORKS/Eoff-7537/2023-24

Name of Work Construction of WMF Road and Ancillary works i/c development of second Work entry at ICD WFD, Bengaluru

Completion Period 05 months

Earnest Money Deposit Rs. 20,170/- (Rupee Two Lakh One Thousand Seven Hundred Only)

Cost of Tender Document (Non-refundable) NIL

Tender Processing Fee (Non-refundable) Rs. 4720/- (inclusive all taxes & duties through e-payment)

Date of Sale of Tender Online | 11.01.2024 (from 15:00 hrs.) to 02.02.2024 (up to 17:00 hrs.)

Date & Time of Submission of Tender 03.02.2024 up to 17:00 hrs.

Date & Time of Opening of Tender 05.02.2024 at 15:00 hrs.

For financial eligibility criteria, experience with respect to similar nature of work, etc, please refer to detailed tender notice available on website www.concorindia.co.in, but the complete tender document can be downloaded from website www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL only. Further, Corrigendum / Addendum to this Tender, if any, will be published on website www.concorindia.co.in, www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL and Central Procurement Portal (CIPP) only. Newspaper advertisement shall not be issued for the same.

Executive Director (Projects)

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE CIRCLE, TIRUNELVELI TENDER NOTICE NO.48/2023-2024/D1/DATED:09.01.2024

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Two Cover System Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 14.02.2024 At 14.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Tirunelveli Circle for CRIDP 2022-23 (Construction of 4 T-shaped Groynes) work pertaining to Nagercoil (H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 13.01.2024 onwards in the Government website [https://tntenders.gov.in](http://tntenders.gov.in). If any Changes/ Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (H) C&M, TIRUNELVELI CIRCLE.

DIPR/171/TENDER/2024

SAVE WATER, CONSER

EXPLAINED LAW

ORGAN TRANSPLANTS: WHY DELHI HC HAS PRESCRIBED 6-8-WEEK TIMELINE

KHADIJA KHAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

DELHI HIGH Court has prescribed an ideal timeline of 6-8 weeks to complete the process of transplanting organs from living donors. In a judgment passed on January 4, Justice Prathiba M Singh said prolonged delays can cause mental and physical anguish for donors, recipients, and their families, and directed the government to ensure that timelines under The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994, and Rules, 2014 are prescribed for all steps in the process of considering organ-donation applications.

The Act of 1994

The law governs the transplantation of human organs and tissues, including donation after death. It lays down regulations for healthcare providers and hospitals, and penalties for violations.

In most cases, the Act allows living donations from close relatives — parents, siblings, children, spouses, grandparents, and grandchildren. Altruistic donations from distant relatives, in-laws, long-time friends are allowed after additional scrutiny.

Authorisation Committee

Stringent checks are in place to ensure there is no financial exchange in transplants. The Authorisation Committee, which oversees and approves procedures involving donors and recipients who are not near relatives, has a key role in the process. The approval is crucial especially in cases where donations are made for reasons of affection, attachment, or other special circumstances, to ensure ethical compliance and prevent illegal practices.

Case before Delhi HC

The court ruled on a plea filed by a re-

tired IAF officer diagnosed with kidney failure in 2017. By 2019, two hospitals had advised him to get a renal transplant. However, his application seeking approval for transplantation was rejected by the Army Hospital in Delhi due to the non-availability of a "near relative" donor in terms of Sections 2(i) and 9(1) of the 1994 Act.

Section 2(i) defines a "near relative" as a "spouse, son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, grandson or granddaughter". Section 9(1) says that without the Committee's prior approval, no organ or tissue can be removed from a donor's body before death and transplanted into a recipient unless the donor is a "near relative".

In 2020, the petitioner approached the HC seeking the transplant and/or a direction to the panel to grant approval.

In February 2021, the HC directed the Authorisation Committee to decide the petitioner's application within two weeks. In October 2021, the court was informed that the petitioner had passed away.

What the court said

The court ruled that everything from conducting interviews to processing forms and decision-making is to be done within fixed timelines, and not in an "expanded or elastic" manner. Such urgency is in fact, reflected in provisions like Rule 23(3), which requires a final decision to be taken within 24 hours of the meeting, the court said.

It suggested that after 4-6 weeks of receiving the application, the Committee can schedule interviews within 2 weeks, during which it will facilitate meetings of family members of the donors and recipients and conduct more than one interview.

The "entire process, from submission to decision, ought not to ideally exceed 6 to 8 weeks," the court said.

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EXPLAINED GLOBAL

CAUCUS SYSTEM IN US ELECTIONS

REPUBLICANS IN Iowa will be the first to vote for their presidential candidate in the 2024 elections when they attend public gatherings on Monday known as caucuses.

How do the caucuses work?

The caucus is a process by which voters select their top choice for their party's presidential nomination. It differs from a primary because it's overseen by the state party, not the state government, and does not require voting at a polling place.

Republicans will gather in small groups at a neighbourhood location, where representatives will make speeches on behalf of

their favoured candidates. Votes are tallied by secret ballot and delegates to the county convention are selected. Results are sent to the state party and announced typically within a few hours.

Why does Iowa go first?

After Democrats liberalised their candidate selection procedures after the 1968 election, Iowa was the first state to schedule its nomination contest. Candidates and the media flocked to Iowa and spent buckets of money — and the state has made sure ever since to keep its first-in-the-nation status. **REUTERS**

Classifieds

PERSONAL

It is for general information that, I Anurag Gupta S/O Kanhaiya Lal R/o Hno. 852, Subhash colony, Ballabgarh, Haryana-121004, declare that my name has been wrongly written as Anurag in my school and college documents/certificates. My actual name is Anurag Gupta, which may be amended accordingly.

I, RAMESH S/O Madan Gopal R/O House No. 871, Mahavir Dairy Street, Dabua Colony, NIT Faridabad, Haryana-121001 have changed my name from RAMESH to RAMESH KUMAR LODHI

004070350-1

I, hitherto known as JAMEELA KHATOON alias JAMILA KHATON,W/O MOHD RIZWAN,R/o/C-2/168, NEW ASHOK NAGAR, VASUNDHRA ENCLAVE,PO:VASUNDHRA ENCLAVE, DIST:EAST DELHI,DELHI-110096,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JAMEELA KHATOON.

0040707739-2

I,VIKAS KUMARS/O PRABHU DYAL,R/o HNO.10A/1-D,BLOCK,SAINKIN ENCLAVE,A TO D1-BLOCK,VIKAS-NAGAR,UTTAM-NAGAR, DELHI-110059.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VIKAS KUMAR RAI.

0040707665-1

I,Tarun,S/o-Omprikash,Add-Lakkarpur surjkund faridabad,Haryana 121009,changed my name to Tarun bhadana.

0040707736-5

I, Tanusee Halder wife of Army No-JC672154A, Sanjib Halder,Sub (Skt) Medical Category Shilpi, RO-Durga Bari Road,near Indra Murti, P.S. Madhyamgram

Kolkata, District-North 24 Parganas, West Bengal . In my husband's service record my D o B has been wrongly mentioned as 03-01-1980 instead of 02-01-1980 as in Aadhar card, Voter ID card and Pan card. It needs corrections. Objections be filled to concerned authorities within seven days.

