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# THE WORLD



HE FORGED CLOSE TIES WITH U.S.

## FORMER CANADIAN PM BRIAN MULRONEY DIES

Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who forged close ties with two Republican US presidents through a sweeping free trade agreement that was once vilified but is now celebrated, died Thursday. He was 84. A family spokesman said Mulroney died at a hospital in Palm Beach, Florida, where he was being treated after a recent fall.

## TOP OF THE WORLD



**JAPAN**  
Opp brings no-trust motion, says govt halting debate

Tokyo: Outraged Japanese opposition lawmakers submitted a no-confidence motion on Friday, accusing the governing party of trying to push through a budget bill without adequate debate because of disruptions caused by a scandal over its fund-raising practices. Opposition politicians slammed Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for failing to provide details about slush funds created by members of the governing Liberal Democratic Party's leading faction, or where the money went. Kishida apologised for the scandal, on Thursday in a rare appearance before the parliamentary ethics committee that was broadcast live. Kishida attended the session in an effort to end debate on the scandal. AP

**HAITI**  
Haiti in chaos as gang leader tries to tighten grip

Port-Au-Prince: Heavy gunfire paralyzed Haiti's capital Thursday, and at least four police officers were slain, as a powerful gang leader announced that he would try to capture the country's police chief and government ministers. The move came during the absence of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who is in Kenya trying to finalise details for the deployment of a foreign armed force to Haiti to help combat gangs. Gunmen shot at Haiti's main international airport and other targets, including police stations, in a wave of violence that caught many people by surprise. AP

**UNITED STATES**  
Week after, Moonlander stops working

Cape Canaveral: The first US spacecraft to land on the moon since the Apollo astronauts fell silent Thursday, a week after breaking a leg at touchdown and tipping over near the lunar south pole. Intuitive Machines' lander, Odysseus, lasted longer than the company anticipated. The end came as flight controllers received one last photo from Odysseus and commanded its computer and power systems to standby. That way, the lander can wake up in another two to three weeks - if it survives the bitterly cold lunar night. PTI

**NEPAL**  
Climate change: All-woman team at Everest camp

Kathmandu: As many as 30 women, including a beauty queen, from across Nepal will assemble at the base camp of Mount Everest on March 8 on International Women's Day to draw attention to the alarming melting of snow in the Himalayas due to climate change and its impact on local communities. The theme of this year's IWD is 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress'. PTI

**ISRAEL: MANY WERE RUN OVER; TROOPS FIRED AT CROWD IN SELF-DEFENCE**

## Shock & anger: Chorus for probe into Israeli firing on Gazans waiting for aid

UN chief, France, Germany & others demand probe; Biden says it will affect truce talks

**REUTERS**  
GAZA, NEW YORK, MARCH 1

PRESSURE MOUNTED on Israel on Friday over the deaths of Palestinians queuing for aid in an incident during which its soldiers fired at the crowd, with several countries backing a UN call for an inquiry.

Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces had killed more than 100 people trying to reach a relief convoy near Gaza City early on Thursday. Israel blamed most of the deaths on crowds that swarmed around aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over. An Israeli official also said troops had "in a limited response" later fired on crowds they felt had posed a threat.

The incident has under-



Palestinians, who were wounded reportedly in Israeli fire while waiting for aid, at Al Shifa hospital, in Gaza City, on Friday. Reuters

scored the collapse of orderly aid deliveries in areas of Gaza occupied by Israeli forces with no administration in place and the main UN agency, UNRWA, hamstrung by an inquiry into alleged links with Hamas.

United Nations Secretary-

General Antonio Guterres said he was "shocked" by the latest episode in the war. Responding to questions on the failure of a recent Security Council resolution seeking a ceasefire, Guterres said worsening geopolitical divides have

"transformed the veto power into an effective instrument of paralysis of the action of the Security Council."

Many countries have urged a ceasefire, but US President Joe Biden said Thursday's incident will complicate talks for a deal

involving a truce and hostage release. France and Germany have backed a call for an international inquiry. The US has also urged an inquiry. India said it was "deeply shocked" at the deaths and Brazil said the incident was beyond "ethical or legal limits."

South Africa condemned the deaths. French President Emmanuel Macron voiced "deep indignation" and the "strongest condemnation of these shootings". Germany said "the Israeli army must fully explain how the mass panic and shooting could have happened."

In Israel, ultra-rightwing security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir urged "total support" to Israeli soldiers who had "acted excellently against a Gazan mob that tried to harm them".

However, an opinion piece on the N12 online news site said the incident showed the lack of rule of law in Gaza. A columnist in the biggest daily newspaper *Yedioth Ahronot* said the incident would "create a turning point in the war" and could "exert international pressure that Israel will not be able to withstand, including from the US".



People walk towards the Borisovskoye cemetery during the funeral of Alexei Navalny in Moscow on Friday. Reuters

## Navalny buried in Moscow as crowd chants his name

**REUTERS**  
MOSCOW, MARCH 1

HUNDREDS OF Russians chanted Alexei Navalny's name and said they would not forgive the authorities for his death as the opposition leader was laid to rest in Moscow on Friday.

In video streamed from the Borisovskoye cemetery, Navalny's mother Lyudmila and father Anatoly stooped over his open coffin to kiss him for the last time as a small group of mourners played.

Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critic inside Russia, died at the age of 47 in an Arctic penal colony on Feb. 16, sparking accusations from his supporters that he had been murdered. The Kremlin has denied any state involvement in his death.

Many thousands of people turned out to pay their respects at the cemetery and outside the Soothe My Sorrows church in southeast Moscow where Orthodox priests held a short funeral service before the body was taken to the cemetery.

Among the large crowd, many people clutched bunches of flowers and some joined in chants. "Russia will be free", "No to war", "Russia without Putin",



Lyudmila and Anatoly, the mother and father Alexei Navalny, attend their son's funeral in Moscow. Reuters

"We won't forgive" and "Putin is a murderer."

Police were present in large numbers but did not intervene.

"I came here to say goodbye to Navalny. What does that mean for me? I don't even know how to explain it," said a 25-year-old man who gave his name as Kirill.

"It's very sad for the future of Russia... We won't give up, we will believe in something better."

A young woman, Kamila, said: "There are more than 10,000 people here, and no one is afraid... We came here in order to honour the memory of a man who also wasn't afraid."

## Biden, Trump try to use immigration to election advantage

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
TEXAS, MARCH 1

THREE HUNDRED miles apart, US President Joe Biden and likely Republican challenger Donald Trump walked the US-Mexico border in Texas Thursday, dueling trips underscoring how important immigration has become for the 2024 election

and how much each man wants to use it to his advantage. Islamabad: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, a senior leader from the party headed by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was on Friday elected as the Speaker of the newly-formed National Assembly amidst protests by supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

The

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate beat his rival Amir Dogar. Dogar was backed by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

"Out of a total 291 votes,

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has got 199

votes, while Dogar has got 91

votes," outgoing Speaker, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, said.

Meanwhile, PTI party-backed candidate Ali Amin Gandapur was elected as the Chief Minister of the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. PTI



RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

Trump was in Eagle Pass, roughly 325 miles northwest of Brownsville.

According to an AP-NORC poll in January, the share of voters concerned about immigration rose to 35% from 27% last year.

Fifty-five percent of Republicans say the government needs to focus on immigration in 2024, while 22% of Democrats listed immigration as a priority.

That's up from 45% and 14%, respectively, from December 2022.

## DHAKA SHOPPING MALL FIRE KILLS 46

Firefighters work in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Thursday night. The massive fire that ripped through a seven-storey shopping mall in Dhaka killed at least 46 people and injured 22 others, the government said on Friday. AP

## In first Iran polls since protests, low turnout despite govt push

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
DUBAI, MARCH 1

IRAN HELD its first parliamentary election Friday since mass 2022 protests over mandatory hijab laws following the death of Mahsa Amini, apparently drawing a low turnout amid calls for a boycott.

Officials including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sought to link turnout directly to taking a stand against Iran's enemies. Others, including imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, urged a boycott of a vote they derided as a "sham." Of about 15,000 candidates vying for seats in the 290-member parliament, only 116 are considered to be relatively moderate or pro-reform candidates.

There are too many prob-



Iranians cast vote in Tehran on Friday. Reuters

lems," said one voter, Sajjad.

Khamenei, 84, cast one of the first votes in an election that also will pick new members of the country's Assembly of Experts. The panel of clerics, who serve an eight-year term, is mandated to select a new supreme leader if Khamenei steps down or dies.

"Pay attention to this, make friends happy and disappoint the evil-wishers," he said. Khamenei's protégé, hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi, repeated that call and urged the public to make it "a glorious day for Iran. Initial election results are expected as early as Saturday. PTI

**DANIELA KLETTE, A MILITANT FROM RED ARMY FACTION, WAS ON THE RUN FOR OVER THREE DECADES**

## Germany's most wanted hid in plain sight, journalist found her in 30 minutes

**ERIKA SOLOMON & CHRISTOPHERFSCHUETZE**  
MARCH 1

IT TOOK authorities more than 30 years to hunt down one of Germany's most wanted fugitives. For Michael Colborne, an investigative journalist running old photographs through a facial recognition service, it took about 30 minutes.

At the request of a German podcasting duo, he'd been asked to search for matches to the decades-old wanted photographs of Daniela Klette, a member of the leftist militant group Red Army Faction, Germany's most infi-

mous postwar terrorist group, originally known as the Baader-Meinhof gang.

Instead, the facial recognition software he used lighted upon a woman called Claudia Ivone. In one image, she posed with her local capoeira troupe as they waved their arms exuberantly. Another showed her in a white headdress, tossing flower petals with an Afro-Brazilian society at a local street festival. He had stumbled on an alias Klette had used for years, as she hid in plain sight in the German capital.

This week, German police announced they had finally caught Klette, now 65, trumpeting her arrest as a "masterpiece" and a



Outside a court building in Verden, Germany; (Inset) Daniela Klette, now 65, in a 1988 image. AP

"milestone." Some German journalists had a different interpretation of events. "What was their success?" one journalist asked, challenging officials at a news conference this week.

It is still unclear whether Colborne's findings for the podcast, Legion, whose latest season on Klette was released in December on Germany's public broadcaster ARD, actually led to Klette being discovered by police. The police say they found her thanks to a tip in November, around the same time Colborne, 42, and Legion were doing their research. Nonetheless, it raised an awkward prospect: That a fugitive who had eluded German police

since Colborne, a Canadian journalist who works for the investigative website Bellingcat, was identified with relative ease.

"Somebody like me, who does not speak German, who does not know much beyond the basic background of Daniela Klette - Why was I able to find such a lead in like literally 30 minutes?" he said.

Peter Neumann, a German professor of security studies at King's College London, said a major flaw in Germany's ability to hunt down extremists and militants was an overly zealous application of data protection laws, which many Germans attribute to the country's history of surveillance and repression under the Nazis and in communist former East Germany. Another problem, he said, was that Germany has been struggling and failing for years to digitize a government that has remained stubbornly beholden to paper mail and fax.

During her time in hiding, the police say, Klette and two accomplices, Ernst-Volker Staub and Burkhard Garweg, who are also wanted in connection with Red Army Faction activities, committed at least 13 violent robberies, netting them about two million euros. Police are still searching for Staub and Garweg. They believe that the two men are still in Berlin. NYT



cbc 22/2013/03/20/2224



## Modi Ki Guarantee

### India to become world's third largest economy

India improves from  
11<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> place in 10 years



Hamara Sankalp  
Viksit Bharat

Deeply shocked:  
India on killing  
of over 100  
Gazans during  
aid delivery

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

A DAY after more than 100 people were killed and over 700 injured when Israeli troops fired on Palestinians trying to pull food off an aid convoy in Gaza, India said Friday "deeply shocked at the loss of lives".

This is a significant statement from New Delhi, especially at a time when Israel's ongoing military offensive in Gaza as part of its response to the Hamas attack on October 7 last year, has drawn criticism from many in the international community.

The Ministry of External Affairs, in a statement, said, "We are deeply shocked at the loss of lives in northern Gaza yesterday during delivery of humanitarian assistance."

"Such loss of civilian lives and the larger humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be a cause for extreme concern," it said.

"We reiterate our call for safe and timely delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance," the MEA said. It did not condemn or name Israel.

India has been calling for de-escalation of the situation and for creating conditions for talks towards a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine issue.

#### THE WORLD



CHORUS FOR PROBE  
INTO ISRAELI FIRING

NIA TEAM JOINS POLICE IN INVESTIGATING INCIDENT

## Lunch-hour blast at Bengaluru restaurant leaves nine injured



A videogram of the explosion at Rameswaram Cafe in Bengaluru, Friday. PTI

CCTV shows man left bag; IT employee among injured, in ICU with 40% burns

JOHNSON T A,  
KIRAN PARASHAR  
& SANATH K PRASAD  
BENGALURU, MARCH 1

A SUSPECTED improvised explosive device (IED) went off at a popular restaurant in Bengaluru's Whitefield area Friday afternoon, injuring nine persons – mostly customers having lunch. A man caught on CCTV camera with his face partially concealed with a mask and cap is being treated as a suspect, police sources told *The Indian Express*.

The blast occurred in the dining area of Rameshwaram Cafe,

a popular chain of vegetarian restaurants, when employees from nearby IT companies were having lunch.

Karnataka DGP Alok Mohan, who visited the blast site, said: "It would be premature to speculate on the cause of the blast without a report from the Forensic Science Laboratory."

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, however, indicated the blast was caused by an IED. "I have spoken to the Home Minister and senior police officers. What they told me was that an unknown person carried a bag to the restaurant. He bought a token and had food.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Man wearing cap, mask  
a suspect; IED like one  
used in Mangaluru, 2022

JOHNSON T A  
BENGALURU, MARCH 1

A MAN wearing a cap, glasses and a mask, captured by CCTV cameras at Rameshwaram Cafe around an hour before a blast occurred at 12.56 pm on Friday, has emerged as a key suspect. Police sources said efforts were being made to identify the man, who had partially concealed his face.

The suspect entered the restaurant and had a snack be-

fore leaving. A tiffin box bag kept inside a larger bag that was left near the hand-wash area of the restaurant contained the IED that caused the blast, the police sources said.

Nine persons suffered injuries in the blast which was marked by a loud sound, fire and smoke but was restricted to the area where the bag was placed. A 45-year-old woman suffered nearly 40 per cent injuries and is in ICU while others suffered

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**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

RELATED REPORT, PAGE 6

PM attacks Mamata: Shielded Sandeshkhali accused... for every wound, reply with vote

Questions silence  
of INDIA bloc,  
says BJP pressure  
led to arrests

SANTANU CHOWDHURY  
ARAMBAGH (WB), MARCH 1

MOUNTING A scathing attack on the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Friday that people across the country were "sad" and "enraged" over the atrocities against the women of Sandeshkhali by local TMC leaders.

Accusing the TMC government of making "all sorts of attempts to protect" its accused leaders, Modi, addressing a public meeting at Arambagh in Hooghly district, also questioned the silence of the Opposition INDIA bloc over the Sandeshkhali incidents and asked people to give a befitting reply to the TMC with their votes — "Har chot ka jawab vote se dena hai" (for every wound, reply with your vote).

The Prime Minister targeted Banerjee and her government a day after the arrest of TMC strongman Shahjahan Sheikh, accused of sexual abuse and land-grabbing in Sandeshkhali — a small island in the Sunderban delta — along with his aides.

Sheikh had been on the run for 55 days after his supporters attacked Enforcement Directorate officers who had gone to search his house in Sandeshkhali on January 5 as part of their probe into the ration distribution case.

The final push, though, came from the Calcutta High Court which, on Wednesday, ruled that central agencies can arrest Shahjahan. Soon after, the Bengal Police picked up the TMC strongman who had been absconding for 55 days since his followers assaulted an Enforcement Direct-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata, Friday. PTI

Why Sandeshkhali row forced usually defiant TMC into a corner

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA  
& ATRI MITRA  
SANDESHKHALI, MARCH 1

UNREST THAT spread from an island to the mainland, allegations of tribals land being taken away, a fear of alienating the women vote bank, and a relentless opposition are among factors that forced the Trinamool Congress government's hand and led to the arrest of its leader Sheikh Shahjahan, leaders from the party and the opposition say.

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orate team.

This is a departure from previous cases, wherein central agencies made an arrest once the High Court transferred the case into their hands. Take the example of:

■ **Anubarata Mondal**, TMC strongman and Birbhum district president. Mondal faced cases of intimidation and murder dating back to 2013, but was not questioned by the police. It was on August 11, 2022 that the CBI arrested him in cases pertaining to alleged cattle smuggling and money laundering. Later, the ED took him into custody and he was sent to Tihar jail.

■ **Partha Chatterjee**, former education minister and industries minister. He was allegedly involved in the primary teachers recruitment in schools. While he

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

NBDSA SLAPS FINE ON 3 CHANNELS

Take down shows that  
spread hate: Regulator to  
Aaj Tak, News18 India,  
Times Now Navbharat

DIVYA A  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE NEWS Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA) has ordered television news channels News18 India, Times Now Navbharat and Aaj Tak to take down videos of several shows aired in the last two years for spreading hatred and communal disharmony by "violating the code of ethics and broadcasting standards and the specific guidelines covering reporting on racial and religious harmony". It also imposed fines on the broadcasters in some cases.

In its meeting held on February 28, the regulatory body set up by TV news broadcast-

ers, and currently headed by Justice (retired) A K Sikri — passed seven decisions regarding complaints about programmes aired in the last two years. It took action against the news channels based on complaints received against them.

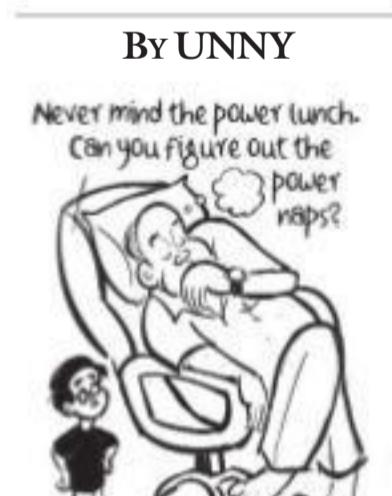
In the case of News18 India, the NBDSA imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 for four shows it broadcast in 2022, hosted by Aman Chopra and Amish Deygan. On the shows, the anchors had said that the murder of Shraddha Walker by her live-in partner Aftab Poonawala in 2022 was connected to "love jihad".