002407318-1

I,Simridhi Malhotra,W/o Tarun Malhotra,R/o H.No.-8,Road. No.-52,West Punjab-Bagh, Delhi,have changed my name to Kanika Malhotra,for all purposes.

0040707739-3

I,Sharwan Kumar Gupta,S/o Raj Kumar Gupta,Add-67,kothi,A-6, paschim vihar,Delhi-110063, changed my name to Sharwan Kumar Gupta.

0040707665-2

I, Sanjiv Kumar,S/O-Late Gain Chand,R/o-Plot No.-138-B,Ist floor,Pratap Nagar,Hari Nagar,NEW DELHI-110064, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME SANJIV KUMAR SHARMA,for all Future purposes.

0040707743-3

I,Sanjay Kumar Kapoor,S/o Gur Dayal,R/o-H.No.-317,Ground Floor, Sector-9, Gurgaon,Haryana,have changed my name to Sanjay Kapoor,for all purposes.

0040707739-4

I,Ramniwas Saini,S/o Mange Ram,R/o U24/30,Pink Town House,DLF Phase-3, Gurugram(Haryana)-122010,have changed my name to Ram Niwas.

0040707735-5

I,Ramesh Kumar Bansal S/o Hari Khan Bansal,R/o-73,Agroha Kunj, Sector-13,Rohini,Delhi-110085,changed my name to Ramesh Bansal

0040707736-6

I, RANI W/O HARJINDER SINGH R/O C-132,PVT-TEERA GARHI-CAMP,SHAKUR BASTI-DEPOT,DELHI-110056.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO Inderjeet Rani.

0040707736-3

I,Rakesh,S/O-Shri Ram Kumar,R/o O-92,Krishna Vihar,Delhi-110086,have changed my name to Rakesh Vashist.

0040707743-1

I, Sarawathy Narayan,D/O Ravi Narayan R/o-H-006,Yamuna-Apartment Alaknanda P.S.Chitranganj, New Delhi-110019,have changed my name to Sarawathy Ravi Narayan,for all purposes.

0040707735-8

I,NUPUR SHARDA ARORA,W/O PRINCE ARORA,R/o FLAT.NO.2B-022,GC GRAND,VAIBHAV-KHAND,INDIRAPURAM, GHAZIABAD,UTTAR PRADESH-201014,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME NUPUR ARORA,FOR ALL,FUTURE PURPOSES.

0040707735-3

This is to notify that I, Debosmita Bhattacharya D/O Dulal Chandra Bhattacharya R/O Flat 6/8, Tower B, Himalaya Pride, Techzone 4, Greater Noida West, UP -201306, have changed my name from Debosmita Meshram to Debosmita Bhattacharya for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 05.1.2024 sworn before notary Ren Bala, Noida

0040707735-11

I,Mamta Deswal,D/o,Surender Deshal,R/o-Flat.No.1070,2nd,Floor,Pocket-Gh-4,Upanv Apartment,Sector-28,Rohini,Shahbad,Dairy,Badli Samaipur,North-West,Delhi-110042,have changed my name to Mamta Choudhary.Mamta Choudhary and Mamta Deswal is one and the same-person.

0040707736-8

I,Leela Devi,W/o Atma Singh Bansal,R/o C-116,Old DLF Colony,Near Sector-14, Gurgaon(Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Leela Bansal.

0040707739-8

I,KRITI,D/O,RAJENDER KUMAR,HOUSE NO-18-A,NEAR-SHIV MANDIR EAST INDIA COLONY,VTC SECTOR-22,FARIDABAD HARYANA-121005,changed my name to KIRITI RANI, for all,future purposes.

0040707735-2

I,JASBEER KAUR,W/o S.JAGJIT SINGH,R/o H.No.216-C,Near-bus stand,mianwali Colony, Gurugram (Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Jasbir Kaur.

0040707735-7

I,ILMA W/O AMEZ KHAN, R/O.H-NO.1224, GALI SURKH POSHAN CHURI WALAN JAMA MASJID,DELHI-6,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ILMA KHAN.

0040707735-1

I,VIKAS KUMARS/O PRABHU DYAL,R/o HNO.10A/1-D,BLOCK,SAINKIN ENCLAVE,A TO D1-BLOCK,VIKAS-NAGAR,UTTAM-NAGAR, DELHI-110059.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VIKAS KUMAR RAI.

0040707665-1

I,Harshita Sharma,D/o-Suresh Sharma,R/o-K-231,JJ Colony,Wazirpur,Delhi-110052,My Mother,name is written Kamles in my,Passport,Educational Certificates & Aadhaar.Kamles,Kamlesh & Kamlesh Sharma is one and the same person.

0040707754-6

I,Harpreet kaur W/o Manmeet Singh R/o KP/292,Maurya enclave,Pitampura-Delhi-110034,have changed my name from Harpreet kaur to Harpreet kaur Arora for all future,purposes.

0040707739-6

I,Harpreet Kour Labana,W/o Harneet Singh R/o C-1/4,A,Himgiri Enclave,Nilothi Extn. Nilothi Delhi-110041,have changed my name to Harpreet Kaur.

0040707739-1

I,Harpreet Kour Labana,W/o Parveen Kumar R/o Late Balbir Singh R/o H.No.1989, Sector-3, Rohtak, Haryana,have lost all my Original documents of New Plot No.D/060, Old Plot No. D-075, area 239 Sq.Yds., Parwan City, Rohtak, Haryana. Finders may contact at above address.

0040707655-3

I,Sangeeta Bhowmik W/o Sh. Dipankar Madhusudhan Bhowmik R/o D-2/25, AIIMS Campus, Ansari Nagar West, New Delhi-110029, have changed my name to SANGEETA DIPANKAR BHOWMIK for all purposes.

0040707650-1

I,SHARISHA SHARMA,D/O-SURESH SHARMA,R/O-K-231,JJ COLONY,WAZIRPUR,DELHI-110052,MY FATHER NAME IS WRITTEN SURESH KUMAR IN MY,AADHAR & SURESH SHARMA IN MY,EDUCATIONAL CERTIFICATES.SURESH KUMAR & SURESH SHARMA IS ONE AND THE SAME PERSON.

0040707754-5

In LIC Policy.number.122501445 My,husband's name is registered as Shivji Ravidas and in the Aadhar card it is Shivaji Prasad,both the names belong to the same person,which is Correct.Kanti Devi, wife Late.Shivaji Prasad,Resident-267,Sangam Vihar-1,Loni,Ghaziabad.

0040707653-1

I,Simridhi Malhotra,W/o Tarun Malhotra,R/o H.No.-8,Road. No.-52,West Punjab-Bagh, Delhi,have changed my name to Kanika Malhotra,for all purposes.

0040707739-3

I,Sharwan Kumar Gupta,S/o Raj Kumar Gupta,Add-67,kothi,A-6, paschim vihar,Delhi-110063, changed my name to Sharwan Kumar Gupta.

0040707665-2

I, Sanjiv Kumar,S/O-Late Gain Chand,R/o-Plot No.-138-B,Ist floor,Pratap Nagar,Hari Nagar,NEW DELHI-110064, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME SANJIV KUMAR SHARMA,for all Future purposes.