The NBDSA stated that the term 'love jihad' should not be used loosely and should be used with great introspection in

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

BUSINESS AS USUAL

BY UNNY



INSIDE

GYANVAPI: SC TO  
HEAR MOSQUE  
PANEL PLEA

BORDER CURBS:  
NAGALAND ASKS  
CENTRE TO RETHINK  
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GRASIM CONSOLIDATES GAIN

How curbs on a key input for textiles helped one industry, and hurt several small players

AGGAM WALIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

IN LESS than a year since India enforced a strict quality control order (QCO) in April on viscose staple fibre (VSF), a key raw material in the textiles supply chain, its imports dropped 65 per cent, helped Aditya Birla Group-owned Grasim Industries consolidate its market share to 95 per cent from 90 per cent, and has started hurting the operations of small and medium sized spinning mills who earlier had access to this raw material via cheaper imports, and could export yarn and fabric.

A QCO is a non-tariff trade barrier that bars manufacturers, importers, and distributors from storing or selling a product without a licence from BIS that certi-

E Need for  
tariff  
re-balance

BARRIERS TO imports — tariff or non-tariff — more often than not end up making domestic industry uncompetitive. In the case of viscose, it is also hurting small textile players including spinning mills who earlier had access to this raw material via cheaper imports, and could export yarn and fabric.

fies specific quality standards being met. Grasim Industries, the largest VSF producer, had about 18 months before the QCO, lobbied

the Ministry of Textiles complaining of substandard imports from Indonesia and China.

Since the QCO was imposed, midstream VSF buyers like small- and medium-sized spinning mills have repeatedly raised concerns with the textiles ministry that such orders have held them back from cheaper VSF, which otherwise, helped them competitively export spun yarn and fabric. For MSME mills, these challenges come at a time when the textiles industry is reeling from a prolonged period of economic distress due to weak global demand.

They also allege that Grasim is delaying the production of certain specialty VSF variants unavailable in the domestic market and engaging in unfair trade

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Week before Singhvi fiasco, Cong had idea of what was coming

MANOJCG  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE DEFEAT of Abhishek Manu Singhvi in Rajya Sabha election in Himachal Pradesh may have come as a huge embarrassment to the Congress but the central leadership and Singhvi himself had prior information that a handful of MLAs who were upset with Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu were restive and could cross over, sources said. In fact, it was the scale of the defection which surprised the party.

As the Congress looks back at what went wrong in Himachal to make sense of the fiasco, the picture that is emerging is of miscalculation and overconfidence. Although the BJP's decision to field Harsh Mahajan, a former Congress leader, was a clear sign

that it was trying to tap into the discontent in the Congress, sources said the central leadership got a whiff of the seriousness of what was brewing in the Himachal Congress at least a week before February 27, the day voting for the Rajya Sabha election took place.

The leadership, sources said, zeroed in on the MLAs who were restive and then used multiple strategies to win them over. CM Sukhu after meeting the Speaker, Friday.

Loknath Dhir", but nothing on her marital status. Though Gopal was now officially Arti's adopted son, he stayed with Alpa since his travel papers were not ready. In February 2017, before he could even set foot in the UK, Gopal was killed. What went wrong?

The chargesheet says the NRI couple had always planned to insure their adopted child and kill him to claim the payout. Nitish Mund, 27, Arti's paying guest in London, was also roped in to be

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

PAGE 1  
ANCHOR

Adopted son, murder for insurance: Gujarat wants UK couple extradited

hoped she too would get justice one day.

A conspiracy allegedly hatched by the couple had cut short the lives of Alpa's husband Harsukh Kardani, 47, and her younger brother Gopal Sejani, 11, in February 2017.

All efforts so far to extradite the couple to India for the murder trial have failed.

In April 2009, Alpa's father, a landless labourer, died, leaving her responsible for her five younger siblings, including a

nearly 3-year-old Gopal, besides her infant son Raju, husband Harsukh and his parents.

However, the 10 bighas her in-laws owned just about sustained the family. Around 2014, the family got an offer through a relative: an NRI couple was looking to adopt a child. It helped that Kavaljitsinh's father Mahendrasinh, from nearby Keshod, was known to the relative.

Alpa recalls, "During our meeting in Keshod, Arti spoke to us through an interpreter. She



Arti Dhir, 59, and Kavaljitsinh Rajjada, 35, were sentenced for 33 years each in a drug smuggling case on January 30. (Source: nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk)

promised to take good care of Gopal. That's why we agreed to the adoption."

Mahendrasinh's statement to the police says Kavaljitsinh left for London in 2008 to do his MBA and that he married Arti, then 52, a Nairobi-born British citizen with roots in Punjab, around 2012-13.

Mahendrasinh's statement, a part of the chargesheet filed in a Junagadh court, says the couple visited Keshod thrice after the wedding. He told the police that

## • Curbs on key input for textiles

practices by giving arbitrary discounts and dealing with select buyers. In August, 2021, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) issued an order stating that Grasim had abused its dominant position in the VSF market "by charging discriminatory prices to its customers, denying market access and imposing supplementary obligations upon its customers". Grasim had appealed the order before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) and the case is currently ongoing.

In a letter to the textiles ministry, included in documents accessed by The Indian Express through the RTI, Grasim has dismissed concerns raised by MSME mills as a "mischievous complaint by the vested interest group... more like a propaganda to malign the domestic industry at (the) best of foreign suppliers".

The QCO process has been driven by the Government of India and cuts across products in a bid to boost India's manufacturing competitiveness... There are more than 650 QCOs... The implementation of QCO holds significant importance in regulating the influx of sub-quality and cheaper imports to ensure customers get quality products... A QCO is already in place for polyester, jute and cotton, to name a few and the rest are work in progress," said a spokesperson from Birla Cellulose, a unit of Grasim, when sought for comments. The Ministry of Textiles and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) did not respond to emails asking for comments.

In September, 2021, Dilip Gaur, then managing director of Grasim, Aditya Birla Group's flagship company, met Union Minister of Textiles Piyush Goyal and the company requested the textiles ministry to "kindly regulate the imports of such sub-standard VSF products from China & Indonesia by mandating the BIS Certification for complying to BIS VSF Standard", according to file notings obtained through RTI.

VSF is a semi-synthetic fibre made with cellulose and is used widely in the textiles industry. Following the meeting, Goyal, who is also the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, "asked to support the BIS issue", a file noting made by an official in the textiles ministry revealed. Goyal's office did not respond to an email asking for comments.

Grasim's Gaur met with Goyal less than a month after an anti-dumping duty (ADD) on VSF, which had been enforced for eleven years, was removed by the Department of Revenue in August, 2021. The ADD was first recommended in 2010 by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) under the commerce ministry, when Grasim initiated an anti-dumping case against VSF producers in Indonesia and China.

VSF is a semi-synthetic fibre made with cellulose and is used widely in the textiles industry. Following the meeting, Goyal, who is also the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, "asked to support the BIS issue", a file noting made by an official in the textiles ministry revealed. Goyal's office did not respond to an email asking for comments.

Grasim's Gaur met with Goyal less than a month after an anti-dumping duty (ADD) on VSF, which had been enforced for eleven years, was removed by the Department of Revenue in August, 2021. The ADD was first recommended in 2010 by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) under the commerce ministry, when Grasim initiated an anti-dumping case against VSF producers in Indonesia and China.

The removal of ADD in the middle of FY22 led to a surge in VSF imports, which grew by 92 per cent in FY23 to Rs 2,033 crore compared to Rs 1,058 crore in the previous financial year, official trade data shows. In the earnings call for Q3FY23, Grasim's HK Agarwal, who replaced Gaur in December 2021, said Indonesian suppliers "have been trying to get market share in India so they are giving aggressive prices... So, we have to contend with that and adjust our pricing accordingly. We cannot also lose market share beyond a point to any imports".

Agarwal had noted during an earlier earnings call that "total imports in FY22 have been around 90,000 tonnes, something like 7,500 tonnes per month and it is roughly about 10-11% of the total market". Notably, both CCI in its 2021 order and DGTR in its anti-dumping investigation found Grasim to be the "sole producer" of VSF in the country. In other words, Grasim's share in India's VSF market was 89-90 percent in FY22.

## • Week before Singhvi fiasco, Cong had idea of what was coming

channels to reach out to all of them, including Sudhir Sharma and Rajinder Rana, the two who led the dissidents.

Accordingly, veteran leader Digvijaya Singh was roped in to speak to Rana, a Thakur who was once a loyalist of former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Prem Kumar Dhumal. Similarly, AICC general secretary Randeep Surjewala was asked to speak to Sharma with whom he shared a good personal equation. Sources said Singhvi too had roped in a couple of leaders — and incidentally some "outsiders" — to speak to the others — Chaitanya Davinder, Inder Dutt Lakhani, Davinder Kumar Bhutto and Ravi Thakur.

That all was not well in the Himachal Congress was known for some time.

Himachal Pradesh Congress president Pratibha Singh and Sukhu were not on talking terms.

Sukhu perhaps took it too

## FROM PAGE ONE

FULLREPORTSON  
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

# Lunch-hour blast at Bengaluru restaurant leaves nine injured

Later, he left the bag which carried the bomb. The police are examining CCTV footage," Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru.

Asked whether it was a terrorist attack, the Chief Minister said an investigation is underway.

Later, the Bengaluru city police in a press statement said that the HAL Police have also registered a case under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) of 1967 and Explosives Substances Act.

A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) from the agency's Bengaluru office reached the spot soon after the blast and is currently assisting police in the investigations. The NIA is likely to take over the case next week, sources said.

The state government formed seven teams to identify and nab the suspect, who is believed to be aged between 30 and 35 years.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who visited the blast site in the evening, said the police have been given a free hand to apprehend the suspect. According to the preliminary investigation based on the CCTV footage, the man was seen with a bag containing the IED. "The accused had

come for lunch at the restaurant. He had traveled by bus. He had placed a bag containing low-intensity explosives near a tree. He had timed the bomb and around 1 pm the explosion took place. ... The entire episode including the facial features of the suspect has been recorded in the camera," he told reporters.

The injured were identified as Farooq Hussain (19), who worked in the restaurant, and customers Swarnamala Narayappa (49), Dwipanshu S (23), Mohan (41), Nagashree (35), Momi (30), Balaram Krishnan (31), Navya (25) and Srinivas (67).

Among them, Swaranamala Narayappa, an employee of tech firm Microchip India Pvt Ltd, sustained the most serious injuries. She suffered around 40 per cent burns and is in the ICU at the local Brookfield Hospital.

"She was out for lunch at the restaurant with colleagues when it happened. I saw her being led out in television visuals and learned of the incident," said her husband Shyam Sundar.

Dwipanshu S did not suffer external injuries but was in a state of shock due to the sound, his roommate Saurabh said. "Dwipanshu works for Amazon

and had gone for lunch," he said.

Hussain, a migrant worker from Assam who was employed at the restaurant, suffered external abrasion wounds which doctors suggested may be due to glass splinters. "I cannot remember anything. There was some kind of an explosion," Hussain said.

Another employee from Assam, who is Hussain' room mate and was working in another portion of the restaurant, said he heard a sound and there was shattering of glass and smoke when he came out to the dining area. "We do not know what happened but there was a blast in a corner of the restaurant. One of our staff was injured," said Guraj, a manager at the restaurant.

Dr Pradeep Kumar, medical director of Brookfield Hospital said, "There are no life threatening injuries. One victim has 40 per cent burns and is in ICU. She will require plastic surgery. One of the injured has abrasions from possibly broken glass. A third injured had suffered a shock due to the sound but has no physical injuries. Seems like a low-intensity blast."

Referring to the initial suspi-

cion that it could have been a gas cylinder blast, Rameshwaram Cafe owner Divya Raghavendra Rao said: "This is not a cylinder explosion. Some eyewitnesses told me that a bag was kept near the hand-wash area of the restauran-

tant..."

"We didn't have any security measures in the dining space, except in the rear end of the hotel where supplies and essentials are loaded. The area where the blast took place is close to the hand-wash area and it is usually not crowded," Rao said.

"We are cooperating with the Bengaluru police in all possible ways and they have full access to our CCTV cameras," she said.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders trained guns against the Siddaramaiah government.

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya said, "At first, they tried the narrative of cylinder blast. Now, they are trying the narrative of business rivalry. Why can't the Congress Govt allow the investigation agencies to do their job? Why preempt? Why prompt? Vote Bank compulsions? CM @siddaramaiah must give a free hand to investigate and give clear answers to the people of Bengaluru."

## • Take down shows spreading hate'

future broadcasts as religious stereotyping can corrode the secular fabric of the country, cause irreparable harm to a community and create religious intolerance or disharmony," the order stated.

The NBDSA also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on Times Now Navbharat for its show on "love jihad" aired on May 31, 2023, hosted by Himanshu Dixit.

"It appears that at the very beginning of the broadcast, the anchor has concluded that men from a certain community lured women from another community by hiding their religious identity and then committed violence or murders against such women and every such violence or murder committed on women of a certain community related to love jihad," it said.

Reached for comment on the NBDSA order, the Times Network said, "We accept the verdict and will do all that is necessary including ensuring that there is more vigilance in story selection in future."

In its order against Aaj Tak, NBDSA directed the channel to remove the video of a show anchored by Sudhir Chaudhary on violence during the festival of Ram Navami in 2023, saying that he targeted the entire Muslim community due to the acts of certain miscreants.

The NBDSA observed that there would have been no problem with the broadcast if the broadcaster had confined its analysis to the incidents of communal violence," the order stated.

Meanwhile, the NBDSA, in its decision on the complaint filed by Youth Congress president Srinivas B V on a "fictional video" aired in the Black and White episode on Aaj Tak in March 24 last year, a day after a Surat court convicted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of defamation for a 2019 speech about thieves with the surname Modi, said the "story of the robber and the imputation it carried" with Gandhi's conviction was "not in good taste" and "should have been avoided". The NBDSA also advised the channel to be "careful while airing such fictional videos" in future.

Representatives of News18 India did not respond to messages for comment on the order.

grammes must be presented in an impartial, objective and neutral manner".

By using words "Tukde Tukde Gang", "Khalistani in Punjab" and "Pakistani supporters", instead of confining its discussion to Obama's statement, the broadcaster had failed to present a controversial issue with sensitivity and objectivity, the order stated.

The channel was slapped with a fine of Rs 75,000 and advised to ensure that in future broadcasts, controversial subjects are fairly presented with strict adherence to the principles of Neutrality, Impartiality and Objectivity in the broadcast". It was also directed to remove the video of the show.

A legal representative of the India Today Group, said, "Even though we are disappointed by the order, we respect the decision by the regulatory body and will follow it."

Another grievance was about a programme aired by India Today titled 'Nudity sparks outrage at USA pride parades - How India's LGBTQ+ lead Responsibly', on which NBDSA held that using visuals and images totally out of context, which were not part of the incident covered was a violation of the principle of accuracy. Apart from following the Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards and Guidelines, members were also circulated a set of guidelines for broadcasting on issues concerning the LGBTQA+ community, for "strict compliance".

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Representatives of News18 India did not respond to messages for comment on the order.

## • IED like one used in Mangaluru

minor injuries and shock.

Preliminary investigations have indicated an IED with a bulb filament that was heated to act as a detonator — after being triggered by a digital timer -- in a low-intensity device contained in a steel tiffin box.

The explosive material used is yet to be identified but sources indicated it was a low-intensity blast involving a combination of easily available explosive materials contained in a box which disintegrated.

The filament detonator has been typically used by self-taught Islamic State (IS) operatives, and was seen in a device that accidentally exploded in an auto-rickshaw in Mangaluru on November 19, 2022.

Police sources said that there are many similarities between the device used at the Rameshwaram Cafe and devices linked to the IS module involved in the Mangaluru explosion.

The Mangaluru incident, in which a self-taught alleged IS activist Mohammed Sharif was arrested after he sustained burn injuries, is currently being investigated by the NIA.

"The detonator is the same as the one in the Mangaluru incident but some other aspects like the explosives used seem to be a bit different," a police source said.

The Bengaluru city police in a press statement said the HAL jurisdiction police have registered a case under sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967 and Explosives Substances Act, suggesting that the blast is being treated as a terrorist incident.

NIA officers were at the scene of the incident through Friday and the agency is likely to take over the probe of the case.

On November 19, 2022, Mohammed Sharif, 24, suffered 40 per cent burn injuries after an almost similar IED he created went off accidentally in a bag he was carrying on his lap in an auto-rickshaw in Mangaluru. He

was arrested for painting anti-national graffiti on a wall in Mangaluru, police sources said.

Two associates of Sharif — Maaz Ahmed and Syed Yasin, both engineers — were arrested by Shivanogga police in September 2022 in a terror case while Sharif was reported as absconding.

Police had said at the time that the accused learned the concept of making bombs from videos.

Most of the suspected members of the Shivanogga-Mangaluru IS module involved in the 2022 incidents were arrested while a key financier, Arafath Ali, was deported from the UAE last year.

The error is regretted.

CORRIGENDUM

## • In Bengal, PM attacks Mamata

of those who advocate for *Maa, Mati and Manush* (mother, soil and people). People across the country are sad and enraged to see what the TMC has done with the mothers and sisters of Sandeshkhali. The soul of (social reformer) Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who worked for women's empowerment, must have been pained to see such atrocities."

"Atrocities of TMC leaders on Sandeshkhali women have crossed all limits. When women sought help from Mamata Banerjee, her government made all sorts of attempts to protect the (accused) TMC leaders. BJP leaders here fought day and night and even had to face (police) batons in their fight to protect the dignity of women. Under their pressure, the state government had no other option than to arrest the TMC leader. They should be ashamed of this. Will you forgive TMC? Will you not take revenge for the atrocities? *Harchot kajawab vote se dena hai* (for every wound inflicted, reply with your vote)," he said.