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0040707743-3

I,Sharmistha Saini,S/o Mange Ram,R/o U24/30,Pink Town House,DLF Phase-3, Gurugram(Haryana)-122010,have changed my name to Ram Niwas.

0040707735-5

I,Ramesh Kumar Bansal S/o Hari Khan Bansal,R/o-73,Agroha Kunj, Sector-13,Rohini,Delhi-110085,changed my name to Ramesh Bansal

0040707736-6

I, RANI W/O HARJINDER SINGH R/O C-132,PVT-TEERA GARHI-CAMP,SHAKUR BASTI-DEPOT,DELHI-110056.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME NUPUR ARORA,FOR ALL,FUTURE PURPOSES.

0040707735-3

This is to notify that I, Debosmita Bhattacharya D/O Dulal Chandra Bhattacharya R/O Flat 6/8, Tower B, Himalaya Pride, Techzone 4, Greater Noida West, UP -201306, have changed my name from Debosmita Meshram to Debosmita Bhattacharya for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 05.1.2024 sworn before notary Ren Bala, Noida

0040707735-3

I,ASHOK KUMAR ALIAS ASHOK KUMAR SAROHA S/O DAYA CHAND SAROHA R/o H.NO. 124-A, KIRTI NAGAR, RAGHU NATH MANDIR WALI GALLI, JHARSA ROAD, SECTOR-15, PART-I, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001,have changed my name to ASHOK KUMAR SAROHA.

0040707735-1

I,Vivek Tiwari S/o Mr. Dilip Tiwari R/o 4/9, Cassia Road, Shipra Sun City, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201014 have changed my son's name from Vedik to Vivek Tiwari for all future purposes.

0040707714-2

I,ASHOK KUMAR ALIAS ASHOK KUMAR SAROHA S/O DAYA CHAND SAROHA R/o H.NO. 124-A, KIRTI NAGAR, RAGHU NATH MANDIR WALI GALLI, JHARSA ROAD, SECTOR-15, PART-I, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001,have changed my name to ASHOK KUMAR SAROHA.

004070882633-1

I, Vipin S/o Trilok Singh R/o 446, DDA LIG Flats, Sanjay Enclave, Delhi-110033, have changed my minor daughter's name from Guneet aged 6 years to Laisha Sahota forever.

I Aparna D/o Sh. Rakesh Sharma R/o 5034, 5th Floor, Tower-2, E-3, GH-7, Crossings Republic, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201009, have changed my name to Aparna Sharma for all purposes.

0040707641-1

I,Vinod Kumar Thapar S/o Barbans, R/o Flat No.107, Old DLF Colony,Near Sector-14, Gurgaon(Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Leela Bansal.

004070882541-1

I,Vineet's Aggarwal, R/o-10/15, Model Town-2, Delhi-110009, have changed my Minor child, aged 17yrs, name from Shaurya Varadarajan Aggarwal to Shaurya Varadarajan Aggarwal

0040707735-6

I,Ajit Singh Khurana S/o Agya Singh R/o-V-243, 1st-floor, Rajaouri Garden, Delhi-110021,have changed my name to Ajit Singh Aggarwal

004070882528-1

I,Tarun Kumar Gupta S/o Sh. Amba Prasad Gupta R/o 2/72, Roop Nagar, North Delhi-110007 have changed my name from Tarun Kumar to Tarun Kumar Gupta for all purpose in future.

004070882570-1

I,Geeta W/o Lokendra Pal Singh,R/o Flat-No.-604, Tower-P, BPTP Spacio,in Front of Suncity School,Sector-37D,Gurgaon(Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Geeta Bhagat.

0040707655-2

I,Ajit Singh Khurana S/o Agya Singh R/o-V-243, 1st-floor, Rajaouri Garden, Delhi-110021,have changed my name to Ajit Singh Aggarwal

004070882570-1

I,Sunita Chauhan W/o Jitendra Singh Chouhan R/o B-196, Flat No.17, 4th Floor, Chattarpur Enclave Phase-2 Chhattarpur Delhi-110074 have changed my name to Jasbir Kaur.

Date : 08/01/2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

U.P.Jal Nigam (Urban) invites E-bids for execution of "Survey, Soil investigation, Design, Supply of all materials, T&P, etc. required for completion 24x7 Water Supply Scheme in selected wards of 10 towns (1. Ward-25 (Partial), Modipone Colony and Kaveri Enclave), Modi Nagar, Distt. Ghaziabad, 2. Kavirajan (Operational Zone-1), Distt. Ghaziabad, 3. Ward No.-18, NPP Baraut, Distt. Baghpat, 4. Ward-03 (Yamuna Puram), Distt. Bulandshahar, 5. Ward-22, NPP Khurja, Distt. Bulandshahar, 6. Ward-20 (Parital of Ramgarhi and Rafig Nagar), Distt. Hapur, 7. Ward-32, Distt. Meerut, 8. Ward-30, Distt. Muzaffarnagar, 9. Ward-8, Distt. Shamli, 10. Ward-21, Partially 37 & 39, Distt. Saharanpur) on TURNKEY basis" are invited in two bid system on percentage basis from eligible, reputed and experienced bidder. E-bid documents will be available on U.P. Govt e-procurement portal <http://etender.up.nic.in> and U.P. J.N. (Urban) website <http://www.jn.uspsc.gov.in> for download from dated 10.01.2024 from 17:00 hrs. Pre-bid meeting will be held on dated 19.01.2024 at 11:00 Hrs. In signed-off E-Bids can be submitted till 08.02.2024 up to 17:00 Hrs. and technical bid shall be opened on 09.02.2024 at 15:00 Hrs. in the office of The Superintending Engineer, Construction Circle, U.P. Jal Nigam (Urban), Meerut in presence of contractor or their authorized representative. E-tender Cost is Rs. 20,00,000 + GST @18% for tender. Details are available on U.P. Govt. e-procurement portal <http://etender.up.nic.in> & U.P.J.N. website <http://www.jn.uspsc.gov.in>.

33-DG/24

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY G2C

(Survey & Construction)

E-Tender Notice

By Chief Engineer (Construction)-H, North-Western Railway, Jodhpur through for and on behalf of the President of India, are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical Tr.D) Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390004, for the following works, Sr. No. 1 Tender No. & Name of Work: EL/TRD/Tender/23-24/22 R Alteration in existing OHE due to provision of Road Under Bridge (RUB) and provision of number plates on Drop Arm (DA/Boom) of Portal/ITC in Surat - Gerapur, Vadodara -Godhra and Vadodara - Dabhol section of Vadodara division. Approximate cost of the work (in ₹) : 1,26,31,886/- Bid Security (In ₹) : 2,13,200/- Cost of Tender document and completion period : Completion period 12 months. Tender scheduled on : Tender closing date 09.02.2024 and time of Closing at 15.00 hrs. on the same date. Web page particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen & address of the office and clarification: Website @ www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical Tr.D) Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390004. (EL/TRD/Tender/23-24/22 R dt. 05/01/2024) 297

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11/2024

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11/2024

NORTHERN RAILWAY

INVITATION OF TENDERS THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Tender Notice No. Inj. Medicines Dated : 10.01.2024 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. Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
1 82243472	CAPD Fluid Bag 7.5% per 2 Litre with Mini Cap.	3620 Nos.	19.02.2024
2 82241599	Erythropoietin Pegylated Human Recombinant Inj. 100mcg	750 Nos.	19.02.2024
3 82244100	Tab/Cap. Ibrutinib 140mg	2670 Nos.	19.02.2024

NOTE:- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

107/24

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

ई-ऑक्शन आमंत्रित करने की सूचना

No. Comm/E-Auction/2023/77 Dt. 08.01.2024

उक्त के सन्दर्भ में विभिन्न गाड़ियों के बीपीयू लोजिंग के लिए हेतु ई-ऑक्शन आमंत्रित की गई है। कैटलॉग ईREPS वेबसाइट पर प्रकाशित किए जा रहे हैं।

1. कार्य का नाम : (1) जोधपुर मंडल से सचालित गाड़ियों के बीपीयू में स्थान लीजने के लिए वार्षिक अमंत्रित की जाती है।
2. कार्य की अवधि : (1) बीपीयू – 2 वर्ष
3. लॉट के ई-ऑक्शन प्रारम्भ की तिथि एवं समय : (1) PVUs : (1) Parcel-JU-61 दिनांक 23.01.2024 को 11.00 बजे से
4. वेबसाइट जहाँ से लॉट वाईज ई-ऑक्शन के संबंध में जानकारी प्राप्त की जा सकती है : www.ireps.gov.in 30-DG/24

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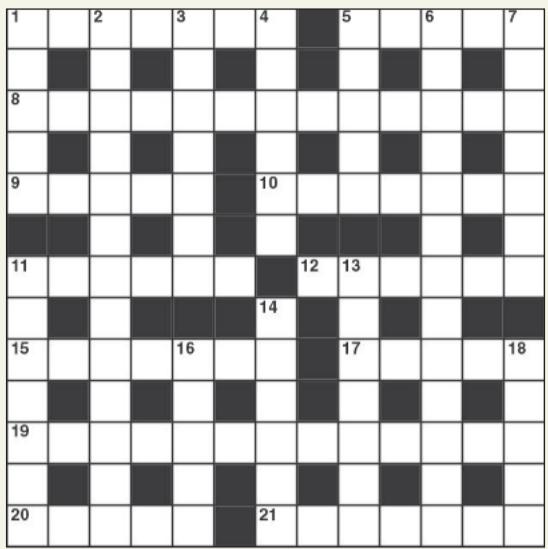
No. Comm/E-Auction/2023/77 Dt. 08.01.2024

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<

CROSSWORD 5258



ACROSS

- 1 Book in reverse order (7)
5 Wild revel in the bar (5)
8 Today's charges for electricity (7,6)
9 Gets level; nonetheless loses nothing (5)
10 Raw material used in pig production (4,3)
11 Stick around at home like a dog (6)
12 Sweater creates thirst (1-5)
15 Met pup perhaps looking rough (7)
17 Presents one's natural talents (5)
19 Poser for the card player? (6,7)
20 Gloom doctor has a listener (5)
21 How time flies (7)

DOWN

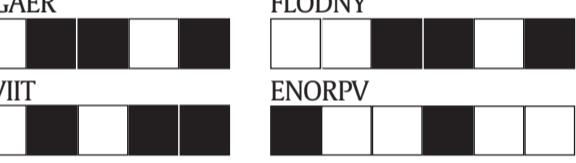
- 1 A fringe gathering of lacemakers (5)
2 It's responsible for cuts in the theatre (8,5)
3 Winds up with part of a film on crime (5,2)
4 Involve in late changes (6)
5 In popular government it's noted for its slowness (5)
6 Girl comes a cropper in Zambia (8,5)
7 A particular deference (7)
11 Curt ode about loved one (7)
13 Foreign lady has dropped in after marriage (7)
14 New plates may be made of metal (6)
16 Manufacturer right below form (5)
18 Superfluous oil wells (5)

Solutions Crossword 5257 Across: 1 Means, 8 Belittle, 9 Punts, 10 Literate, 11 Capon, 12 Ale, 16 Repaid, 17 Leaves, 18 Aim, 23 Level, 24 Wardress, 25 Serve, 26 Thinking, 27 Flare Down; 2 Educated, 3 Not so bad, 4 Serial, 5 Fired, 6 Atlas, 7 Sewer, 12 Ada, 13 Elm, 14 Farewell, 15 Receiver, 19 Insane, 20 Swath, 21 Trait, 22 Broke

JUMBLED WORDS

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

Pampered ___ is a better thing perhaps than starved ___ - Joanna Baillie (6,5)



-jammed Baillie
Pampered ___ is a better thing perhaps than starved ___
SOLUTION: BARCIE, VINTNDY, PROVEN, SWATH

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 5438

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions

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

Difficulty Level

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5437

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

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
1.	82241029	CETUXIMAB INJ. 500 MG	150 Nos.	05.02.2024

NOTE :- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS websites i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained. Tender Notice No. Inj. Medicines Date:- 08.01.2024 109/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Tamil Nadu Urban Finance And Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited

(A Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking)
No.490/1-2, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai - 600 035. Phone No.: 044- 2432 9800, 2432 9801, Fax: 044- 24350814. E-mail: projsec.tufidco@tn.gov.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Lr.No.TUFIDCO/AMRUT2.0/160/M (M)/2021 Date: 11.01.2024

Invitation of Bids for

Selection of Transaction Advisor Cum Merchant Banker (TA cum MB) for Providing Technical Assistance and fund mobilization for Selected Urban Local bodies through Municipal Bonds and Pooled Municipal Bonds in Tamil Nadu

TUFIDCO invites bid from eligible and willing firms for 'Selection of Transaction Advisor Cum Merchant Banker (TA cum MB)' to provide Technical Assistance and fund mobilization for Selected Urban Local bodies through Municipal Bonds and Pooled Municipal Bonds in Tamil Nadu. The bid document for the above assignments may be downloaded free of cost from the websites: <http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in>, www.tufidco.in from 12.01.2024 onwards.

Last date and time for submission of bids: 24.01.2024 - 3:00 pm

Any clarification in this regard may be obtained from Dr.R.Murugan, General Manager (Projects), TUFIDCO, Chennai. Contact No:044-24329800, 24329801.