Questioning the silence of the INDIA bloc, including the Congress, Modi said, "INDI gathered bandhan (alliance) leaders have been silent and mute on the Sandeshkhali issue. They are like Mahatma Gandhi's three monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil. They sit together and hold meetings in Patna, Bengaluru and Mumbai but are not ready to speak on this issue. Have the Left and Congress sought answers from the TMC?"

The arrogance of the TMC will break soon. It is confident that it has the support of a particular group, but Muslim women too will now throw them out. They will start the countdown of TMC's ouster from power," he said.

The TMC government even stops Central agencies from conducting investigations. TMC wants to loot money from Central schemes. TMC sees Modi as its No.1 enemy because he stops such acts. Should I allow them to loot people's money? Am I doing the right thing or not? I give you my guarantee that the looters (of people's money) will have to return the money.

Modi's guarantee is that they will have to return the money which they looted," he said.

The arrogancy of the TMC will break soon. It is confident that it has the support of a particular group, but Muslim women too will now throw them out. They will start the countdown of TMC's ouster from power," he said.

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## ABVP, Left members clash in JNU, three students hospitalised

VIDHEESA KUNTAMALLA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

A SCUFFLE broke out at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) late Thursday between students belonging to the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and Left-associated groups, including the All India Students' Association (AISA).

Three students injured in the melee during the general body meeting (GBM) at the School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies have been admitted to Safdarjung Hospital.

A video of the purported incident shows a man thrashing students with a stick, another clip shows a person throwing a bicycle at students. Other purported videos showed individuals being mobbed and beaten up by a group even as JNU security personnel tried to rescue them.

The university's Office of the Dean of Students on Friday issued a statement, saying: "All students are advised to adhere to the university's rules and regulations. Any kind of violence is against the democratic ethos of JNU. The varsity will take appropriate action..."

On Friday, both the groups issued statements blaming each

other for the violence.

AISA said: "The GBM's last day at the School of Languages witnessed another round of violence by ABVP goons. Initially, attempting to disrupt the selection process for the poll panel, ABVP resorted to physical violence when thwarted by JNU students... were seen wielding rods and targeting and beating common students indiscriminately."

Accusing the ABVP of singling out Muslim students, AISA said, "They oppose whenever Muslim students propose their names for the upcoming poll panel..."

The ABVP, in its statement on "a disturbing incident", said: "The group launched an attack on students affiliated with Bachelor's and Master's programmes at School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies. The assailants, reportedly associated with Aishe Ghosh (JNUSU chief) and her cohorts, unleashed... violence against the students... Shockingly, even physically handicapped students were not spared from the brutality inflicted upon them."

DCP (Southwest) Rohit Meena said police were informed about the incident at 1:30 am on Friday. We have received multiple complaints, which are being verified, said DCP Meena.

## HC on plea by pardanashin woman: Policing is not tailored to serve interests of any religious community

MALAVIKA PRASAD  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

POLICING IS not tailored to serve the interests of any specific religious or cultural community alone and rather, has to be guided by the principles of impartiality, fairness, and reasonability, the Delhi High Court said on Friday.

Stating that it cannot issue "faith-based directions" for police officers investigating criminal cases, a single-judge bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma observed that law-enforcement agencies, while respecting cultural sensitivities and religious practices, must "prioritise the common good and uphold the law without discrimination".

The observations came as the HC disposed of a plea by a "pardanashin" (veiled) Muslim woman seeking an impartial

probe after she was allegedly taken to the police station and wrongfully detained without her veil. In the final hearing, the "person-oriented prayers" raised by the woman were satisfied and withdrawn, the judgment noted.

Justice Sharma observed that police probe can't have any "room for anonymity".

The HC said: "...it is important that law enforcement agencies have the authority to identify individuals when necessary... regardless of veiling practices and also regardless of the fact that whether these practices would be covered under Article 25 (freedom of religion) in the Constitution or not."

The woman had sought sensitisation of the Delhi Police on religious and social customs and practices of all women who observe purdah, belonging to any religion, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

### BRIEFLY

Waqf case: No bail to AAP's Amanatullah

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Friday dismissed AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan's anticipatory bail plea in the Waqf Board case, being probed by the ED, as per which the accused acquired "huge proceeds of crime" in cash via illegal staff recruitment and invested the amount to purchase immovable assets in the name of his aides. On February 17, the MLA moved the bail plea before special judge Rakesh Syal, citing an apprehension that he may be arrested if he joined the probe. He had argued that he was ready to join the probe if the court granted him protection from arrest.

YSRCP MP's son approver in CBI case now

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Thursday allowed Magunta Raghava Reddy, the son of YSR Congress Party MP from Ongole Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, to turn approver in the CBI's case related to the Delhi excise policy case. Special Judge M K Nagpal in an order allowed Raghava's plea and granted him pardon in the case. Raghava was allegedly a part of the group, with others including P Sarath Chandra Reddy, the son of P V Ramprasad Reddy, founder of Aurobindo Pharma. ENS

'FRAUD' CARRIED OUT OVER 15 YEARS

## Noida authority paid Rs 117.56 cr to ineligible farmers: SIT report

DHEERAJ MISHRA  
NOIDA, MARCH 1

A SPECIAL Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government has found that the Noida authority "illegally" paid Rs 117.56 crore to ineligible farmers in alleged collusion and connivance with its officers as additional compensation for land acquisition in the last 15 years.

The SIT, set up after a Supreme

Court order, examined 1198 land acquisition records from April 1, 2009 till 2023 and found that compensation had been paid at increased rates in 20 cases despite "no legal obligation" on the Noida Authority.

The SIT raises questions over the role of then-Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rama Raman and Additional CEO Rajesh Prakash.

"...It is clear...that the respective files form the basis for giving payment, but the payment files should have been thoroughly examined at the level of Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Additional Chief Executive Officer," the SIT report dated January 06, 2024 states.

In most, the rate of Rs. 33.32 per square yard was passed by the Special Land Acquisition Officer; the farmers challenged this, resulting in its increase to Rs. 93.75 per square yard by the District Court, Ghaziabad in 1990s. The Noida Authority challenged this verdict and filed a first appeal in the Allahabad High Court which upheld the lower court's judgement in July 2014.

The authority paid farmers after the approval of CEO in 2014-15, but in June 2015, the farmers moved a highly time-barred ap-

peal before the High Court, which does not fall in the category of regular appeal, the SIT stated.

After this, on behalf of the landowners, an application was presented to the CEO noting that they demanded compensation at the rate of Rs. 300 per square yard but will settle for Rs. 297.

According to the SIT, the Junior Assistant submitted a notice sheet showing the liability of 15 percent interest on the Authority

citing that the first appeal was pending in the court. The court disposed of the case noting "The Appeal is dismissed as withdrawn." A fresh application was then submitted and the CEO approved the proposal with hiked compensation.

The SIT said that "it was not proper" to file first appeal at this stage if the case had already been disposed by the HC in 2014 and that the Authority compromised with farmers at the rate of Rs. 297 per square yard.

"...there was no increase in the rates of compensation fixed by the reference court. It was not proper to organize the first appeal from the level of the farmers concerned. But this fact was not taken into consideration," said the SIT.

"Nearly 22 years after the order...the first appeals were organized by the concerned farmers in a planned manner. Taking advantage of the unclear situation, the farmers made systematic and time-barred appeals with the aim of reaching an agreement with the Noida Authority and getting compensation at an increased rate..." it also stated.

There was, according to the

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL MANAGEMENT (NCSCM)  
(Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)

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Director, NCSCM

'Finally have a home': Registration begins in Noida after Kant scheme

DHEERAJ MISHRA  
NOIDA, MARCH 1

RETIRED TEACHER Neelum Kumari, 59, can't hide her excitement. "I was living with a lot of anxiety all these years. Now, I can live in my home in peace," said Kumari as she held the registration documents of the flat she bought in 2019.

Kumari is one of the 10 buyers who were handed over the certificates at a camp at Express Zenith society in sector-77, Noida.

Two months after the implementation of Amitabh Kant relief package, the registration of flats has finally begun in the Noida Authority area.

Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner (IIDC) Manoj Kumar said most of the builders will take up the scheme and the government will not have to take "extreme action".

They filed an anticipatory bail petition in Allahabad High Court which was dismissed in January 2023 after which they moved Apex court for bail.

After coming to the notice of the case, Noida Authority filed FIR in the 12 cases while recovery certificates have been issued for over Rs. 86 crore from ineligible beneficiaries in 10 cases. Writ petitions against the recovery certificate in five cases were canceled by the High Court and the SLP filed in the Supreme Court in four cases has also been rejected.

When contacted, the then-CEO of Noida Authority Raman told *The Indian Express*: "I have not seen the report yet and the matter is subjudice. So at this stage, it would not be proper to comment. I hope that by the next hearing, things will get clear that if it is a procedural irregularity or financial."

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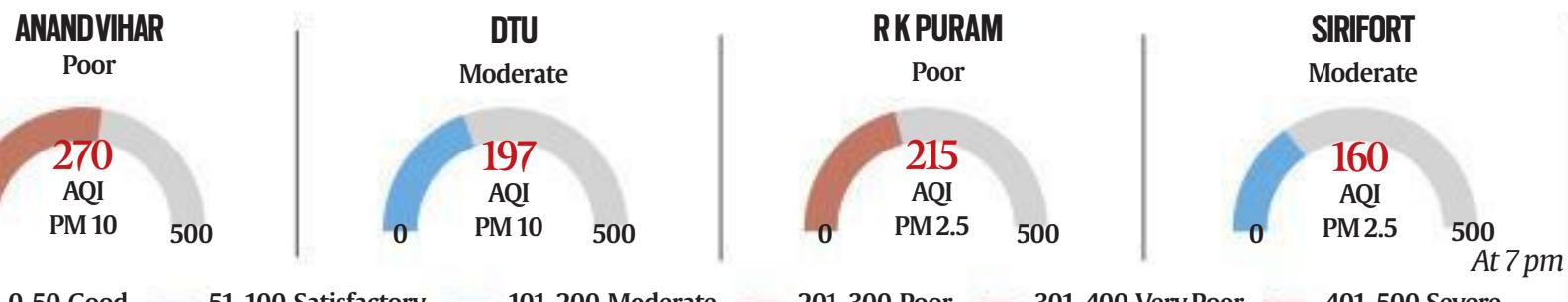
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**S K Y W A T C H**  
FORECAST: March 2  
Generally cloudy sky. Light to moderate rain with gusty winds. Possibility of hailstorm at one or two places  
**MAX: 24** 3.4°C below normal  
**MIN: 15** 1.4°C above normal

## DELHI'S ECONOMIC SURVEY 2023-24 IS OUT

## 22% increase in per capita income in 2 yrs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE PER capita income of the national capital has seen an increase of 22% in two years – from Rs 3.76 lakh in 2021-22 to Rs 4.61 lakh in 2023-24, according to the Delhi Economic Survey, presented by Delhi Finance Minister Atishi during the ongoing Budget session of the Legislative Assembly on Friday.

Atishi said the per capita income has increased despite “all the efforts of the central government to stall the functioning” of the Delhi government.

She said, “The last year has been one when every attempt was made (by the Centre) to stop the functioning of (CM Arvind) Kejriwal government... but this survey is pure data and data does not lie... No matter how many letters L-G sir writes to the CM, abuse him by saying he did not do any work, this data will not lie...”

Accusing the central government of trying to stop various works and schemes, Atishi said, “...I want the Central government and its L-G government to know that Kejriwal rukega nahi, Kejriwal jhukega nahi aur jab tak Arvind Kejriwal Delhi ke mukhyamantri hai, Delhi ka vikas rukega nahi.” (Arvind Kejriwal will neither stop nor bow down. And as long as he is the chief minister, the development of Delhi won't stop either.)”

Atishi said the Gross State

Domestic Product (GSDP) of Delhi at current prices during 2023-24 is likely to reach Rs 11.07 crore – at a growth of 9.17% over 2022-23 when it was Rs 10.14 crore.

The budget for 2024-25 will be presented on March 4.

Delhi's speed of recovering from economic slump after Covid has been highest in comparison to any other state, Atishi said, adding that the city's GSDP grew at 8.76% in 2021-22 and 7.85% in 2022-23 post-Covid.

The minister told the House that even as inflation and unemployment is “the biggest problem in the country”, the national capital's inflation rate was lesser as compared to the national figure:

From January to December 2023, the rate was 2.81% against the national rate of 5.65%. She further said that the unemployment rate in Delhi has reduced from 6.3% in 2020-21 to 1.9% in 2022-23.

According to the report, tax collection has grown at 18% in 2022-23 (provisional) as compared to the growth of 36% in 2021-22. Further, Delhi's tax revenue, which includes the receipts under GST (including Other Taxes and duties on Commodities and Services), Value Added Tax (VAT), Stamps and Registration Fees, State Excise and Motor Vehicle Tax, has together accounted for 75.53% of the state government's total revenue receipts.

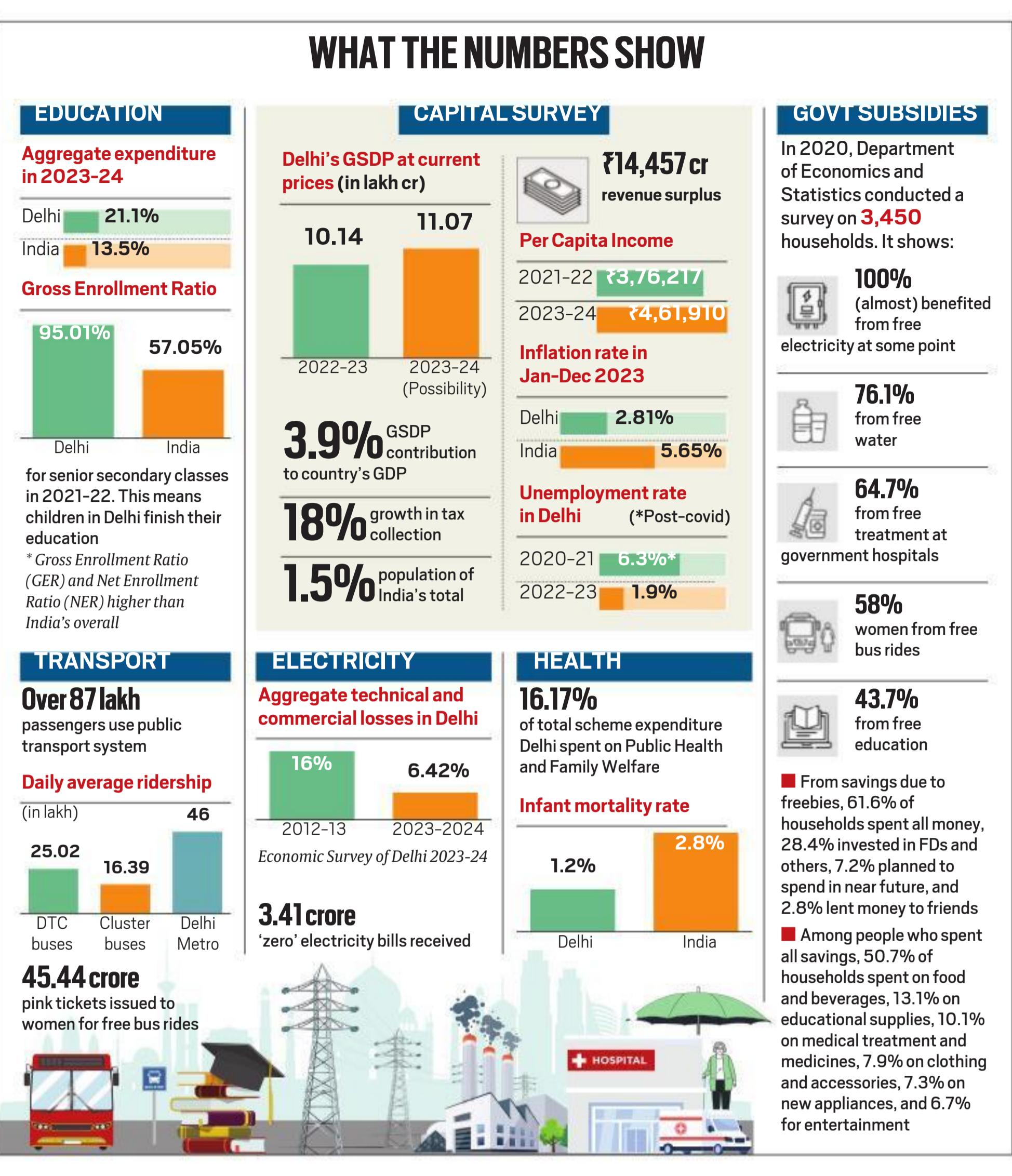
Calling the central government as “the government of bor-

rowing”, the minister said outstanding debt of the Delhi government has declined and is “well under control”.

The minister said that despite providing free electricity, water, bus tickets and other facilities, Delhi has maintained its consistent Revenue Surplus; it increased to Rs 14457 crore during 2022-23 (Provisional) as compared to Rs 3270 crore in 2021-22. The city's revenue surplus was 1.42% of GSDP during 2022-23 and 0.52% during 2023-24 (Budget Estimate).

The minister further shared that the peak demand for electricity increased from 5,653 megawatts in 2013-14 to 7,695 MW in 2022-23. “There are no power cuts in Delhi...the Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses reduced from approximately 16% in 2012-13 to 6.42% in 2022-23...in the same year, nearly 3.41 crore electricity bills with a value of 0 were generated to consumers.”

Dismissing Atishi's claims, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, “Through the Economic Survey, finance minister Atishi tried to establish that there is no inflation and unemployment, and progress is happening in Delhi... I want to ask her how many jobs have been provided in Delhi? You say you provide free electricity and water but how many tenants are getting free water and electricity? Delhi people have clearly understood your number games...”



At Rs 43,700 cr, priority sector schemes see increase of only Rs 100 crore

NIRBHAY THAKUR

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

DELHI'S BUDGET outlay on priority sector schemes for the year 2023-24 stood at Rs 43,700 crore – a rise of merely Rs 100 crore from the one in 2023, showed data from the Delhi Economic Survey, presented on Friday.

However, compared to the 2022-23 revised outlay of 38,700 crore, the share for 2023-24 recorded an increase of over 11.4%. While the revised outlay in 2023 was 38,700 crore, merely Rs 32,647 crore were spent – a shortfall of over Rs 6,000 crore (15%). Compared to the budget outlay, the shortfall in the actual expenditure was around 11,000 crores, i.e., almost 25%.