Managing Director TUFIDCO

DIPR/183/Tender/2024

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

Office of the Executive Engineer (Mahadevpura-Lakes) Room No.306, 3rd Floor, Annex-3 Building, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Head office, N.R.Square, Bengaluru-560 002

Tender No: EE/Mahadevpura-Lakes/TN-08/2023-24 Date: 10.01.2024

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

(TENDER NOTIFICATION)

(Through GoK KPP Portal <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> only)

Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the work mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Providing Chain Link Fencing to Lakes in K.R.Puram Assembly Constituency	150.00	2,25,00,000

Calendar of events: 1) Bid documents can be downloaded from 12-01-2024. 2) Pre bid meeting will be held on 22-01-2024 at 15.00 hours. 3) Tenders must be submitted on or before 16.00 hours on 29-01-2024. 4) Technical Bids will be opened on 30-01-2024 at 16.30 hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Mahadevpura-Lakes)

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

It is time to look outwards and review your place in the world. It's a moment to check up on whether your career path is working well, if you have one. But, also, you will be reminded of the importance of community, and the pleasure of helping strangers.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

There's bound to be a series of secret comings and goings today, and you may hear some confidential news. However, you'll find it difficult to keep anything to yourself for long. Happily, a threatened financial loss should fail to materialise, much to your relief.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

The current planetary picture is throwing your financial situation into sharp relief, possibly in a manner which is not to your liking. If you play your cards right, gains are as likely as losses. It's all a matter of striking a sensible balance.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Tread warily if important issues are at stake career-wise, as colleagues could be in an unpredictable mood. Events at the end of the week could transform your feelings towards a particular person. And that will, in turn, open a window of opportunity elsewhere.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Have you considered the implications of current domestic aspirations, perhaps the chance that you could be about to move to bigger or more comfortable accommodation? Even if difficulties crop up in the meantime, you can expect the tide to turn in your favour before long.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

The planets are generally helpful but, if taking a trip to check directions before leaving home, you're in an impulsive mood and even well-laid domestic plans will be affected by unexpected and dramatic developments, with startling results.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

If you're looking for work or seeking promotion in your present job, then play your cards with confidence and care. There's much to be gained if you make the right moves. Look for ways to ease chores at home, for you weren't born to be a domestic drudge.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Today's planetary alignment continues the trend towards greater optimism just as you had begun to give up hope. Prosperous times are on the way, even if partners sometimes seem like they are not prepared to contribute.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

This week's planetary movements signify a positive turning-point in a series of changes, both personal and professional, that have been in the melting pot for some time. Expect dramatic events over the next fortnight, and over the next three months.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Now that people are recognising your finer qualities, you may be called upon to perform a charitable act. Confidential plans may be connected with overseas interests, and a legal hitch is likely. Events may, however, work in your favour, in spite of current indications.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Your personal economic climate takes an upward swing over the next few days, in spite of general unpromising conditions, but you should be wary of making any commitments you can't fulfil. At work, you may be responsible for newcomers, so treat less experienced people kindly.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

You're about to embark on a new cycle, one which will have critical implications for your financial situation. The current period could mark a significant point in a number of professional developments and close relationships. The worst should be over by now.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

If you're looking for work or seeking promotion in your present job, then play your cards with confidence and care. There's much to be gained if you make the right moves. Look for ways to ease chores at home, for you weren't born to be a domestic drudge.

Rashid Khan ruled out from T20 series with back injury

PRATYUSH RAJ
JANUARY 10

AFGHANISTAN WILL be without their premier leg-spinner Rashid Khan for the three-match T20 series against India, starting from Wednesday in Mohali.

Rashid is yet to recover from a back surgery that had him miss Afghanistan's T20I series in the UAE. He was also ruled out from the Big Bash League (BBL).

"He is not totally fit, but he is travelling with us. He is doing his rehab, and we are hoping that he gets fit as soon as possible. We will miss him in this series," Afghanistan captain Ibrahim Zadran told the reporters.

However, Zadran is confident that they still have quality spinners in their ranks who can trouble the star-studded Indian batting line-up.

"Without Rashid, we will struggle as his experience is invaluable, but even in his absence, we have got quality spinners in Mujeeb (Ur Rahman), Nabi (Mohammad), Noor (Ahmed), and Qais (Ahmad). All of them have played a lot of cricket, and we have trust in them," he said.

Batting a worry

Zadran admitted that they are not worried about the bowling, but it is the batting, where they are looking to be more aggressive.

"We have quality spinners and seamers, but we need to improve our batting skills; we will try to be more aggressive in that area," he said.

Zadran's strike rate in the 27 matches he has played is only 103.18. He generally plays the role of sheet anchor, with his opening partner Rahmanullah Gurbaz being the aggressor. The young Afghan skipper said his role in the team is to play through the innings.

"T20 is different from the ODIs and Test cricket. My role in the team is to play through the innings. I am doing the anchor role. Indeed, I am working to improve my strike rate, but it all depends upon the circumstances because you can't always play the fancy shots," he said.

Playing for Afghan people

Afghanistan has punched above their weight in the recently-concluded ODI World Cup. The Afghans defeated the former champions England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The stunning campaign of players from a war-weary nation had captured the cricketing world's attention, and gave immense joy to Afghan fans across the globe.

"We have played wonderful cricket in the World Cup. The Afghan people worldwide are expecting us to do well," he said.

On post-World Cup scenes in Kabul, the skipper said: "I was there for only one day, but what I have heard from my teammates is that the people were really happy and were celebrating on the streets. Cricket is the only hope in our country, which gives happiness to our people. Every time we enter the field, we try to play for the happiness of our people."

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Rohit and Kohli are back but young opener with strike rate of 158.69 during field restrictions must be in playing XI

PRATYUSH RAJ
MOHALI, JANUARY 10

WHEN ROHIT Sharma and Virat Kohli were brought back into the T20 fold for the Afghanistan series, there was this inevitable question as to where they would bat. With Kohli unavailable for Thursday's T20I because of personal reasons, India are set to open with Rohit and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

"As of now, we will certainly be opening with Rohit and Jaiswal," coach Rahul Dravid said, ahead of the first T20I against Afghanistan. "But when you have a squad, you have to have that flexibility to do whatever is required if that is in the best interest of the team and gives us the best chance to succeed."

But going forward, India head coach hasn't ruled out the possibility of Rohit and Kohli partnering at the top, a move that totally deviates from the blueprint they have followed for the past 14 months. It also puts a question mark over the place of Jaiswal in the XI, who has by far been their best opening batsman in T20s.

Dravid elaborated where India stand in terms of the openers, especially when Kohli joins the team in Indore. "Nothing is closed (Kohli opening with Rohit). We have no doubt that the kind of ability and skill sets players like Rohit and Kohli possess, they will be able to find answers against different kinds of bowling," said Dravid.

If India do put this plan to work, they will once again be without enough ammunition at the top. Sans an X-factor batsman in the top three, the batting powerplay was one of the problematic areas for India in successive T20 World Cups.

It is with this aspect in mind that India, post the last T20 World Cup debacle in Australia, adopted a more aggressive, bolder approach by employing Jaiswal at the top. It is a move that has not just worked but has also put less pressure on the middle-order. Now, if India partner Rohit and Kohli at the top, they may have to compromise on this aspect.

In the coming days, India have a huge decision to make as to who among Rohit, Kohli and

Having chosen to invest in Yashasvi Jaiswal, who fits perfectly into the new batting blueprint, that the selectors have brought back Rohit and Virat seems to show a lack of vision and clarity so close to a World Cup.

will be without a left-hander at the top. Apart from making the most out of the fielding restrictions, Jaiswal has also shown he can also manipulate the field easily and find the gaps once the powerplay is over.

In the last T20I they played against South Africa, despite losing Gill and Tilak Varma cheaply, Jaiswal ensured India ended up with 62/2 in the powerplay. In the first T20Is against Australia that was played just after the ODI World Cup, chasing 209, India got home with one ball to spare.

Although it was Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav and then Rinku Singh in the backend who played a pivotal role in India's win, the kick-start was given by Jaiswal with his blazing 8-ball 21 at the top. In the second match of the same series, while batting first, Jaiswal scored fifty (53 runs in 25 balls), with India scoring 77 for 1 inside the powerplay.

Since the next T20 World Cup will be played in the Caribbean and the USA, let's go back to India's tour of the West Indies in July. Playing only his second match, Jaiswal smoked an unbeaten 84 off 51 balls as India chased down the target of 179 runs in 17 overs.

In IPL 2023, Jaiswal scored 625 runs in 14 innings. It was the most by an uncapped Indian player in an IPL season, bettering Ishan Kishan's 516 runs in 2020. Jaiswal's tally is also the most for uncapped batsmen overall, as he pipped Shaun Marsh's 616 runs in the inaugural edition. During the season, he scored one century and five fifties, including one where he took only 13 balls, the fastest in the history of the IPL.

The sample size of Jaiswal's batting must be significantly less when one compares it with the likes of Rohit and Kohli, but Jaiswal certainly has that impact that the Indian cricket team has been lacking at the top order since the retirement of Virender Sehwag.



In 14 innings, Yashasvi Jaiswal has scored 292 runs in the powerplay at a strike-rate of 158.69. PTI

Shubman Gill misses out if they are keen on playing Jaiswal.

So on Thursday, the stakes are high for Jaiswal, who will get another opportunity to remind India what he is capable of. Unlike Rohit and Gill, Jaiswal has better returns in the powerplay and is single-handedly responsible for putting the opposition under pressure from the word go in recent times. Sample these numbers: In 13 innings, Gill's strike rate in the powerplays is only 114.61. In 109 innings, Rohit's strike rate in the first six overs is 134.24, and Kohli's is 116.75.

But in 14 innings, Jaiswal has scored 292 runs in the powerplay at a strike-rate of 158.69. And India has never lost in eight games, where he has crossed the 20-run mark. Out of those eight matches, India has scored 50 or more six times in the powerplay, with Jaiswal himself scoring a fifty once.

When a top-order batsman gives such a start in the powerplay, nearly half the battle is won with the bat, and it only allows the middle-order to play with much more freedom without worrying about run-rate. The brand of T20 cricket that the Indian team has been aspiring to master for the past couple of years comes naturally to Jaiswal who is capable of providing the knockout punch in the first six overs.

Aggressive approach

One significant change that came with India's aggressive approach was they believed 200-plus totals should be the norm when batting first. For such a module to work, it is essential for India to bat in the top gear from first over till the last as against pressing the accelerator only in the last five overs. The same holds true when they are chasing big totals as well. For India to go all the way in the T20 World Cup, they cannot afford to have any weak links.

However, should they go in with Rohit, Gill and Kohli — who are anchor material in T20s — as their top three, they will be short on firepower and will be without a left-hander at the top. Apart from making the most out of the fielding restrictions, Jaiswal has also shown he can also manipulate the field easily and find the gaps once the powerplay is over.

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Dravid kept the door open for the possibility that Virat and Rohit could also be tried as an opening pair. "Nothing is closed (Kohli opening with Rohit). We have no doubt that the kind of ability and skill sets players like Rohit and Kohli possess, they will be able to find answers against different kinds of bowlers.

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With Dravid locking Jaiswal and Rohit as first-choice openers, which means the IPL's leading run-getter Shubman Gill will bat at No. 3 in Kohli's absence and might have to warm the bench when the senior returns for Indore and Bengaluru games.

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Osaka gets ready to make her Grand Slam return

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JANUARY 10

SMALLER THINGS are getting Naomi Osaka's attention now that she's preparing for her Grand Slam comeback.

She's focusing on being more in the moment. More patient. More conscious of who may be watching her play her first major since 2022, and what kind of impression she'll leave.

The first 15-day Australian Open, set to start Sunday morning (Saturday night in the U.S. ET), has been hyped as the tournament of comebacks. And Osaka has top billing among the three former No. 1-ranked, former Australian Open champions returning to Melbourne Park for their first time as moms.

The attention on that returning trio — Osaka, Angelique Kerber and Caroline Wozniacki — intensified after another prominent storyline fizzled out when Rafael Nadal's attempted comeback from a year-long injury layoff lasted three matches.

The 22-time major winner has a small tear in a muscle near his surgically repaired hip and flew home, leaving Novak Djokovic as the only remaining member of the so-called Big Three.

Osaka competed for the first time in more than a year last week; she became a mother in July when her daughter, Shai, was born.

The four-time major winner went 1-1 in Brisbane and found herself engaging more with other players, and more eager to acknowledge fans.

"A part of me felt like Shai was watching me," she said. "I wanted to do my best for her. Also, when I was signing autographs, I was more aware of kids. I see them differently now because now I'm a mom, too, and I can picture Shai being that age. Yeah, I think while I'm playing, I'm aware of it in the sense that I want to be a good role model for my daughter." The 26-year-old Osaka has a Japanese mother and a Haitian father. She was born in Japan and grew up in the U.S. With endorsements and prize money, she's one of the wealthiest athletes in women's sports.

In the past, she's felt enormous pressure. Osaka was open about her issues with depression and anxiety when she withdrew from the French Open in 2021. She later took extended breaks from the game to protect her mental health.

She didn't play elite-level tennis at all last year, but realized she really did miss it. "Becoming a mom changed my mindset a lot," she said. "I think I'm a lot more open-minded, a lot more patient. Also, I feel a lot stronger physically, but I think Shai definitely helped me with the way I view things." Osaka won her second U.S. Open title in 2020 and her second Australian Open title in 2021. Not long after, she said, "I closed myself off a lot." "I don't think that was quite fair... When people give me positivity and joy, I feel like it's fair to return it."

In Brisbane, Osaka didn't wear headphones around the tennis venue, a choice she described as "character development!" "I feel like I'm more confident with who I am as a person," she said. "Now I find myself interacting with people." Kerber, who had her Grand Slam breakthrough in Australia in 2016, withdrew from the 2022 U.S. Open because she was pregnant. Her daughter, Liana, was born in February. "For me to start my comeback like this, I mean, it couldn't be better, to be honest," she said. "It was a completely cold start for me. I had no idea where I am." One of her four losses was to top-ranked Iga Swiatek, one of the power players dominating the women's game.

Aman starts new year on right foot

The 20-year-old wrestler overcomes early jitters to clinch gold in 57kg category at UWW Ranking Series

MIHIR VASAVDA
JANUARY 10

FOR MONTHS on, Indian wrestling's biggest prodigy, Aman Sehrawat, had to suffer a snippy taunt at his akhara — dheela.

It had nothing to do with his relaxed demeanour. Rather, that was how Sehrawat's coaches described — at times sarcastically, sometimes in a caustic way but always out of frustration — his wrestling style in the opening few exchanges of a bout. The barb would have perhaps rung in his ears on Wednesday.

While he went on to win the 57kg title at the UWW Ranking Series in Zagreb, beating China's Wanhai Zou 10-0 in the gold medal bout, Sehrawat was a little slow off the blocks earlier in the day in the opening round.

In his first bout of the year, the 20-year-old, allowed Turkey's M Karavus a four-point takedown within the opening 10 seconds of the Ranking Series tournament in Zagreb.