Still, comparing last year's actual expenditure to the budget expenditure of this year, there is an increase of 25%. With over a fifth of the priority sector budget, transport got over a whopping Rs 9,000 crore. Education was second with an outlay of over Rs 7,500 crore, followed by housing and urban development with an outlay of over Rs 6,360 crore. Medical and public health got over a 10th of the budget, at Rs 4,830 crore, and water supply and sanitation had an outlay of 5,442 crore. Another important sector was energy, which received over Rs 3,340 crore.

General education's 2022-23 budget outlay was Rs 5,830 crore – Rs 80 crore more than the 2023-24 outlay of Rs 5,748 crore. However, compared to the revised outlay last year, general education got Rs 240 crore extra this year. Further, compared to actual expenditure, the rise in budget outlay for 2023-24 was Rs 1,000 crore.

Medical and public health – budget estimates (BE) to BE – saw a reduction of around Rs 800 crore. Even BE 2022-23 to 2023-24, the sector saw a decline of Rs 46 crore. Compared to the actual expenditure last year, the 2023-24 budget outlay was Rs 630 crore higher.

BE for water supply and sanitation last year was Rs 6,710 crore – around Rs 1,300 crore higher than this year's budget outlay. However, merely Rs 3,674.3 crore was actually spent. Energy had a slight increase of Rs 9 crore in its budget outlay this year, as compared to last year's Rs 3,336 crore. Actual expenditure last year was Rs 3,182 crore, which was only slightly lesser than the budget and revised outlay.

While the female unemployment rate has reduced and their labour force rate has gone up marginally, men still dominate the workforce – they have a labor force participation rate of 57.1% of 2022-23, over 5 times greater.

## Enrolment in pvt schools the highest

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

WITH THE Delhi Economic Survey out – presented by finance minister Atishi in the ongoing budget session of the Assembly – data released by the Directorate of Education (DoE) showed that the share of student enrolment in private schools of the Capital in 2022-23 remained below the pre-Covid levels.

In 2022-23, this share was recorded at 36.79%, a marginal increase from 35.54% in 2021-22 however, a drop from 42.56% in 2018-19 and 42.65% in 2019-20.

The DoE's data for the Delhi Economic Survey 2023-24, released on Friday, showed that the share of enrolment in private schools in nine years – from 2014-15 to 2022-23 – peaked at 42.65% in 2019-20, an increase from 30.52% in 2014-15.

This share, then, has dropped again, to remain at less than 40%, from 2020-21 onwards.



Delhi Finance Minister Atishi with a copy of the Economic Survey, outside the Assembly on Friday. Praveen Khanna

ment in secondary and senior secondary private schools, at 27.06%. The survey also points to 15 new government schools that were opened in 2023-24, of which, six were schools of specialised excellence (SoEs) that are affiliated to the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE).

**Avg daily passenger count in buses yet to reach pre-Covid levels**

The average daily count of passengers travelling in DTC buses declined from 33.31 lakh in 2019-20 to 25.02 lakh in 2022-23, while the corresponding figure for cluster buses fell from 17.71 lakh to 16.39 lakh, according to the survey.

According to the survey, the average daily passenger count in Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and cluster buses is yet to reach pre-pandemic figures. The report showed that while the bus fleet in DTC has declined from 3,951 in 2017-18 to 3,937 in 2022-23, the cluster bus fleet has grown from 1,744 to 3,293.

-WITH PTI INPUTS

effectiveness” and “quality”.

Delhi has a total of 5,488 recognised schools, where 46.29 lakh students are enrolled. Out of this, 1,240 are government and government-aided.

The share of enrolment in private schools – primary and middle school – at 41.06%, is larger than the share of enrol-

ment in secondary and senior secondary private schools, at 27.06%. The survey also points to 15 new government schools that were opened in 2023-24, of which, six were schools of specialised excellence (SoEs) that are affiliated to the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE).

BETWEEN 2020 and 2023, the female unemployment rate in Delhi has fallen from 6.4% to 2.2% – a drop of three times in as many years, according to the recent economic survey. This has occurred due to the urban unemployment rate falling from 6.5% to 2.2% in the same period, the report further stated. Significantly, this has come at a time when labor force participation rates in women have marginally risen.

Female labour force participation rate is, however, stagnant – it has grown by a mere 0.6 percentage points in the last three years (from 10.7% to 11.3%). Rural female labour force participation, on the other hand, has fallen from 6.9% to 2.9% in the same period. This number is slightly less significant because Delhi is highly urbanised and has only 3% of its population in rural areas. Another trend that stands out is the fall in Delhi's fe-

male unemployment rate for women aged 15 to 29 years. After Nagaland and Lakshadweep, Delhi has seen the sharpest fall in the female unemployment rates (15 to 29 years) in India from 2019-20 to 2022-23, according to data.

Nagaland and Lakshadweep combined have a population of just over 20 lakhs according to the 2011 census – almost 10 times lower than Delhi. Of the states and UTs with over 1 crore population, Delhi performed the best by far. In four years, Delhi's female unemployment rate (15 to 29 years old) was almost double of India's average, while in 2022-23, it was almost half the average for the country.

While the female unemployment rate has reduced and their labour force rate has gone up marginally, men still dominate the workforce – they have a labor force participation rate of 57.1% of 2022-23, over 5 times greater.

## FAMILY INSISTS ON ALTERNATE HOUSE IN SAME AREA

## Khajuri Khas demolition: Kin of miner say didn't get notice

UPASIKHA SINGHAL

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE FAMILY of Vaqel Hasan, the Uttarakhand tunnel rescue hero whose house was demolished by the DDA earlier this week, have claimed they had not received any notice prior to the exercise even as they rejected offers for an accommodation from different quarters, insisting they only want to stay in Khajuri Khas – a locality they have been residing in since over a decade.

In November 2023, Hasan had led a team of “rat-hole” miners, which rescued 41 construction workers trapped in the Silkyara Tunnel. “We did not receive any document from the DDA. When we asked, they said why should they issue a notice for their own land,” said Shabana, Hasan's wife.

Notably, the entire Shri Ram Colony where Hasan lived figures in the list of 1,731 unauthorised colonies in the capital. “My house is unauthorised the way the entire colony is unauthorised. The whole exercise is to extort money from me,” he said. Hasan seemed unmoved by Lieutenant Governor



Vaqel Hasan led a team of ‘rat-hole’ miners in Nov 2023, and rescued 41 construction workers trapped in the Silkyara Tunnel. Chitrak Khambhati

www.indianexpress.com

## FOCUS: SLUM AREAS

## DUSIB to issue tenders to maintain toilets

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE GAUTAM Buddha Nagar police on Friday arrested four guards of a Sector 137 high-rise for allegedly thrashing a resident, after a dispute over parking a vehicle without a sticker inside the housing complex.

A video has gone viral on social media platforms, where the complainant said that he was heading towards his flat with his friends, carrying belongings,

victim man (a tenant) and a woman could be seen being attacked and thrashed by several security guards at Paras Tiera housing complex.

The argument later escalated into a full-blown assault, where the man was thrashed with a stick, slapped and punched; with the woman being thrashed too. The complainant said that he was heading towards his flat with his friends, carrying belongings,

“The argument later escalated into a full-blown assault, where the man was thrashed with a stick, slapped and punched; with the woman being thrashed too. The complainant said that he was heading towards his flat with his friends, carrying belongings, back” from the streets onto the digital sphere in the run-up to the polls.

“Namo Warriors will go to each corner of the city to gather testimonials of the positive impact that Central welfare

schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi like the Ujjwala Yojana, PMAY etc have ushered into the lives of the people of the capital as well as amplify issues they face due to the AAP Delhi government's neg-



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# Rapid Strides of Sehat Kranti

# 829

## AAM AADMI CLINICS

### DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF PUNJAB

The image shows the exterior of an Aam Aadmi Clinic. The building is modern, light-colored with red trim. It features a large white cross on the left side and a circular portrait of a man (Arvind Kejriwal) on the right. Above the entrance, there is a sign in Gurmukhi script that reads "ਆਮ ਆਦਮੀ ਕਲੀਨਿਕ" (Aam Aadmi Clinic). To the right of the entrance, there is another sign that says "ਮੰਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ". In the foreground, a man wearing a yellow turban and a red vest over a white shirt is standing with his hands joined in a greeting gesture. He is positioned in front of a dark blue background.

Chief Guest

# Arvind Kejriwal

Chief Minister, Delhi

**2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2024**  
**JALANDHAR, PUNJAB**

**Bhagwant Singh Mann** Chief Minister, Punjab

Court: Attach property of ex-minister Amarmani in 2001 kidnapping case

MANISH SAHU  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 1

A LOCAL court in Uttar Pradesh's Basti has directed the state Principal Secretary (Home) and Director General of Police (DGP) to take steps for attaching the properties of former minister Amarmani Tripathi in a 2001 kidnapping case.

The court had in December ordered the Basti district police to

attach Amarmani's properties after he failed to appear before it despite a non-bailable warrant against him in the case issued on October 16 last year after he ignored several summons. In November, the court declared him a proclaimed offender.

Government Counsel Devanand Singh said the court's latest direction comes as it suspected that the local police were avoiding action despite court directions.

## In Jharkhand, PM calls JMM corrupt, party hits back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
RANCHI, MARCH 1



PM Modi  
at Sindri in  
Dhanbad,  
Friday. ANI

SETTING THE tone for the upcoming general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said he hears one slogan wherever he goes — “Abki baar 400 paar” (this time we will cross 400 seats).

Modi was in Jharkhand's Sindri to inaugurate a fertiliser plant for which he had laid the foundation stone in May 2018. He said he inaugurated the plant five years later, which shows “Modi's guarantee” of development.

“Ye Modi ki guarantee thi aur ye Modi ki guarantee poori hui hai. (This was Modi's guarantee and it was completed). Not only Sindri, but a lot of new job avenues have been created for the people of Jharkhand,” Modi said.

He said in the last 10 years he

has started fertiliser plants in Ramagundam, Gorakhpur, Barauni and Sindri. “In the next 1.5 years, Talcher fertiliser plant (in Odisha) will start. I have full faith in myself, and in the country's people that I will inaugurate the Talcher plant,” he said.

In Dhanbad, Modi apologised to people who were standing in the sun outside the pandal. He said their patience will not go to waste. “I will ensure development and return it to you with interest, this is my guarantee.”

Targeting the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led coalition government, PM Modi said the JMM and the Congress are known for their dynastic, corrupt and appeasement politics. He said the JMM stood for “Jam Kar Kharao (devour)” and the INDIA bloc has only one agenda “to fill its coffers”.

“I have never seen such bundles of notes in my life... This money was for the future of your children but it has been looted,” Modi said, apparently referring to the recovery of huge amounts of cash from the premises of Jharkhand Congress MP Dhiraj Sahu.

Hitting back at the PM, the JMM said BJP translates to “Bharpoor Jyo Punjapatiyon (Enjoy life to the fullest, capitalists)”. The party said: “The PM talks about corruption. Did he forget that Himanta Biswa Sarma, Ajit Pawar, Praful Patel, Narayan Rane, B S Yediyurappa and Suvedu Adhikari, who were declared corrupt by the BJP, are in his party?”

SC junks OPS's plea against HC order to re-visit assets case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE SUPREME Court on Friday dismissed former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O Panneerselvam's plea challenging the Madras High Court order deciding to re-examine his discharge in a disproportionate assets case.

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and P K Mishra rejected the Special Leave Petition but said that the observations by the High Court in its order would have no bearing in finally deciding the criminal revision.

The AIADMK leader had approached the SC against the order of the Madras HC single-judge bench of Justice Anand Venkatesh, initiating suo motu revision of the order discharging him in the disproportionate assets case.

Appearing for him, senior advocate Jaideep Gupta pointed out it was a matter where the prosecution itself had withdrawn its case.

The SC, however, said it had gone through the HC order and found enough reasons “that would justify passing of such an order”.

## NIA, NSG assist Bengaluru cops in blast probe

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

sons were arrested. An NIA probe stated the IS-inspired module had also conspired to bomb a rally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On January 29, 2021, an explosion took place near the Israeli Embassy in Delhi. Though the blast did not cause any casualties, investigators found the bomb to be packed with military-grade explosive PETN, a “Hi-Watt” 9 volt battery for transistor radios and ball bearings. The IED, packed in a can, was dropped in a flowerpot across the road from the embassy. The explosion took place around 5.05 pm, damaging a few vehicles.

On June 17, 2021, a parcel exploded on a platform at Darbhanga railway station in Bihar. The parcel had been booked at Secunderabad and came to Darbhanga on Secunderabad-Darbhanga Express. No one was injured. The NIA arrested two persons in the case and accused the LeT of having engineered the blast.

On December 23, 2021, a bomb exploded in Ludhiana court complex, killing one person and leaving six others injured. The case was taken over by the NIA, which said the IED was smuggled across the border via a drone. The attack was suspected to have been carried out by Khalistani separatists.

On May 10, 2022, a Rocket-Propelled Grenade was fired at the Punjab Police's Intelligence headquarters in Mohali, triggering a blast. While no one was injured, Khalistani operatives were found to be behind the attack.

On October 23, 2022, a bomb blast occurred in front of a temple at Eswaran Kovil Street in Ukkadam near Coimbatore from a vehicle-borne IED driven by one Jamesha Mubeen, who was killed in the blast. A statement issued by the NIA said Mubeen was inspired by the IS ideology.

On April 2, 2023, at 9.30 pm, an unidentified man boarded the Alappuzha-Kannur Express without a reserved ticket and set fire to coach number D1 using inflammable liquid. Three passengers, including a child, were killed, while 10 others were injured. One Shahrukh Saifi was arrested for the attack.

On March 7, 2017, a suitcase bomb exploded in Bhopal-Ujjain passenger train, injuring 10 passengers. The attack was alleged to have been carried out by self-appointed Islamic State operatives. One of the suspects was killed in an encounter in Lucknow. Six persons

### ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

## Rethink decision to seal India-Myanmar border, Nagaland urges Centre

SUKRITA BARUAH  
GUWAHATI, MARCH 1

THE LEGISLATIVE Assembly in Nagaland, where the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party and the BJP are in power in a coalition government, Friday unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre to reconsider its decision to seal the Indo-Myanmar border. Earlier this week, the Mizoram Assembly had passed a similar resolution.

In February, the Union government announced its decision to end the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement with Myanmar and fence the entire length of the border. The FMR agreement had allowed tribes living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country without a visa and stay up to two weeks.

The Indo-Myanmar border is 1,643 kilometres long and runs along Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur. While the Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh governments welcomed the decision to scrap FMR, civil society groups and the governments in Mizoram and Nagaland have opposed it.

In the Nagaland Assembly, the resolution against the decision was moved by Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton, who is from the BJP. This represents the strongest stance taken by the Nagaland government on the issue. Both Mizoram and Nagaland have extensive ethnicities to Myanmar. The Mizos of Mizoram and the Chins of Myanmar are of the same ethnicity,

and Myanmar also has a sizeable population of Nagas, mostly in the Naga Self-Administered Zone in Myanmar's Sagar region.

The Nagaland Assembly resolution states that the end of the FMR and the fencing of the border would not only cause “hardship and inconvenience”, but also “agony to the Naga people living in the Indo-Myanmar border areas due to the fact that the traditional land holding system straddles across the international border in many areas, and people have to cross the international border on a daily basis for their normal cultivation activities”.

It also stated that these measures would “seriously disrupt the age-old historical, social, tribal, and economic ties of the Naga people living on both sides of the international border”.

The resolution urged the Centre to reconsider its decision, and called for a consultative process to work out regulations for the movement of people across borders, involving the people living along these borders and the village council authorities concerned.

During the discussion in the Assembly, Nagaland's other Deputy Chief Minister, T R Zeliang, said the Nagas on both sides of the border “lived as free people without any artificial borders until the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826 which established the current India-Myanmar boundary”. The decision to seal the border has been premised on security concerns such as the influx of illegal immigrants, drugs, and free movement of insurgents seeking shelter in Myanmar.

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER  
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE**

E-Mail ID: serv\_balasore@yahoo.in  
Ph-No-06782/260318

**"e" Procurement Notice for Bridge Work**  
Identification No.- Online Tender - Bridge Work NCB No. 87 of 2023-24  
Letter No. 1256/WE Date. 28.02.2024

1. Name of the work	-> Bridge works.			
2. Total No. of work	-> As per annexure			
3. Estimated Cost	-> As per annexure			
4. Eligible Class of Contractor	-> As per annexure			
5. Period of Completion	-> As per annexure			
6. Other details	->			
<b>Procurement Officer</b>	<b>Bid Identification No.</b>	<b>Availability of Tender on line for bidding</b>	<b>Last date &amp; Time of seeking Tender Clarification</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time of Opening Tender in O/O S.E.R.W. Circle, Balasore</b>
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore.	No. 87 of 2023-24	04/03/2024 at 11.00 A.M.	18/03/2024 up to 5.00 P.M.	19/03/2024 at 11.00 A.M.

● Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
Sd/-  
Sd/- Er.N.V.Harihar Rao  
Chief Construction Engineer  
R.W. Circle, Balasore.  
OIPR- 25105/11/0120/2324

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH	NO/AL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HSAMB ROHTAK	PDS HIGH MAST LIGHTING INSTALLATION SERVICE LINE AND CONSTRUCTION OF CONTROL ROOM 15' X 18' IN NVM AT LOHARU (PHASE-I) (HON BLE C.M. ANNOUNCEMENT CODE 25359 DATED 07.03.2020) + 1 WORKS	29.02.2024 12.03.2024	44.73 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9812100311 xenelectrohtak 2023.hsamb@gmail.com

25509/HRY  
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in)



## FARIDABAD MARATHON MY CITY MY RUN

3 March, 2024

Surajkund Mela Ground,  
Faridabad

Chief Guest

# Sh. Manohar Lal

Chief Minister, Haryana



### OPEN CATEGORY

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

HALF MARATHON (21.1 KM)

Reporting Time 5:00 am

10 KM RUN

Reporting Time 6:00 am

FUN RUN (5 KM)

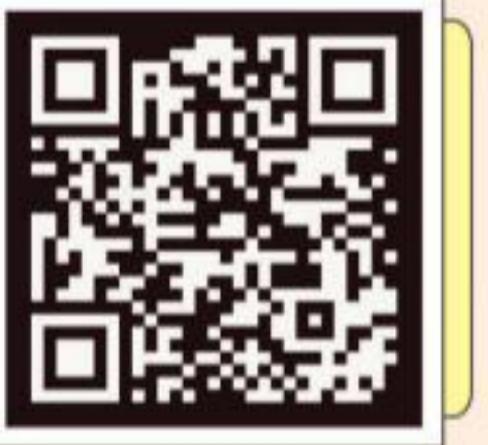
Reporting Time 6:15 am



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## SAYING IT WITH SONG

A SONG that was played in the Chhattisgarh rallies of PM Narendra Modi — *“Sapne nahn haqeeqat bunte, tabhi to sab Modi ko chunte”* — seems to have struck a chord with the BJP. The lines were seen written on the hoardings when the PM addressed party workers after winning Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh polls, and were then repeated by BJP president J P Nadda when Modi virtually addressed first-time voters a few days ago. Now the song, originally sung in female voice, has also been recorded in a male voice and is being circulated in BJP circles. It now seems set to become a prominent campaign song of the party in the Lok Sabha polls campaign.

## POLLS APART

AS THE high-level committee on simultaneous elections is almost wrapping up its report, the Congress is yet to meet its chairman, former President Ram Nath Kovind. It is learnt that the party has been invited and reminders sent, but it hasn't sent any representative to meet Kovind yet. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had in January sent his views to the committee, opposing the idea of one nation, one election, in response to the panel's request to parties.



RJD MLA  
Bharat Bind.  
File

known as RJD state president Jagdanand Singh loyalist.

"Now, he sees a secure future with the BJP for the 2025 Assembly elections. Plus, the BJP reaches out to the EBCs in the Shahabad region after poaching two Dalit leaders from the Opposition camp (Murari Gautam and Sangeeta Kumari) in the region," said a BJP leader.

An RJD leader called it a huge setback. "But we are not expelling any of our five rebels because then we will lose the status of the single-largest party in the Vidhan Sabha. These rebels can be treated as a separate group in Assembly. They may cross-vote but they are neither members of JD(U) nor BJP... The party has to take serious note of the rumbling," he said.

If Bind sticks to his line, this could be the fifth RJD MLA crossing over to the NDA in just three weeks. Since the Bihar trust vote in February, five RJD MLAs and two Congress MLAs have crossed over to the NDA. Earlier, RJD MLAs Sangeeta Kumari, Prahlad Yadav, Chetan Anand, and Neelam Devi had switched sides. Congress MLAs Murari Prasad Gautam and Siddharth Saurav, too, shifted allegiance.

Bind, an EBC leader from Kaimur, is a first-time MLA. A matriculate, Bind was once

VIKAS PATHAK  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE BJP may announce its first list of Lok Sabha candidates over the weekend, party leaders have said. The names were decided at a marathon meeting of the party's Central Election Committee (CEC), which went on till the early hours of Friday. "It will be speculation to guess the exact number to be announced but the list is expected to be a significant one," said a BJP leader.

The list is likely to feature some high-profile names, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as well as constituencies that the party lost last time, according to BJP insiders. The party wants to ensure its candidates for the seats it failed to win last time get ample time to campaign.

It has also informally deployed in-charges for these "weak" seats. In UP, BJP general secretary Sunil Bansal is paying additional attention to the seats the party lost last



The BJP Central Election Committee meeting, which began Thursday night, concluded around 3.30 am Friday. PTI

time, a leader said on the condition of anonymity. The party is hopeful of flipping these constituencies — it won 62 of 78 seats it contested in UP last time — in the backdrop of the Ram temple inauguration, the decision of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) to join the NDA, and a weaker Opposition compared to last time.

"The BJP's advantage against the Congress is so clear that even if the latter chooses its nominees knowing who our candidates are, the popularity of PM Modi will ensure a sweep," said a BJP leader.

Another BJP functionary pointed out that the party announced candidates for the MP and Chhattisgarh Assembly elections even before the Election Commission (EC) declared the poll schedule. A BJP leader from MP said an early announcement of the Lok Sabha candidates would send out the message of the BJP being a disciplined party with "resolute leadership".

In UP, which has the most Lok Sabha Seats at 80, the first list may have the names of about 20 candi-

dates, according to sources. The party is also expected to leave two seats for the RLD, one or two seats for the Apna Dal (S), one for the Suhdev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) and one for NISHAD Party.

The party leadership has received a panel of probable candidates for all 10 parliamentary constituencies in Haryana. This has put a question mark over the fate of the NDA in the state. The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) of Dushyant Chautala is an NDA ally and part of the ruling coalition. "While we have given a panel of names for all 10 seats, it is up to the central leadership to decide if it wants to leave a seat for the JJP," a BJP leader from Haryana said.

Amid a buzz in BJP circles that former MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan may be fielded from Vidisha, sources said BJP might announce almost all candidates or field nominees for 10 of the 29 seats in the first list. In Chhattisgarh, the buzz is that the list will feature candidates for seats in tribal belts of Surguja and Bastar.



The Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi complex in Varanasi. File

## Gyanvapi: SC to hear mosque panel's petition against HC order

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE SUPREME Court Friday agreed to hear a plea by the Gyanvapi mosque committee challenging the Allahabad High Court's finding that pleas of the Hindu petitioners seeking possession of the disputed Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi mosque complex were maintainable and not barred by The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

A three-judge bench, presided by CJI DY Chandrachud, said it will take up the plea along with other pending petitions arising out of the dispute. "We will tag this with the other Special Leave Petitions," the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, told Senior Advocate Huzefa Ahmadi who appeared for the Anjuman Intezamia Masajid Committee, Varanasi.

The Supreme Court too had taken a similar position on the 1991 Act when other petitions arising out of the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi mosque dispute came up before it earlier and said the Act does not bar the determination of religious character of a place of worship.

"Due to the interim order operating since 1998, the suit could not proceed. In the national interest, it is required that the suit must proceed expeditiously and be decided with utmost urgency with the cooperation of both the contesting parties without resorting to any dilatory tactics,"

The High Court order came on five petitions filed by the Gyanvapi mosque committee and the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board. The petitions said that the original suit (Ancient Idol of Swayambhu Lord Vishweshwar and Others vs. Anjuman Intezamia Masajid and Another) filed in 1991 was not maintainable as it was barred by The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

Directing the Varanasi court to conclude the hearing in the original suit within six months, the HC said, "...the court below shall not grant unnecessary adjournment to either of the parties."

## Manipur Assembly adopts 2022 resolution on implementing NRC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
IMPHAL, MARCH 1

THE MANIPUR Assembly has reaffirmed the resolution passed by the House on August 5, 2022, for the implementation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Manipur.

The resolution was adopted Friday in the ongoing session of the Assembly in connection with the Private Member Resolution motion moved by Naga People's Front (NPF) MLA K Leishio.

Participating in the discussion, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said the 2022 Assembly resolution was sent to Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalat. Subsequently, in 2023 Deputy Registrar General Jaspal Singh officially intimated the state Home Commissioner informing that the Centre is actively considering taking a call on the resolution to implement NRC in Manipur. He said it was better to resign from politics if the commitment to protect and safeguard the people of Manipur is not realised.

In this connection, Biren Singh wrote on X, "NRC is crucial for safeguarding the interests of our state and contributing to the greater good of our nation".

"The decision to urge the

Government of India to expedite the implementation of the NRC reflects our commitment to ensuring the security and integrity of Manipur," he said. He then urged all citizens to support this endeavour as "we strive to build a stronger, more prosperous Manipur for generations to come".

Moving his motion, NPF MLA Leishio said the current crisis has opened the Pandora's box ranging from border fencing, influx of illegal immigrants, and Free Movement Regime among others. One of the crucial issues taking centre stage is the influx of illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

"While the implementation of NRC has unfolded many debates, maintaining such a record would be in favour of the indigenous communities residing in the state. There will be merit and demerit in the exercise, but maintaining a proper record will help the state in better policy-making and streamlining administration," Leishio said. The MLA then suggested that the Private Member Resolution be converted to a government resolution.

The 2022 resolution of the Manipur Assembly to implement NRC came days after 19 tribal bodies, mostly Nagas, submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## RJD MLA takes Treasury Bench seat, sparks buzz of another switcheroo

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, MARCH 1

THE RJD faced an embarrassing moment Friday, a day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first public meeting in Bihar after Chief Minister Nitish Kumar returned to the NDA in January, with one of their MLAs seen sitting with the Treasury Bench on the last day of the Budget Session under the leadership of Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary.

Bind, an EBC leader from Kaimur, is a first-time MLA. A matriculate, Bind was once

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

FOR THE upcoming Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections, senior citizens 85 years and older will be able to opt for postal ballots as the government on Friday amended the rule to increase the eligibility age from the current limit of 80 years and above.

In a gazette notification, the Union Law Ministry amended the Conduct of Elections Rules-1961 to change the definition of senior citizens who are eligible to choose the postal ballot facility from those "above 80 years" to those "above 85 years". This, the notification said, was "after consulting the Election Commission of India".

The rules enable postal ballot voting for a "notified class of electors", which includes essen-



At a voter awareness programme in Ranchi on Friday. PTI

tial services workers, persons with disabilities, Covid-19-infected or suspected cases and senior citizens. In Section 27(A) (e), senior citizens had been defined as those above 80 years.

"In the conduct of Elections Rules-1961, in rule 27A, in clause (e), for the words and figures 'above 80 years', the words and figures 'above 85 years' shall be

substituted," the notification said.

According to the electoral roll published on February 8, out of the total 96.88 crore electors in the country, 1.85 crore were those above the age of 80 years.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar could not be reached for a comment and an EC spokesperson did not respond to request for comment.

In May last year, the poll panel had issued a similar advisory to parties to exercise restraint in their public utterances. In the latest advisory, the EC reminded parties of the MCC provisions against making appeals on caste lines or stoking communal feelings, personal attacks on rivals, and unsubstantiated claims.

"Taking note of the various trends and cases of plummeting levels of political campaign discourse in recently held elections, the EC has issued further advisory to all political parties to maintain decorum during campaigning and that star campaigners and candidates would be held responsible in case of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violations, even if indirect.

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The EC also listed out some examples of indirect MCC violations that would not be allowed, including state governments publishing advertisements about their schemes in neighbouring poll-going states "at opportune time" and carrying out registration for non-existent schemes to lure voters.

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# EXPRESS NETWORK

**PMLA CASE**

Very grounds for arrest are illegal: Bail plea of Jharkhand IAS officer

**ABHISHEK ANGAD**

RANCHI, MARCH 1

SEEKING REGULAR bail for their client, lawyers of Jharkhand IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan, who was arrested in an alleged money laundering case in May last year, told the Jharkhand High Court on Friday that the very grounds for arrest are 'illegal' as there is no 'proceeds of crime'.

This case relates to the illegal sale and purchase of 4.55 acres of Army land and assumes importance as it is the genesis of former CM Hemant Soren's arrest in the alleged money laundering case.

The Enforcement Directorate had alleged that during the investigation into the Army land case, they came to know of a syndicate operating in Jharkhand, leading the agency to Soren who, the agency said, 'illegally acquired' a property. However, Soren's lawyer Kapil Sibal had denied the claim saying that there was 'no proceeds of crime' to the offence Soren was arrested for.

The charge against 2011-batch IAS officer Ranjan is that he allegedly played a role in the 'acquisition' of 4.55 acres of army land. The ED has alleged that Ranjan 'knowingly assisted' one Jagatbandhu Tea Estate Pvt Ltd, a company said to be owned by another accused Amit Kumar Agarwal in acquiring the said land through a 'fake sale deed prepared by co-accused Pradeep Bagchi'.

During Friday's hearing, Ranjan's lawyer Abhishek Singh, however, submitted to the court that the allegations by the ED, even if accepted true, do not show Ranjan's involvement in "proceeds of crime" i.e. with a property that has a criminal or tainted status.

In substance, the allegation against the Petitioner is that he facilitated or 'knowingly assisted' the acquisition of the Morabadi land by M/s Jagatbandhu through the use of criminal means...however, in order to bring a plausible charge of money-laundering, the prosecution has to allege Ranjan's involvement with a process or activity connected with property that already has the status or quality of 'criminal property,' the bail petition stated.

## Sukhu calls rebel MLAs snakes, but sends Vikramaditya to meet them

Pratibha continues to criticise CM, defends disqualified MLAs

**SAURABH PARASHAR**

SHIMLA, MARCH 1

THE POLITICS within the ruling Congress in Himachal Pradesh continued to simmer Friday with Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu saying he asked Cabinet minister Vikramaditya Singh to meet the disqualified MLAs, in what appeared to be a firefighting measure, even as he called the same six legislators "kaale naag (black serpents)".

Sukhu also took some administrative steps to pacify the disgruntled faction of the leaders even as party's state unit chief and Vikramaditya's mother Pratibha Singh continued to criticize him.

Vikramaditya, meanwhile, met the six disqualified legislators in Panchkula on his way to

## This summer, brace for above-normal max temperatures, prolonged heatwaves: IMD

**ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE SUMMER of 2024 will be hot, as the season would witness above-normal temperatures and above-normal number of heatwave days from March to May, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast issued Friday predicted. This comes with El Nino conditions that are set to persist till May.

"El Nino conditions will continue this summer, and we have seen in the past that El Nino conditions are expected over the region during the month, with

wave conditions...overall, El Nino could have an impact on heatwave conditions, leading to higher-than-normal number of heatwave days," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, the Director General of IMD.

Above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures are expected over most parts of the country from March to May, stated the IMD forecast for the season.

With the summer setting in over south peninsular India in March, above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures are expected over the region during the month, with

heatwave conditions expected in northeast peninsular India, including parts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and adjoining Karnataka and some areas of Odisha, going by the forecast.

This year, the south peninsular India has recorded the warmest February from 1901 onwards, with a mean temperature of 27.13 degrees Celsius, which is 1.2 degrees above the normal of 25.93 degrees Celsius.

The IMD said in its forecast that hot-and-humid weather could prevail over Kerala on March 1 and "improve thereafter."

Northwest India could be

spared the heat, at least for the first two weeks of March, with rainfall likely to be brought in by western disturbances to the region.

"In March, up to the second week, we are expecting consecutive western disturbances over the Himalayan region and the adjoining plains, and therefore we are not expecting any heatwave conditions in March over this area...we will have good rainfall activity," Mohapatra said.

A western disturbance that now lies over Afghanistan is likely to move eastwards, and this system, along with moisture from the Arabian Sea, could

bring widespread rainfall and thunderstorms, and isolated heavy rainfall or snowfall over the western Himalayan region till March 3. This could also bring rainfall, thunderstorms, and gusty winds of 30 to 40 kmph over the plains of northwest India — Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and northern Madhya Pradesh from March 1 to 3, going by the forecast.

The rainfall is likely to come close on the heels of what has been a 46 per cent deficit in rainfall over northwest India from January 1 to February 29.

**JET ENGINES TO MISSILES**

## Defence signs deals worth ₹39k cr with Indian firms

**AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

WITH THE financial year drawing to a close, the Ministry of Defence signed five major capital acquisition contracts worth ₹39,125 crore on Friday. All the deals — for BrahMos missiles to fighter jet engines and high-power radars — were signed with domestic manufacturers, both state-owned and private.

"It would help increase the indigenous content of future Repair and Overhaul (ROH) tasks of RD-33 aero-engines," the statement said.

On the procurement of CIWS from L&T (at a cost of ₹7,668.82 crore), the Ministry said the CIWS will provide terminal air defence to select locations in the country while the project will boost active participation of Indian aerospace, Defence and associated industries including MSMEs.

The IAF's existing long-range radars are also being replaced with modern active aperture phased array-based High Power Radars (HPR), which come with advanced surveillance features.

The contract for procurement of HPR at a cost of ₹5,250 crore for procurement of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and ship-borne BrahMos systems, which was recently cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Yunus was among those arrested for probe in the 2002 Ghatkopar blast case. Those arrested along with Yunus were all acquitted or discharged of all charges.

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Another contract — ₹5,250 crore for procurement of RD-33 Aero-engines for MiG-29 aircraft — was signed with state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

The remaining two — worth ₹13,369 crore — were sealed with Larsen & Toubro Limited for Close-in Weapon System (CIWS) and High Power Radars (HPR). CIWS are systems that help destroy short-range missiles and aircraft that breach the outer defences.

According to the Ministry statement, the RD-33 Aero Engines will help the Indian Air Force to procure at a cost of ₹988.07 crore, will be the Navy's primary weapon for maritime operations.

## Hedgewar celebrated Lahore declaration by Nehru, went to jail for freedom: Hosabale

**DEEPTIMAN TIWARY**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

RSS SARKARYAVAH Dattatreya Hosabale Friday hit out at people questioning the Sangh's contribution to the freedom struggle.

At an event to launch the book, *Man of the Millenia – Dr Hedgewar*, in the Parliament complex, Hosabale said RSS founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar went to jail for independence. When Jawaharlal Nehru declared Purna Swaraj at Lahore in 1929, it was celebrated with greetings to the Congress in all Sangh shakhas, he added.

He said: "Later, when during the Lahore Congress, Nehruji proposed *purnaswaraj* resolution, Dr Hedgewar said that January 26 should be celebrated with pomp and gaiety by all Sangh shakhas. He sent letters across the country asking for resolutions to be passed on this, greeting the Congress. Such programmes were then held in all the shakhas."

"For the country's freedom, he (Hedgewar) went to jail twice, in 1921 and 1931," Hosabale said.



RSS  
Sarkaryava  
Dattatreya  
Hosabale

**ALOK DESHPANDE**

MUMBAI, MARCH 1

IN A bid to win over state government employees demanding the old pension scheme's (OPS) reinstatement, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, on the budget session's last day Friday, announced the revised National Pension Scheme (NPS) in the Maharashtra Assembly, where market linked risks in the NPS will be borne by the government.