That move seemed to have woken up Sehrawat as it was the only time Sehrawat conceded points in the tournament. Quick and aggressive, Sehrawat steamrolled his opponents, including Karavus against whom the Indian took 10 straight points, to begin the Olympic year with a title.

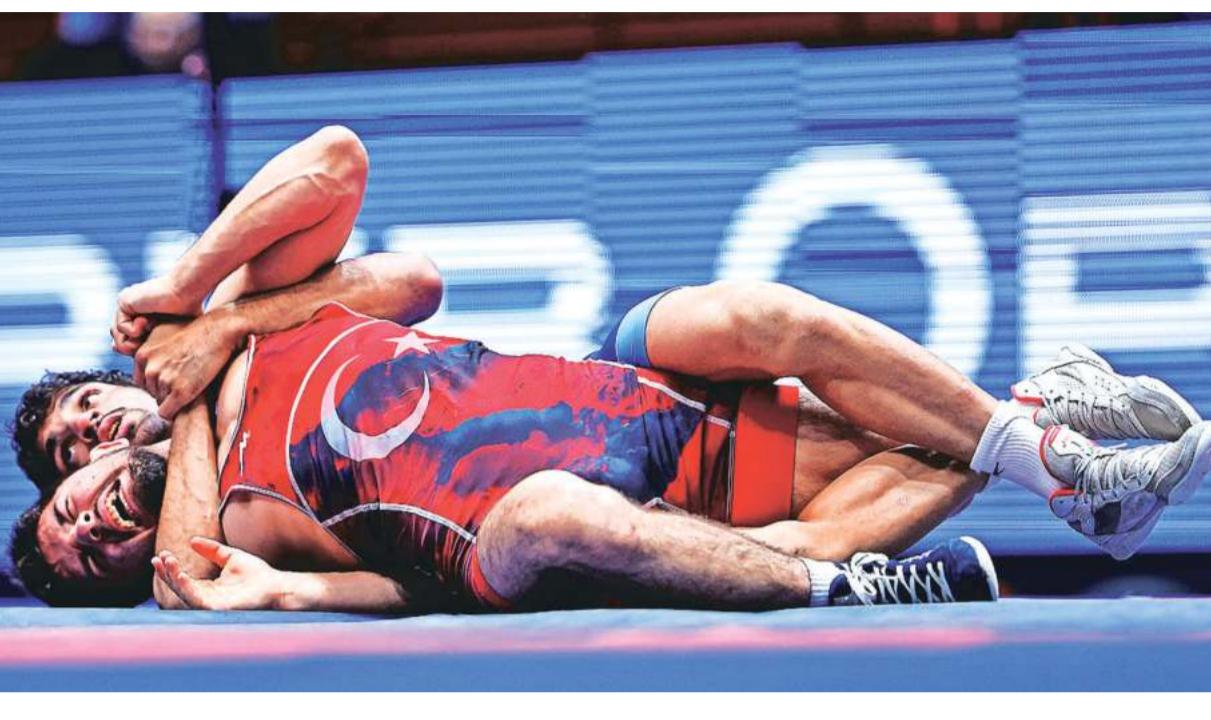
For Indian wrestling that's been mired in doom and gloom of player protests, sexual harassment allegations against former president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, international suspension and a domestic flux for a year, this was rare good news.

Better even for Sehrawat's coach, who was thrilled that the off-season work to improve the wrestler's slow starts paid off.

"There weren't many tournaments in the last few months but we didn't stop working even for a day. The entire time was used to improve his starts," said his coach Lalit Kumar, who was on Tuesday feted with the Dronacharya Award. "It took some time to drill the idea in his mind that if he wants to be at the Olympics and win a medal, he can't be dheela even for a second on the mat."

Sehrawat vs Dahiya for Olympic spot

Being at the Olympics and standing on a podium isn't plain rhetoric. Sehrawat, from Delhi's Chhatrasal Stadium, is tipped widely to follow the footsteps of the academy's alumni Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt, Bajrang Punia and Ravi Dahiya — all Olympic medallists.



Aman Sehrawat locks up Turkey's Muhammet Karavus on the way to his gold medal at the Zagreb ranking series. UWW

Still in his second year in senior wrestling, the Paris Olympics might have come a little too early for the junior world champion and senior Asian champion in the 57kg weight class. But that hasn't stopped him from preparing for a potential showdown with Tokyo Olympics silver medalist and his idol Dahiya at the selection trials next month.

The winner of those trials will get the first chance to clinch an Olympic berth at a qualifying event in April. And even that might not be enough to get on the plane to Paris. The final trials for the Paris Olympics are likely to be held on May 31 and June 1 and the winner of that will get a shot at Olympic glory.

Potentially, there could be more than one bouts between the country's two best lightweight wrestlers to decide who gets to be the sole representative in the 57kg category.

Dahiya, because of his international pedigree, would have been an obvious choice until not too long ago. But Sehrawat's gradual rise and the Tokyo silver medalist's bout with injuries have spiced up the contest. The fact that Dahiya lost to a nondescript wrestler from Maharashtra during the Asian Games trials — which Sehrawat won without breaking much

sweat — adds another layer to it.

Symbolically, perhaps, Dahiya has chosen France as his venue to compete in his first international tournament in a year. Watching him closely next week would be Sehrawat and his coaches.

"At Chhatrasal, we have always had a problem of plenty so it's not uncommon to have more than one world-class wrestler in a weight class," Lalit says. "Both will be well prepared. Ravi has his team and Aman trains with me, as he has since his childhood."

Stint in Dagestan

At Chhatrasal, Sehrawat's upper-body strength and quick leg work have been spoken about highly for years. In the last few months, Lalit has worked on improving his reaction time at the start of the bout.

It was a major deficiency in Sehrawat's game, Lalit says, one which was exposed thoroughly during the World Championship last year.

"I gave him an earful after that. It was his first year on the senior circuit so everything was new for him but at that moment, we knew that if Aman has to win at major events, he'll have to start better. He can't be dheela," Lalit said.

And so, during the off-season training,

he was paired up with partners who were quicker and tested his reaction speed. His diet was modified to increase speed and short sprints were introduced to his routine.

Lalit admits Sehrawat is still a work in progress and to evolve further, the wrestler is set to travel to Dagestan, one of the biggest wrestling hubs in the world. It's the first time Sehrawat will travel outside India, rather outside Chhatrasal Stadium, for training.

"He'll spar with new partners since wrestlers from all over the world land there. It'll open him up to new styles and techniques," Lalit says. "It'll be a short stint, just to provide a finishing touch to his preparations before the selection trials next month."

Satwik-Chirag reach 2nd rd: Prannoy, Sen lose opener

Kuala Lumpur: THE INDIAN men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty began the new season on a winning note, advancing to the second round, while Asian Games bronze medalist HS Prannoy bit the dust in his opening-round match at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 badminton tournament here on Wednesday.

The world No.2 doubles combination of Satwik and Chirag overcame a tough challenge from the gritty Indonesian pair of Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Maulana Bagas 21-18, 21-19, while world No. 8 Prannoy lost to Denmark's Anders Antonsen, a player ranked one spot below him, 14-21, 11-21 in 43 minutes and Lakshya Sen fell to China's Weng Hong Yang 21-15, 21-16.

The second-seeded pair of Satwik and Chirag, which reached the semifinals in 2023, will look to continue the good run and go deep in the draw after the stiff 44-minute test from the world No. 9 duo, which had beaten the Indians twice last year — at the Thailand Open and China Open.

Satwik and Chirag have looked in ominous form, winning the Asian Games gold in Hangzhou, a Super 1000 crown in Indonesia, the Korea Open Super 500 and the Swiss Open super 300 last year before grabbing a career-best ranking of World No.1, albeit for a brief time.

The duo asserted early dominance in the first game with powerful smashes to take a four-point lead at 8-4 and never lost the advantage. However, the second game was more challenging with the Indians trailing for most part of the match before levelling at 19-all and taking the last two points.

Prannoy, a frontrunner in the Olympic race, had a sensational last season with maiden bronze medals at the World Championships and the Asian Games and a title-run at the Malaysia Masters super 500.

But, in the season-opening match here the Indian looked rusty and couldn't match up with his opponent's speed. PTI



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (L) and Chirag Shetty. AP

Nancy prevails in strong Indian field to clinch Asian Olympic Qualifier gold

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 10

TEENAGER NANCY Mandhotra overcame stiff competition from compatriot Elavenil Valarivan to win the women's 10m air rifle gold medal at the Asian Olympic Qualifier in Jakarta on Wednesday.

The competition showed the depth of talent India has in the event with Mehuli Ghosh, who had already bagged a quota place for the Paris Olympics, finishing fourth. Tilottama Sen, 15, has also clinched a spot for India at the Games to be held in the French capital later this year.

Kurukshetra's 19-year-old Mandhotra, who had won a bronze at the ISSF World Cup in Baku last year, began the final with four of her first five shots in excess of 10.5 and was placed second behind Valarivan after the first series.

The second series of five saw the Haryana youngster climbing to the top with two shots

of 10.9. The elimination series would see Mandhotra shooting strongly but China's Shen Yufan ran her close. At one point, both Shen and Mandhotra were tied at 210.7 with Valarivan only 0.2 point behind with all three confirmed to win medals.

It was here that the Chinese shot a 10.0 on her 22nd shot to bow out. Mandhotra would then edge out Valarivan with a difference of 0.1 point after the 24th and final shot to win the gold.

"The competition was stiff but I wanted the gold. Our team dominated and it really feels like a success for each one of us here," Mandhotra told The Indian Express.

Each one of the five Indian shooters in qualification boasted of having an ISSF World Championship or World Cup medal under their belt. Asian Games medallist Ramita Jindal had shot the second-best score of 633.6 competing in RPO (Ranking Points Only) category behind Valarivan's 633.8 with Sen (RPO), Mandhotra and Ghosh shooting scores of 632.8, 632.4 and 631 respectively.

(From left) Elavenil Valarivan, Nancy and China's Shen Yufan pose for a picture.

Among the top eight shooters in qualification, the top four shooters were Indian with Ghosh in sixth place resulting in Mandhotra, Valarivan and Ghosh advancing to the final from the 62-shooter field.

None of the Indian shooters were eligible for a Paris Olympics quota in Jakarta but national coach Suma Shirur is delighted with the strong batch. "Each one of them has a world cup or world championship medal and the fact that two of them were able to bag the quota and not depend on the Asian qualifiers speaks of their confidence. They see the competition among themselves as motivation. Such high scores in qualification here means we are on the right path," says Shirur.

The five shooters know that only two of them can catch the flight to Paris. Valarivan, 24, who has gold medals in the World Cup Final and World Cup in her CV, wants to make amends for her 12th-place finish in Tokyo.

Ghosh is a one-time World Champion and World Cup bronze medalist while Jindal is a two-time world cup finalist apart from climbing the podium at last year's Asian Games. Sen had bagged the Paris Olympic quota for India with a silver medal at the Asian Championships while Ghosh had won the quota with a bronze medal at the ISSF World

Championships last year. With the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) coming up with an amended selection policy for the Paris Olympics, the shooters will be eyeing the four trials in May. Ghosh and Sen will automatically qualify for the trials, but there will be other worthy contenders as well.

Sen and Ghosh will gain a slight weightage for bagging the quota spots while Mandhotra and Valarivan, if they qualify for the trials, too would see one point added to their ranking scores since they were in quota position in Jakarta but not eligible due to India bagging two quotas earlier.

"Both Tilottama and Nancy are young but have been very open to whatever the coaches have charted for them. Ramita too has been in fine form. Mehuli won the bronze in the World championship in a competitive field and that gave her a lot of confidence. Elavenil has been one of the most experienced shooters in the lot. Coming here, we worked on some technical aspects in her shooting apart from reinforcing some minor things," says Shirur.

ALL-NIGHTER NO MORE

How organisers hope extra Aus Open day will curb late night finishes

ANILDIAS
JANUARY 10

THE AUSTRALIAN Open, the season's opening Grand Slam will see an extra day added to its schedule this year, a move which should reduce player fatigue and more importantly, reduce the chances of late-night/early-morning finishes.

What led to the change?

Last year — and in many other editions of the tournament — Melbourne's fickle weather rained out a host of matches and forced a backlog of clashes that had to be rescheduled, contributing to the run of late nights.

This year, day sessions on Rod Laver Arena and Margaret Court Arena — the two centrepiece courts — will have a minimum of two matches scheduled instead of three.

Night sessions will stay at a minimum of two matches. But there's less chance of the day session stretching overtime due to one fewer match — meaning that those extreme, late nights are eliminated.

By stretching the tournament out a day, increasing the number of sessions across three

arenas from 47 to 52, and scheduling three days for first-round action instead of two, fans get to see more tennis at a friendlier time, and players won't bear the brunt of extreme late nights that reduce recovery time and can effectively ruin their chances in the next round.

"We've listened to feedback from the players and fans are excited to deliver a solution to minimise late finishes while continuing to provide a fair and equitable schedule on the stadium courts," Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley said in a statement.

What will change? This year, day sessions on Rod Laver Arena and Margaret Court Arena — the two centrepiece courts — will have a minimum of two matches scheduled instead of three.

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Andy Murray and Thanasi Kokkinakis famously ended their marathon second-round battle at 4:05 am in a match that lasted nearly six hours. Reuters

matches in the day session. That would stop the day matches running into the night session starting too late," Murray had said.

Did players speak out about it? It was a move that was suggested by Murray after his win over Kokkinakis.

"I think the US Open went to playing two

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lowing day.

The fan-ticket issue...

To avoid late-night finishes, Grand Slam organisers have independently discussed having just one match in the night session but concluded that it may be unfair to spectators.

The fans at the night sessions buy separate tickets to those who attend during the day, so might feel short-changed if they only get to see one match, especially if it is one-sided or there is an injury. But with two-night matches scheduled, there is always the worry that it will go past midnight. And when matches run for nearly six hours, as the clash between Murray and Kokkinakis did, then it is almost unavoidable.

Are there any other solutions?

Slam organisers can take a leaf out of Wimbledon's book. The curfew at The Championships, implemented in 2009, is said to be intended to get spectators home safely

from the venue. The flip side is that at times, the cutoff has left fans hanging on a cliff during the most intense matches.