This will be a one time option and employees have to opt within the next six months if they choose to remain under the old NPS or the revised one. In February, the state government had issued an order awarding OPS to 26,000 government employees who were chosen before November 2005.

As per the new scheme, employees will have the option to get pension of 50 per cent based on their last drawn salary and

Delhi, where he was also scheduled to hold talks with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge.

The PWD minister, who sparked speculation by updating his Facebook bio to 'Himachal ka sewak', spent approximately three hours with the legislators. A source close to him said: "Vikramaditya expressed disappointment over CM's language for the rebel MLAs. Despite his efforts to convince them to return to the party fold, it is evident that the six rebels have strong support from the central leader-

ship of the BJP."

Vikramaditya declined to comment. He was also scheduled to meet Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari during his two-day trip to Delhi.

In Shimla, the CM told reporters that the PWD minister informed him Thursday that some of the Congress rebels wished to come back. He said Vikramaditya will meet Kharge. "But there is no threat to the (state) government," he claimed.

Meanwhile, Pratibha Singh defended the disqualified MLAs, saying it was natural for them to be upset due to a lack of acknowledgement and communication from the party leadership. "When it has been more than a year and you take no cognizance or listen to them, it is natural for them to be upset," she said.

Vikramaditya, meanwhile, met the six disqualified legislators in Panchkula on his way to

the pre-wedding bash of Anant Ambani in Jamnagar on Friday.

**BASHAARAT MASOOD**

SRINAGAR, MARCH 1

BARELY HOURS after returning home after five years of incarceration, Srinagar-based journalist Asif Sultan was arrested again by the J&K police in another case.

Sultan was released from Uttar Pradesh's Ambedkar Nagar district jail on Wednesday and re-arrested on Thursday from his residence in Srinagar. The police have secured a five-day remand of Sultan, said sources.

They said that when he returned home on Thursday, he received a call from the police asking him to report to the local police station where he was detained again.

His arrest in 2018 under the

stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) had attracted international condemnation and several international press freedom organisations had called for his release.

Family sources said Sultan, who was lodged in Srinagar Central jail till April 2022, was moved to a jail in Uttar Pradesh under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

They said that when he returned home on Thursday, he received a call from the police asking him to report to the local police station where he was detained again.

On December 7 last year, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh had quashed Sultan's detention under PSA calling it "illegal and unsustainable".

While the J&K police have not made any statement over the development, official sources said Sultan has been arrested in a 2019 case registered at the Rainawari police station over an agitation of inmates inside the Srinagar Central Jail. The jail inmates were protesting against shifting of some prisoners outside the state and allegedly set some furniture on fire.

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# SC dismisses PIL seeking to digitally monitor MPs, MLAs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

THE SUPREME Court on Friday rejected a Public Interest Litigation seeking direction to "digitally monitor" all Members of Parliament and state legislators, reminding the petitioner that even legislators have the right to privacy.

"We cannot put some chips on their legs or hands to monitor what they do...how can we digitally monitor? There is something called the right to privacy also. We can't digitally monitor all MPs and MLAs in the country," Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said as the petition came up for hearing.

The PIL petitioner Surinder Nath Kundra said: "We are equal co-masters of the nation and at the time of elections, we appoint all these MPs, MLAs as our salaried representatives under the Representation of People Act-1950 whereby their role is to represent our opinion on various issues." He said that after getting elected, they however start to rule upon people rather than represent them.

The CJI said: "You can't say that about every MP. You may have a grievance against a particular person. But you cannot make a charge against all MPs."

The petitioner said that under

Maoists kill BJP leader, 8th in Chhattisgarh since last year

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
RAIPUR, MARCH 1

A BJP leader was murdered allegedly by Maoists in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Friday night. This is the first murder of a BJP leader by Maoists in the state this year and eighth since last year.

The deceased, Triputati Katla, was a Janpat Panchayat member and was living in Bijapur headquarters area. Katla was attacked allegedly by a Maoist team using sharp weapons around 8 pm when he was returning after attending a wedding in Toyner village. He was rushed to the district hospital where he was declared dead.

In December last year, Komal Manjhi, a BJP worker, was killed by Maoists in Narayanpur district. In November last year, Ratan Dubey, 50, a BJP poll coordinator and the party's deputy chief in Narayanpur district, was murdered. On October 20, Birju Taram (53), another BJP worker, was shot dead. On June 21, Kaka Arjun, a 40-year-old former sarpanch in Bijapur district, was murdered. In February last year, three other BJP workers were killed in separate incidents.

Dismissing the plea, the court said "a bare recital of the reliefs which are sought would be sufficient to indicate that the petition is a misuse of the process and cannot be entertained".

Desisting from imposing costs,

it cautioned him not to file such petitions in future.

# EPFO Kochi pays man's wife month after he died by suicide over PF denial

SHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
MARCH 1

THE EPFO regional office in Kochi has paid the Provident Fund (PF) amount of the retired employee who ended his life at the office last month by consuming poison.

The victim, KPSivaraman, 69, who retired from Apollo Tyres, was a regular visitor at the EPFO office for the past nine years, after his PF benefits were kept on hold over technical issues. The EPFO officials had demanded his school certificate, which he could not provide, leading to the denial

of the PF amount. After Sivaraman's death on February 7, the Ernakulam district committee of the Provident Fund Pensioners Association had approached the EPFO seeking urgent action to release the benefits to Sivaraman's wife.

Association general secretary KJ Alfred said after the death of

Sivaraman, the EPFO paid the PF amount to the tune of Rs 94,000. They did not insist on the school certificate or any other documents to release the amount. He said the association had moved a petition in the Kerala High Court seeking steps to avert such incidents and action against erring officials.

**HARYANA REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY**  
Mini Secretariat, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sector-1, Panchkula.  
E-mail: hrerapl-hrv@gov.in, officer.rera.hrv@gmail.com  
Website: www.harvanara.gov.in

## PUBLIC NOTICE

For kind attention of allottees of the Real Estate Project - "RPlaza79" being developed by Sunrays Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd. on land measuring 2.725 Acres situated in Sector-79, Faridabad, Haryana bearing registration no. HRERA-PKL-FBD-264-2017 dated 03.10.2017 valid upto 02.12.2020.

1. The above-mentioned project was registered with HRERA Panchkula vide Registration No. HRERA-PKL-FBD-264-2017 dated 03.10.2017 valid upto 02.12.2020.

2. The promoter has requested the Authority that instead of revoking the registration on its expiry, the Authority may permit it to remain in force for further two years & nine months subject to such further terms and conditions as it deems fit to impose in the interest of the allottees and any such terms and conditions so imposed shall be binding on the promoter.

3. The Authority is considering the application of the promoter to permit continuation of the registration certificate under section 7(3) of the Act for this project. However, the first right of refusal for carrying out of the remaining development works is that of the association of allottees. Therefore, the Authority hereby invite objections from the association of allottees in particular and any other concerned persons in general.

4. The objections shall be filed in the registry of the Authority before 11.03.2024 which will be considered by the Authority under section 7(3) of the Act.

Executive Director,  
HRERA Panchkula

25546

**MANIPUR UNIVERSITY**  
CANCHIPUR : IMPLB-795003  
MANIPUR  
**NOTICE**  
Dated, the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024  
No. MU/5-124/2024/FCY : It is hereby notified that the University is inviting application for 68 (sixty eight) posts of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor for 31 Departments. Last date for submission of application forms is 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Details may be downloaded from the University website [www.manipuruniv.ac.in](http://www.manipuruniv.ac.in)  
(Prof. W. Chandbabu Singh)  
Registrar

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PUNE**  
(An Autonomous Institution of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)  
Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune-411008. Website: [www.iiserpune.ac.in](http://www.iiserpune.ac.in)  
**Global Tender Notice (E-Procurement Mode)**  
IISER Pune invites bids from Original Equipment Manufacturers, Foreign Principals and Indian Agents of Foreign Principals, Authorized Distributors of Original Equipment Manufacturer for procurement of Multi-users X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy (XPS) Facility. Tender documents are published on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and <https://www.iiserpune.ac.in/tenders>  
Advt. No: IISER/S&P/17/23-24 Dated 23/02/2024 Director

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PUNE**  
(An Autonomous Institution of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)  
Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune-411008. Website: [www.iiserpune.ac.in](http://www.iiserpune.ac.in)  
**Global Tender Notice (E-Procurement Mode)**  
IISER Pune invites bids from Original Equipment Manufacturers, Foreign Principals and Indian Agents of Foreign Principals, Authorized Distributors of Original Equipment Manufacturer for procurement High end Laser Scanning Confocal Microscope with high sensitive detectors. Tender documents are published on <https://gem.gov.in> and <https://www.iiserpune.ac.in/tenders>  
Advt. No: IISER/S&P/18/23-24 Dated 29/02/2024 Director

**GURU GHASIDAS VISHWAVIDYALAYA**  
(A Central University established by the Central Universities Act, 2009, No.25 of 2009)  
KONI, BILASPUR-495 009 (C.G.) INDIA,  
Tel. +91-7752-260342, Fax - +91-7752-260154, 260148, website - [www.ggu.ac.in](http://www.ggu.ac.in)

Ref. No 558/Admission/Academic/24  
ADMISSION NOTICE (2024-25)

Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur invites online applications for admission to the various programmes for the academic session 2024-25 through Common University Entrance Test CUET (UG) 2024 to be conducted by NTA.

- (a) Programmes available for admission:
  - Honours Programmes: B. Com (Honours), BSW, BA (Honours)-Anthropology, English, Hindi, Journalism & Mass Communication, Economics, History, Political Science,
  - B. Sc. (Honours)- Anthropology, Biotechnology, Botany, Forensic Science, Chemistry, Computer Science, Zoology, Mathematics, Physics, Electronics, Rural Technology, B. Pharm, B.Sc. in Forestry,
  - 5 years Integrated BA-LLB, B. Com-LLB
  - Programmes under self-financing scheme- Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA), Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) - Diploma programme: Diploma in Pharmacy,
- (b) For admission procedure, eligibility, number of seats, reservation policy, Entrance Test provisions, fees and mapping of programmes subject to test, please refer to "Admission Notice 2024-25" available on university website [www.new.ggu.ac.in](http://www.new.ggu.ac.in) and <https://exams.nta.ac.in/CUET-UG>.
- (c) As the entrance test will be conducted by NTA, therefore, the University will follow the admission procedure and syllabus for entrance test as notified by the NTA for CUET UG. Interested candidates have to visit the links provided above for all updates regularly.
- (d) Important dates:
  - Start of Online Application Process in CUET NTA Portal : 27.02.2024
  - Closing date of Online submission of Application forms : 26.03.2024

Registrar (Acting)

**कनारा बँक Canara Bank**  
A Government of India Undertaking  
सरत सरकार का उपकरण  
सिंडिकेट Syndicate

Asset Recovery Management Branch (D.P.-17415), Ground floor, Luv Kush Tower, Exhibition Road, PATNA - 800001  
Ph: 8102916048, Email: cb17415@canarabank.com

## PROPERTY FOR E-AUCTION NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) & 6 (2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/hypothecated/Pledged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Canara Bank, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on 20.03.2024. Details are as under:

Sl. No.	Name/Address/ Contact No./ A/c No. & IFSC Code of the Branch	Name and Address of the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s)	Outstanding In Rs.	Details of Property	Reserve Price (in Rs) EMD Bid Multiplier
1.	ARM Branch Patna Contact No. 8102916048 A/c No. 209272434 IFSC Code: CNRB0017415	1) M/s Jai Maa Bhawani Construction Pvt. Ltd. (Borrower), Address- Registered Office at Village-Deodha, P.O-Mahanandpur, P.S -Dipnagar, Biharsharif, Dist-Nalanda, Bihar-803101, 2) Lalit Kumar Singh (Director/ Guarantor) S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh residing at Address - Village-Deodha, P.O- Mahanandpur, P.S -Dipnagar, Biharsharif, Dist-Nalanda, Bihar-803101, 3) Smt. Indu Devi (Director/ Guarantor) W/o Lalit Kumar Singh, 4) Sri Shambhu Sharan Singh (Guarantor) S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh, 5) Sri. Awadh Kishore Singh (Guarantor) S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh, 6) Smt. Manju Devi (Guarantor) W/o Late Parshuram Singh all four (i.e. sl.no.3, 4, 5, 6) residing at Village- Deodha, P.O-Mahanandpur, P.S-Dipnagar, Biharsharif, Nalanda, Near-Pawapuri station, Bihar-803101.	₹4,29,37,878.58 (Rupees Four Crore Twenty Nine Lakh Thirty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Eight & Fifty Eight Paisa Only) together with future interest and charges from 01.11.2023 till clearance of entire liability	Property no.1):- EMT of three Properties (a), (b) & (c) are jointly in the name of as follows:- A) Sri. Shambhu Sharan Singh, B) Sri. Prashuram Singh, C) Sri. Awadh Kishore Singh (All name mentioned A.B,C are sons of Late Bhishm Narayan Singh), D) Smt. Indu Devi W/o Sri. Lalit Kumar Singh. (a) All that part and parcel of land situated at Mauza- Kamarpur Paharpur, Thana Dipnagar, Thana No.-97 Tauzi No. 17507, 11091 and 11013 Khata No 548,522,510. Khesra (Plot) No-2365, 2366, 2367. Total area Of Land 34 and 3/4 decimal as per deed no.7580 dated 07.07.2000 and Bounded by:- North- Nawal Yadav, South- Alang and Nathun Sao, East- Dayamanti Devi (Vendor no.2), West- Demarcation Line (Siman) of village Dewdhwa. Thus total area of land is 103.25 Decimal as per deed no.7580 dated 07.07.2000 (Actual Area as per site 102.32 decimal is only on sale)	₹3,22,30,000/- ₹32,23,000/- ₹10,000/-

Property no.2):- All that part and parcel of land situated at Mauza- Manaurp Devdhwa, Thana Dipnagar, Tauzi No- 11703, Thana No- 318, Khata No- 390 Khesra No- 520, Area of land 11 decimal (5 1/2+ 5 1/2)decimal as per deed no.6973 and 6974 both dated 01.07.1992, District & Sub- Registry-Nalanda, (Biharsharif) owned by Lalit Kumar Singh S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh. Bounded by:- North-Railway Quarter, South-Kailash Singh, East- Plot No 520, Pratap Narayan Singh, West - H

Property no.3):- All that part and parcel of land situated at Mauza- Kamarpur Paharpur Thana- Dipnagar Thana No.-97 Tauzi No. 17507, Khata No-17507, Khata No. 581 and 574, Khesra No- 2379,2380, Total area of land is 14 1/2 decimal (2 3/4+ 2 3/4+ 4+3) as per deed no.13925,13926,13927,13928,13929 all dated 03.08.1987 (Actual Area as per site-10.50 Decimal is only on sale) Distt and Sub Registry office , Nalanda (Biharsharif) Owned by Lalit Kumar Singh S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh. Bounded by :- North-Parshuram, South- Mangar Yadav, East- Ranchi Road NH 31, West- Plot no.2379.

Property no.4):- All that part and parcel of land situated at Mauza- Manaurp Devdhwa, Thana Dipnagar, Tauzi No- 11703, Thana No- 318, Khata No- 390 Khesra No- 520, Area of land 11 decimal (5 1/2+ 5 1/2)decimal as per deed no.6973 and 6974 both dated 01.07.1992, District & Sub- Registry-Nalanda, (Biharsharif) owned by Lalit Kumar Singh S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh. Bounded by:- North-Railway Quarter, South-Kailash Singh, East- Plot No 520, Pratap Narayan Singh, West - H

Property no.5):- All that part and parcel of land situated at Mauza- Manaurp Devdhwa, Thana Dipnagar, Tauzi No- 11703, Thana No- 318, Khata No- 390 Khesra No- 520, Area of land 11 decimal (5 1/2+ 5 1/2)decimal as per deed no.6973 and 6974 both dated 01.07.1992, District & Sub- Registry-Nalanda, (Biharsharif) owned by Lalit Kumar Singh S/o Sri Bhism Narayan Singh. Bounded by:- North-Railway Quarter, South-Kailash Singh, East- Plot No 520, Pratap Narayan Singh, West - H

Last Date of EMD 18.03.2024 by 4.00 P.M.  
For Detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in [www.canarabank.com](http://www.canarabank.com)

Date : 29.02.2024  
Place : Patna

Authorized Officer (Canara Bank)

LAST DATE FOR ONLINE APPLICATION IS 10 MARCH 2024  
For eligibility criteria and specific details for the batch, visit [www.joinindiannavy.gov.in](http://www.joinindiannavy.gov.in) and  
Scan this QR Code to apply online  
EMPLOYMENT NEWS DATED 24 FEBRUARY 2024



\* These vacancies are tentative and may be changed depending on availability of training slots.

cb10701/130033/23234

**O**N OCTOBER 31, 1964, the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri inaugurated a 50-tonne-per-day cattle feed plant of the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union, better known as Amul.

A couple of days before the function, Verghe Kurien, Amul's 43-year-old general manager, got a message from then Gujarat Chief Minister Balwantrai Mehta. The Prime Minister, Kurien was told, would not merely open the feed factory at Kanjari, about 8 km from the cooperative's dairy in Anand, but wanted to also go to a village and stay overnight at the home of a farmer supplying milk to the Amul society there.

The village that Kurien identified was Ajarpura. Nearly 15 km from Anand, it had been visited nine years earlier — again on Sardar Patel's birth anniversary — by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi. The occasion then was the inauguration of Amul's (and the world's first) buffalo milk powder manufacturing plant. The difference this time was that Shastri was keen to not just "see", but also interact freely with the villagers sans any intrusive police presence.

It was a challenging request. But Kurien, like always, found a solution. He convinced Rambhai Patel, a farmer-member of the Ajarpura Milk Producers' Co-operative Society and also owner of a tobacco-processing facility in the village, to host the distinguished visitor. For security reasons, he didn't reveal who the guest-to-be actually was.

"He's a foreigner whom I know," Kurien lied to Patel. "How will he stay here and what would he eat?", the latter asked. Kurien replied: "Don't worry about that. You know foreigners are crazy and like to experience things. Ensure the place is tidy and a clean bathroom. Give him the same food that you eat."

#### The start of a revolution

The unassuming "foreigner" arrived around 6:30 in the evening on October 30. Shastri spent the night at the village, talking to its people, learning from them about the cooperative, eating a simple dinner arranged at a stunned Rambhai Patel's tobacco shed, and going to bed late at 1 a.m. in his house. He was up early morning again to see milk being procured from farmers at the society. From there, he went to inaugurate the feed plant at Kanjari and then to Anand to have a detailed discussion with Kurien.

On December 2, 1964, just over a month after his visit to Ajarpura, Shastri wrote a letter addressed to the Chief Ministers of all states. He proposed the setting up of a National Federation of Dairy Cooperatives to "transplant the spirit of Anand" all over India. He had seen for himself ordinary farmers of a village banding together to pour milk at a society collectively owned by them. This milk was procured by a dairy union that gave them a fair and remunerative price, while ensuring a steady year-round market for their produce through a nationally established brand. Incidentally, Amul, contrary to perception, is not short for Anand Milk Union Ltd.

The National Dairy Development Board was established in September 1965, with Shastri appointing Kurien as the chairman of this organisation having the mandate to replicate the "Anand Pattern". It laid the basis for the Operation Flood programme that helped turn India into the world's largest milk producer by 1998.

Ajarpura not only seeded the White Revolution, it was the first Amul dairy cooperative society (DCS) to be registered on August 7, 1947, with a union code of "0001". One of its members Chhotabhai Manoharbhai Patel was on the first board of the Kaira union, while another, Rambhai Shankarbhai Patel, became Amul chairman twice, in 1975-78 and 1987-90.

**Ajarpura moves on**  
The Ajarpura DCS had 66 farmer-mem-

# Union code 0001

## HOW A VILLAGE SEEDED INDIA'S WHITE REVOLUTION

An undercover visit by a PM was to trigger the start of a programme that led to India becoming the world's largest milk producer and Amul one of the most recognised brands. As the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation turns 50, HARISH DAMODARAN travels to the place where it all began



(Clockwise from above) Ajarpura was the first Amul dairy cooperative society (DCS) to be registered on August 7, 1947. The Ajarpura DCS sold 1,703 litres per day (LPD) in 2022-23; Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at the Ajarpura Milk Producers' Cooperative Society; Gayatriben Riteshbhai Patel, the current chairperson of the Ajarpura dairy cooperative, at her dairy farm.

Photographs by Bhupendra Rana

bers who together sold an average 355 litres per day (LPD) of milk in 1947-48. That rose to 368 members and 513 LPD in 1959-60, 580 members and 1,118 LPD in 1979-80 and 877 members and 1,391 LPD in 1989-90.

The increase hasn't been much thereafter — to 1,010 members and 1,580 LPD in 2015-

16 and a peak of 1,014 and 2,546 LPD in 2018-19. Procurement has in fact fallen since to 1,703 LPD in 2022-23.

Ajarpura is no longer a showpiece star performer like it was when Shastri, and before him Nehru, came visiting. Amul's top five DCSs ranked by average milk procure-

ment in 2022-23 were Badarpura (18,609 LPD), Undel (17,429 LPD), Bedva (12,173 LPD), Motipura (10,430 LPD) and Borsad (9,769 LPD). They are all much bigger than Ajarpura.

The reason for that has primarily to do with community profile.

Roughly two-thirds of Ajarpura's popu-

lation of 4,693 comprises Patidars. Amul's leadership, including its redoubtable founder-chairman Tribhuvandas Patel, came largely from this community. But the Patidars have gradually exited from dairy and agriculture, while seeking greener pastures overseas.

Ajarpura has some 700-750 people now living abroad — an estimated 500 in the US and the rest mainly in the United Kingdom and Canada. Vijaybhai Ramabhai Patel, whose father famously hosted Shastri nearly 60 years ago, has settled in the US. The Ajarpura DCS has 1,024 farmer-members. But out of them, only 302 are active 'pourers', with hardly a third or more Patidars.

The Patidars have also relinquished their dominance as leaders in the milk cooperatives — of Kaira and other district unions of Gujarat as well. Amul's farmers and DCS chairpersons are today mostly Kshatriyas (with surnames such as Parmar, Padhyar and Gohel), just as it is the Chaudhary or Anjana Patels in Panaskantha and Mehsana and Adavisas in the Panchmahal and Valsad unions.

Neither Kurien nor even Tribhuvandas Patel would have minded the Patidars passing on the baton to other communities. For them, milk and cooperatives were simply tools for empowering the rural producer.

#### Meet Gayatriben

The Ajarpura DCS has, since June 21, 2022, had a woman, Gayatriben Riteshbhai Patel, as its chairperson. The 44-year-old B.Com graduate, who drives her own Wagon R car, has 75 cows, 40 of them adult cows and 28 currently producing milk. She pours 300 LPD on an average and 400-500 LPD in the peak "flush" months of November-January.

Unlike many others who have moved on from dairy farming, Gayatriben, who has been Ajarpura's top supplier since 2017, wants to bring people, especially those from her community, back into the business. "It's not easy, as the ones with education are interested in going abroad. Even the less educated lot are ready to sell their land and go through the Dunki route," she says, referring to the 2023 Hindi blockbuster depicting illegal immigration to the UK.

Gayatriben's husband Riteshbhai was himself one such emigrant to the US in the early 2000s: He ran a convenience store at Charleston in South Carolina as a "hidden partner" with 5-6 other men, also from Ajarpura. He returned after about five years to Ajarpura to manage the family's 15-bigha (9 acres) farm, a retail outlet and Gayatriben's dairy. The couple also has a cable TV business operation catering to Ajarpura and three nearby villages.

The Ajarpura DCS paid an average price of Rs 43.01 per litre for milk supplied by its members in 2022-23. That was inclusive of a "price difference" bonus of Rs 7.46/litre, payable from the year-end profits on sales to the Kaira union. Besides Kaira, the other district unions too market their dairy products under the Amul brand through the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation or GCMMF.

Gayatriben sells milk valued at Rs 40 lakh annually. At least 80% of that revenue goes into buying cattle feed and dry/green fodder and paying for labour, electricity and water. "The profit that I make really comes from the price difference (Rs 8 lakh) and sale of dung (Rs 1.5 lakh) and 5-7 cows (each at Rs 60,000-62,000) every year," she points out.

Dairying, according to her, is a profitable business, but requires "good management". Gayatriben engages four labourers: two from Uttar Pradesh (for feeding and milking the cows, and taking their milk to sell in the society) and two locals (for collecting the grass and dung). Her dairy farm has a covered shed, with a fan and fogging system plus rubber mats to provide cool air and comfort for the animals. She also has milking machines and a chaff cutter for the grass/straw fed to the cattle.

"I am happy, but not sure if my son (a Class 9 student at Anand's D Z Patel Higher Secondary School) would want to continue with this. Also, today's parents don't want to marry off their daughters to someone doing gai-bhains ka kaam (dairying) or even regular (crop) agriculture. There's no brand value to this business," she sums up.

Gayatriben offers a solution: "Agriculture and dairying must be made part of the school curriculum. Our children should be taught this so that they understand the importance and develop an interest in farming".

## A Bar election shows why Calcutta HC is battleground for TMC, BJP

of the contesting candidate and the name of a political party were read out on a loudspeaker.

In High Courts, the excitement over Bar elections — to choose office bearers from among professional lawyers registered with the court — is usually limited to those in the legal community. However, with the High Court taking cognisance of the allegations of sexual harassment made by women in Sandeshkhali against TMC strongmen, and weeks after a sitting judge, Abhijit Gangopadhyay, accused his senior colleague Justice Soumen Sen of working for "some political party", the political stakes this around were unusually high.

Along with mugshots of candidates, the TMC hoardings prominently displayed images of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (a lawyer by training), her nephew and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, and state Law Minister Moloy Ghatak. Another set of saffron coloured posters read "BJP Legal Department".

#### Leads: Trinamool, 10; BJP, 5

This election, held from January 29 to February 2, around 6,800 of the Bar Association's 10,000-odd members voters were eligible to vote for 51 candidates vying for 15 posts — president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, two assistant secretaries and nine executive committee members. While in the last election held in 2021 former Congress MLA Arunava Ghosh, contest-



Calcutta High Court's Bar Association elections are openly fought on party lines

ing as an Independent candidate, won the president's post, the BJP won two seats in the executive committee. All other seats were won by the TMC.

This time, the BJP is claiming a bigger victory with its candidates ahead in the crucial posts of vice-president (Krishnendu Bhattacharya) and secretary (Shankar Prasad Dalapati). TMC candidates are ahead in the posts of president (Ashok Kumar Dhandhana) and treasurer (Soumik Gangopadhyay). Of the two assistant secretary posts, the TMC (Dipanjan Datta) and BJP (Falguni Bandopadhyay) candidates have won one

seat each. Of the nine posts in the Executive Committee, the TMC has won seven while BJP candidates have won two.

Advocate Ashok Kumar Dhandhana, the TMC-backed candidate who is now leading in the election for the president's post, while insisting that he would rise above politics in his new role, said, "Lawyers are also part of the society and all advocates have their own political beliefs. Despite that, if you see the voting pattern, I got votes from BJP, CPI(M) and Congress supporters. After getting elected, I can assure that I will be the president of the Bar Association irrespective of politics."

Shankar Dalapati, the BJP-backed candidate for secretary post said, "The Bar Association is an apolitical organisation. But the way the TMC candidates campaigned this time, with photographs of the CM and Abhishek Banerjee, was unwarranted. They tarnished the image of the Bar Association."

Old-timers insist this "political polarisation" of the Bar is at its highest now.

"The attitude always was that the Bar comes first and then the party affiliation. Over the last few years, it seems to be the other way round," said senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, who began his career in the Calcutta High Court before moving to Delhi.

#### Bar vs Bench

Senior advocate Arunava Ghosh, the outgoing president of the Bar, was in August 2022 caught in a spat with Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay. In a courtroom video that went viral on social media, the judge threatened to haul up Ghosh for contempt while calling him a "hooligan" when the latter questioned why journalists were frequenting the judge's chambers. In response, Ghosh said that he "knows how to deal with a judge".

Ghosh had contested the last Bar election independently with support from Left groups. He had defeated both the TMC and BJP candidates while making a case that their influence in the Bar had led to religious polarisation.

In January 2023, lawyers allegedly affiliated to the TMC had protested outside Justice

Rajasekhar Mantha's Court Room No. 13, protesting against his orders that the state would not take any coercive action against BJP leader Suvendra Adhikari.

In 2019, state government lawyers had called for a boycott of Justice Samapti Chatterjee (now retired) after she quashed a no-confidence motion passed against the mayor of Bidhan Nagar, a BJP leader. Party MP Kalyan Banerjee, appearing for the state, had reportedly questioned the judge's integrity when she walked out of the courtroom.

In 2021, during a hearing on post-poll violence, the state government had sought the recusal of Justice Kaushik Chanda, a former ASG for the central government, on the grounds that he had ties with the BJP.

While it's not uncommon for judges and lawyers to engage in heated exchanges across the Bench, the Calcutta High Court stands out for the frequency of these exchanges, the lack of comity and the blatant politics behind such 'arguments'.

"Why blame the Bar alone? The judges are at war with each other. That sort of behaviour among the judges has also allowed the Bar to behave indifferently. After all, the Bar and the Bench mirror each other and are cut from the same cloth," said a senior advocate and a member of the Bar Library.

Meanwhile, another election — to the Lok Sabha — is round the corner. Whoever wins, the camaraderie in the courtroom is likely to be fraught.

# A stay can't be time-bound: What SC ruled, why it matters

**AJAY SINHA KARPURAM**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

"SOMETIMES, IN the quest of justice we end up doing injustice. Asian Resurfacing is a clear example..." a five-judge Constitution Bench said on Thursday, overturning a 2018 decision of the Supreme Court.

## What was the 2018 case, and what did the top court set out to do?

A three-judge Bench comprising Justices Adarsh Goel, Navin Sinha, and Rohinton Nariman were deciding a batch of cases involving the Prevention of Corruption Act, which had one aspect in common — the concerned High Court had granted a stay at some stage of the trial.

Stay orders are passed to temporarily halt judicial proceedings in order to secure

the rights of a citizen.

However, the grant of stay invariably delays the trial, irrespective of which side benefits from it.

For example, if an HC had to consider a challenge against an order framing charges (by the trial court), it would first stay the trial and then fix a date to hear arguments on framing charges. With courts swamped with criminal cases that perhaps need more immediate attention — bail cases, for example — the hearing against framing of charges gets delayed.

In India's three-tier system of courts, a trial court's decision can be challenged at every stage, not just at the final stage after a verdict is delivered. Trials are often pending for decades because a stay is in operation.

In its judgment in *Asian Resurfacing v. Central Bureau of Investigation*, the SC held that a "High Court has jurisdiction in appropriate case to consider the challenge against

an order framing charge and also to grant stay, but how such power is to be exercised and when stay ought to be granted needs to be considered further."

To address the problem of undue delays in trials, the SC held that interim orders of stay at the levels of the HC and civil court will be only valid for six months — after that, they will be automatically rescinded or "vacated".

## What impact did the ruling have?

Following the ruling, several trials on stay virtually rose from the dead, as lawyers cited *Asian Resurfacing* to alter the status quo. Trial courts started issuing non-bailable warrants for not appearing before the court — even though the HC, which had stayed the summons, may not have started hearing arguments for quashing.

This added to the load on the HCs and

burdened the average litigant; it also raised important questions of law.

These questions were framed by a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud in December last year.

First, whether the SC, under Article 142 of the Constitution, can order automatic vacation of all interim orders of the HC of staying proceedings of civil and criminal cases on the expiry of a certain period?

Second, whether the SC, under Article 142, can direct HCs to decide pending cases in which interim orders of stay of proceedings has been granted on a day-to-day basis and within a fixed period?

## On what grounds has the 2018 ruling been undone now?

The five-judge Bench held that constitutional courts should refrain from laying

down precise timelines for deciding cases. It pointed out that courts often have different patterns when it comes to their pending caseload, and the concerned court is best placed to decide which cases to prioritise.

The case was heard for a single day on December 13 last year by a Bench led by CJI Chandrachud and comprising Justices AS Oka, JB Pardiwala, Parkaj Mithal, and Manoj Misra.

Senior Advocate Rakesh Dwivedi representing the petitioner, the High Court Bar Association of Allahabad, argued that vacation of a stay is a judicial decision which needs application of mind, without which it would become arbitrary. Automatic vacation of stay would be antithetical to this principle.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the central government, argued that *Asian Resurfacing* infringes on the discretion of HCs to decide applications for vacation of stay orders under Article 226(3). He also ar-

gued that deciding timelines for judicial proceedings is a decision for Parliament to make, not the courts.

Justice Oka in his majority opinion for four judges — Justice Misra concurred in a separate opinion — held that a stay order can only come to an end after all the parties in the case have been heard.

The court also held that the Bench in *Asian Resurfacing* did not have the power to set a six-month time limit for vacating stay orders. Automatically vacating a stay order after six months would, in fact, "defeat justice" by nullifying interim orders that had been lawfully passed, without hearing the parties, the court ruled.

The court also agreed that only the legislature has the power to decide if a category of cases should be decided within a specific time.

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## THIS WORD MEANS

### IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

At least ten people were injured in a suspected IED blast in Bengaluru's Whitefield



An IED recovered by Israeli forces in 2009. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

REACTING TO the explosion in Rameshwaram Cafe during lunch hours on Friday, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that CCTV footage has revealed that a "man was seen keeping a bag in the cafe." He added: "It is not a high-intensity blast but an improvised one."

#### Home-made bomb

An IED is basically a home-made bomb. According to a factsheet by the United States Department of Homeland Security, "because they are improvised, IEDs can come in many forms, ranging from a small pipe bomb to a sophisticated device capable of causing massive damage".

They can be deployed using a vehicle; carried, placed, or thrown by a person; delivered in a package; or concealed in strategic locations. While such explosive devices have been around for over a century, the term "IED" first entered common usage during the United States' invasion of Iraq (beginning in 2003).

#### Components of an IED

Each IED comprises a few basic components, which can come in various forms, depending on resources available to the bomb-maker. These include an initiator or a triggering mechanism, (which sets the explosion off), a switch (which arms the explosive), a main charge (which causes the explosion), a power source (since most IEDs contain an electric initiator, they require an electronic power source), and a container.

Additionally, IEDs may be packed with additional materials or "enhancements" such as nails, glass, or metal fragments designed to increase the amount of shrapnel released by the explosion — and thus the damage it causes. Enhancement may also include hazardous materials such as

toxic chemicals, or radio-active circumstances. An IED packed with, say, depleted uranium would colloquially be called a "dirty bomb".

Some common materials used to build IEDs include fertilisers such as ammonium nitrate and urea nitrate, gunpowder, and hydrogen peroxide. Passengers are not allowed to carry large quantities of liquids aboard aircraft because it is possible to create IEDs on site by simply mixing certain commonly found liquids.

#### Damage IEDs cause

IEDs are not only meant to kill and injure. They have often, especially in active war zones, been used as distractions.

According to the US Department of Homeland Security, "the extent of damage caused by an IED depends on its size, construction, placement, and whether it incorporates a high explosive or propellant."

Typically, they come with a clear trade-off: While smaller bombs are easier to hide, carry, and deploy, they are also generally less powerful than larger ones.

Some notable IED attacks in India include the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, the 2008 Jaipur blasts, and the 2013 Bodh Gaya bombings. IEDs have also frequently been used by Maoist insurgents, and Kashmiri militants.

The difference between the two sets of growth rates widened to 190 basis points in Q3, a 10-year high. This large divergence is due to a sharp increase in net taxes and a fall in subsidies

**AANCHAL MAGAZINE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

INDIA'S GROSS Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate surpassed expectations to rise to a six-quarter high of 8.4% in the third quarter (October–December) of 2023–24, data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Thursday showed.

This was much higher than the 6.5% estimate for Q3 by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and similar estimates by economists.

The Q3 GDP helped push the estimate for the full year to 7.6% in the second advance estimates, from the 7.3% estimated in the first advance estimates released in January.

While there was an improvement in manufacturing, mining, construction, trade, hotels, transport and communication, and services related to broadcasting, the agricultural sector recorded a contraction in Q3.

There was, however, a sharp divergence in the growth rates based on GDP and Gross Value Added (GVA), which has led some economists to suspect that GDP may have been overstated. While GDP for Q3 was 8.4%, GVA growth was recorded 190 basis points lower at 6.5%. GDP is arrived at by adding product or indirect taxes, and excluding subsidies to GVA, which measures national income from the output side.

Another factor that seems to have contributed to real growth being overstated is lower-than-usual annual GDP deflator. It is seen growing by 1.4% in FY24 as against 6.8% in FY23, reflecting the deflation in the wholesale price index (WPI) used to calculate it.

The deflator measures changes in prices of all the goods and services produced in an economy, and thereby helps compare the levels of real economic activity from one year to the next. A lower deflator means higher real GDP growth and vice versa. In Q3, deflator increased marginally to 1.7% from 1.5% in Q2 FY24.

#### What were the key reasons behind the surge in Q3 GDP?

Barring agriculture, all other sectors posted strong growth during October–December. The GVA of 'Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry & Fishing' contracted by 0.8% in Q3 as against a 5.2% growth in the year-ago period, and 1.6% in the previous quarter.

Manufacturing grew at 11.6% in Q3 as against a low base of (-)4.8% in the year-ago period, while construction posted a strong growth of 9.5% compared with the same rate of growth in Q3 a year ago.

## DIVERGING GDP AND GVA GROWTH RATES (IN %)

	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
GVA	21.3	10	5	4.3	11.3	5	4.8	6	8.2	7.7	6.5	
GDP	22.6	9.9	5.5	4.5	12.8	5.5	4.3	6.2	8.2	8.1	8.4	
Difference	1.3	-0.1	0.5	0.2	1.5	0.5	-0.5	0.2	0	0.4	1.9	

## GVA GROWTH RATES AT BASIC PRICES (IN %)

	Oct-Dec FY24	Oct-Dec FY23
Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry & Fishing	-0.8	5.2
Mining & Quarrying	7.5	1.4
Manufacturing	11.6	-4.8
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply, Utility Services	9	8.7
Construction	9.5	9.5
Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication	6.7	9.2
Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services	7	7.7
Public Administration, Defence & Other Services	7.5	3.5
GVA at Basic Prices	6.5	4.8
Net Taxes	32	-2.6
GDP	8.4	4.3
	Oct-Dec FY24	Oct-Dec FY23
Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)	3.5%	1.8%
Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE)	-3.2%	7.1%
Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)	10.6%	5.0%

Source: The National Statistical Office (NSO)

On a sequential basis, manufacturing declined by 4.9% in October–December 2023–24. In the year-ago period too, manufacturing had posted a sequential decline of 2.5% in Q3.

Among services, Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication & Services related to Broadcasting grew 6.7% in October–December as against 9.2% in the year-ago period. Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services' grew 7.0% and Public Administration, Defence & Other Services' by 7.5%.

On the expenditure side, a rise in investments supported the GDP growth. The real estate cycle has turned (households) have risen, a large part of which is housing), and industry utilisation is back at 2019 levels thus leading to a revival in the capex cycle," Axis Bank said in a note.

There's a perceptible slowdown in private final consumption expenditure, an indicator of consumption demand, with the FY23 growth levels seen growing at a more than two-decade low (barring the pandemic year).

In Q3, private final consumption expenditure rose by 3.5% year-on-year, while government final consumption expenditure decreased by 3.2%. Gross fixed capital formation, an indicator of investment, grew by 10.6% during the third quarter.

#### What revisions were made to GDP growth rates?

Several revisions were made to the growth rates of previous financial years, and the third quarter growth rate gained from a favourable base effect from the downward revision in the year-ago period.

For October–December 2022–23, growth rate was revised down to 4.3% from 4.5%. Quarterly growth rates were also revised for the first two quarters of the current fiscal. The GDP growth estimate was revised up to 8.1% from 7.6%, while that for April–June quarter was revised to 8.2% from 7.8%. This came on the back of a downward revision in FY23 quarterly growth rates to 5.5% in July–September from 6.2% earlier and 12.8% in April–June from 13.1% earlier.

## Why is there a divergence between the two measures of growth, GVA and GDP?

The sharp divergence in GDP and GVA rates for Q3 is on account of a sharp rise in net taxes and a fall in subsidies. The difference between the two sets of growth rates widened to 190 basis points in Q3 from 40 basis points in the previous quarter.

Axis Bank in its note said the divergence is at a 10-year high, driven mainly by a rise in net taxes. Net taxes rose by 32% year-on-year in Q3 FY24 in real terms. Net taxes are calculated by adding product taxes and excluding subsidies.

IDFC First Bank said the fluctuation in net tax collections has added a lot of volatility in the GDP print in Q3. "Instead, GVA would be a better metric to look at while assessing growth as it's not impacted by fluctuation in net tax collections," it said in a note.

Government officials said the divergence between GVA and GDP rates was mainly due to a sharp fall in subsidies in the quarter because of lower payouts on fertiliser subsidies. As

## BETTING BIG

On semiconductors, government takes an important step forward. An enabling policy environment will be needed

**T**HE GOVERNMENT IS moving on its ambitious semiconductor plans. On Thursday, the Union cabinet approved three chip projects worth Rs 1.26 lakh crore. These include India's first semiconductor fabrication plant to be set up in Dholera, Gujarat, by the Tata Group. The project, which has been set up in partnership with the Taiwan-based Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC), is estimated to cost Rs 91,000 crore. Alongside, a separate Tata Group proposal for setting up an assembly plant in Assam at a cost of Rs 27,000 crore has also been cleared, along with another one by CG Power in Sanand Gujarat which involves an investment of Rs 7,600 crore. These projects follow the government's approval in June last year of Micron Technology's assembly and test facility in Gujarat.

In December 2021, looking to develop a semiconductor ecosystem in the country, the government had put in place a Rs 76,000 crore chip incentive scheme, announcing incentives for "every part of supply chain including electronic components, sub-assemblies, and finished goods." Under this, the central government offers fiscal support and state governments can offer additional incentives to attract investments. For instance, as reported in this paper, in the case of Micron, of the project cost of Rs 2.75 billion, the company will contribute \$825 million, with 50 per cent coming from the central government and 20 per cent from the Gujarat government. The Tata-PSMC plant is expected to serve industries such as high-performance computing, electric vehicles, defence and others. The chips will be primarily 28 nanometre, along with 50 nm and 55 nm.

In recent times, competition in this arena has become fierce. Countries like the US have put in place attractive schemes to facilitate investments. In fact, government support is seen as critical. Currently, South Korea, Taiwan and China account for around 70 per cent of the global manufacturing capacity, with the balance in the US and Japan. As reported in this paper, India's incentive schemes are focused on all three parts of the semiconductor ecosystem — packaging units (ATMP facilities), assembly and testing projects (OSAT plants), and full-scale foundries that can manufacture chips. In fact, the government is also setting up an R&D lab at the Semiconductor Laboratory, with the modernisation plan for the organisation involving an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore. A strong domestic ecosystem will help cater to the burgeoning demand in the country, assist in building of secure and resilient supply chains, while reducing reliance on some, the importance of which has become apparent during periods of geopolitical uncertainty. The government is providing support at a fiscal and regulatory level. It must also ensure a stable policy environment.

## LEAVE THE KIDS ALONE

Suspension of teachers in Kota school shows dangers of bringing divisive politics into spaces that must be kept safe and open

**A** THREE-ACT TRAGEDY unfolding in the Government Senior Secondary School in Rajasthan's Kota, where a *sarva dharma sadbhav natak*, a registration error and an interfaith elopement by a former student have snowballed into familiar fear-mongering over "love jihad" and religious conversion, shows, yet again, the dangers of bringing divisive politics into classrooms. The events have led to the suspension of the school's three Muslim teachers on charges of abetment. Clips of the play held on Republic Day have been circulated as evidence of the school's allegedly nefarious intent. The state's school education minister, who ordered the suspension, has promised stricter action if the charges are proven true. In recent days, minister Madan Dilawar has also made controversial statements on Mughal emperor Akbar and his place in Indian history.

The heavy-handed response of the state machinery shows that when the system becomes complicit, by commission or omission, in conspiracy theories or rumour-mongering, it makes vulnerable the precious space of the classroom. Last year, the minority-run Ganga Jamuna Higher Secondary School in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh faced the government's wrath for the Iqbal song, 'Bachche ki Dua', sung in its morning prayer, and for a poster that celebrated the academic success of its students — a majority of them from disadvantaged backgrounds — in which they were shown wearing head scarves. The school was derecognised, its principal arrested, throwing into jeopardy the future of its nearly 1,200 students. Such actions cede ground to the bigotry of individuals: The video of a teacher from a school in UP's Muzaffarnagar instructing students to hit a Muslim classmate as punishment for academic shortcoming or a Muslim teacher in a government higher secondary school in Kathua assaulting a student for writing 'Jai Shri Ram' on the blackboard show the pernicious reach of prejudice.

There is a reason why classrooms are held sacrosanct across cultures. These are spaces where the inequities of the world can be diminished and the jagged edges of political and communal schisms softened through debates and discussions. A large part of the learning in classrooms relies not merely on the curriculum but on the inclusivity that these spaces foster. At a time of heightened political polarisation, these are spaces that need to be kept safe and open. It is heartening that after the suspensions, students of the school have organised protests demanding the return of their teachers. The school administration and the local Education Department officials have refuted the accusations. They need to be heard. It's also incumbent on civil society to offer a pushback and the responsibility of the political leadership to send out a message that prejudice has no place in the classroom.

## RISOTTO, LIKE SILPHIUM

A beloved Roman herb went extinct long ago. Thanks to climate change, other cherished foods face an existential threat today

**O**NE OF THE most valuable foods in history — at one point, worth its weight in gold — is a herb that no modern human has seen. Silphium, loved by ancient Romans to the point that poetry was written about its delicious pungency, is believed to have disappeared sometime in the first century CE. Overharvested to extinction, its loss deprived the famously extravagant Roman cuisine of a key ingredient.

Nearly two millennia later, could the region be facing a culinary disaster of a similar kind? Thanks to climate change, rice cultivators in Italy's Po valley are faced with a scenario where it may no longer be possible to continue growing unique rice varieties, like arborio and carnaroli, which form the base of one of Italy's most iconic dishes, risotto.

The spectre of climate change-induced extinction now looms over several crops, from cereals to fruits. If the farmers of Po valley can no longer count on the abundant Alpine snow melt that would flood their fields in the spring, erratic rainfall and rising temperatures in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in West Africa — which produce half the world's cocoa — pose a threat to global chocolate production. A study published last year showed that "ongoing systemic shocks" to coffee production, particularly rising temperatures in regions which grow the Robusta and Arabica variety of beans, could lead to lower yields and skyrocketing prices.

The cruel irony, about how much agriculture itself has contributed to climate change, is unmissable. Efforts are underway to figure out how these and other endangered crops can be adapted to thrive in adverse conditions, including gene editing using CRISPR — all in the hope that future generations will be able to sample the pleasures of a rich, velvety risotto and experience the jolt of energy that only a good, strong cup of joe can bring.



DHARMAKIRTI JOSHI

INDIA'S GROWTH CONTINUES to surprise on the upside. The 7.6 per cent GDP growth as per the National Statistical Office's second advance estimate has surpassed all previous estimates.

On January 5, the first advance estimates had pegged GDP growth at 7.3 per cent. Additional data for two months pushing up GDP growth implies a strengthening economic momentum in the third quarter — in addition to the gains from rising net taxes (taxes minus subsidies). In comparison, growth in gross value added without the net tax impact was lower at 6.9 per cent.

Considering that for this full fiscal year, growth is now seen at 7.6 per cent with the first three quarters growing at an average of 8.2 per cent, the implicit fourth-quarter growth turns out to be 5.9 per cent. Although real GDP is still below where it would have been without the pandemic, domestic strengths and policy focus have pulled the economy closer to the 7 per cent growth path. Strengthened bank and corporate balance sheets and the government's focus on infrastructure have improved growth performance and potential. In its latest monetary policy statement, the RBI had projected India's GDP growth at 7 per cent for next year.

We expect growth to moderate from these levels next year, with high interest rates and a lower fiscal impulse (from a reduction in the fiscal deficit to 5.1 per cent of GDP) tempering demand and net tax impact on GDP normalising in the coming year. Monetary policy has limited heft to propel the economy because inflation is projected to stay above the RBI's 4 per cent target amid economic momentum. To be sure, the second advance estimates are not very relevant from the point of view of GDP growth estimates for this year. For that, the provisional estimates in May will provide a better estimate with a longer shelf life. What makes it an important release is the host of other data that comes along, including details of private consumption, savings and investment for 2022-23.

At 3 per cent growth, private consumption has trailed overall GDP growth. Rural consumption was likely slower than urban since high food inflation affects the former more and eats away discretionary spending power. This is more so when agriculture has grown a

## On the upside

Revival of private investment is critical to sustaining high growth as government stays with fiscal consolidation

mere 0.7 per cent. Last year, nominal food consumption spending went up 13 per cent. A similar trend likely played out this year given food inflation remained high. In some sectors, higher-ticket items have done better than the entry-level ones.

Interestingly, household consumption expenditure data released last week shows shifts in consumption expenditure towards non-food items over time, which typically happens with rising per capita income. Even within food, there is a shift from cereals to processed items. This new information can help adjust weightages in the consumer price index basket which is currently based on 2011-12 consumption patterns. The second important data point is the split of national savings between the government, households and the private sector. The overall savings rate (savings/GDP) at around 30 per cent for 2022-23 remains below the decadal peak with corporate savings at 11.2 per cent of GDP.

The most interesting aspect is that household savings are 61 per cent of total savings. It was the largest component and its share in GDP fell to 18.4 per cent in 2022-23. Household savings are split between financial and physical savings. Financial savings data released by the RBI and reported by NSO in its release shows a sharp fall in net financial savings of households to 5.3 per cent of GDP in 2022-23 from 7.3 per cent in 2021-22.

Net financial savings are calculated as the difference between gross savings and household borrowings/liabilities. NSO data shows that while net financial savings as a percentage of GDP fell, physical savings rose. Apparently, households used borrowings to acquire physical assets such as houses which pushed up physical savings. This is reflected in the strong housing demand. This trend is likely to have continued in this fiscal as well, since retail borrowings have increased sharply amid robust demand for assets. To boot, consumers, particularly the younger ones, have become debt-friendly. Over the years, savings in physical assets have always been higher than savings in financial assets. With the thrust on financial inclusion, the financial savings rate climbed and the gap between financial and physical savings narrowed.

Then came the pandemic, when there was

a sharp jump in the financial savings rate while physical savings dropped. In 2020-21, net financial savings rose temporarily above physical savings. Some of this was corrected after the recovery from the pandemic started. Once again, household savings in physical assets have trumped net financial savings, which hit a decadal low in 2022-23.

The disaggregated investment is the third important data point released by the NSO. This is the first time we have comprehensive data on much-tracked private corporate investments, in addition to public and household investments for 2022-23.

As anticipated, public and household investments were the faster growing investment components in fiscal 2022-23. Private corporate investment did not show any definitive sign of revival as its share in total investments was stagnant. A somewhat similar situation is playing out in the current fiscal since government and household investments have been relatively strong.

That said, there are signs of a pick-up in corporate investments in the current fiscal. Investments driven by the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, notably in pharmaceuticals and electronics, have complemented rising investments in steel and cement, which are directly linked to the government's infrastructure and housing revival.

We expect higher capacity utilisation levels in the manufacturing sector to turn into higher capex. There will also be a transition from assembly-type operations towards core/capital-intensive segments such as advanced chemistry, cell batteries and electrical vehicles under the PLI scheme. Healthy corporate balance sheets improve the ability of the corporate sector to leverage and undertake investments. A broad-based revival of private investments is critical to sustain high growth rates over the medium run as the government tempers its fast and furious investments to enable fiscal consolidation.

The private corporate sector is now primed for investments. An extra impetus can come via reduction in policy uncertainty and compliance cost. That would be a key ask from the next government.

The writer is chief economist, CRISIL



MOHAMMED SOLIMAN

THE MUNICH SECURITY Conference (MSC) and the Raisina Dialogue in Delhi recently concluded their annual sessions. Both highlighted an undeniable reality: The global community is fragmenting into distinct blocs with their own realities, priorities, and increasingly fewer commonalities compared to a decade ago. The MSC has long been a cornerstone of European security discourse; its agenda often reflects European anxieties and priorities. The Raisina Dialogue represents different perspectives on issues like the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Raisina Dialogue fosters a distinct discourse, attracting a wider range of participants, including Russian policymakers and thinkers from countries not typically present at Munich nowadays — chief among them Iran. The Raisina Dialogue and the MSC diverge sharply on the invasion of Ukraine and the current state of the international order. They raise questions regarding the widening intellectual divide between the West and the East and the ability of capitals such as Delhi, Riyadh, Doha, and Abu Dhabi to introduce a policy agenda that competes with the likes of MSC and the World Economic Forum.

Dominated by the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, Munich reflected Ukraine's centrality to the worldviews of European and American policymakers. Simply put, Ukraine served as a de-facto benchmark for evaluating bilateral relations between the West and the Rest, at least until the recent war in Gaza. While the moral imperative is certainly im-

## THE GLOBAL ORDERS

Agendas at Raisina Dialogue and Munich Conference underscore competing visions

The Raisina Dialogue saw discussions raise questions about the application and perceived inconsistencies within the rules-based order, as well as the apparent mismatch between the current global order and the actual balance of power and growing influence of various nations such as Brazil, India, and Indonesia.

portant, from a realpolitik standpoint, prioritising and upholding Ukraine's sovereignty may also be the most logical path for Europe in this era marked by interstate wars. This stems from Western concerns about Russia's potential imperial ambitions in Eastern Europe, where it may seek to establish a spatial buffer zone against what it perceives as NATO encroachment. However, what Europe considers logical, realistic, and moral may not be universally accepted — and in Raisina, it was clear that this is indeed largely the case.

The rise of the Raisina Dialogue coincides with India's growing influence and its evolving strategic approach, shifting from non-alignment to multi-alignment. Raisina, buoyed by India's successful G20 presidency, is expanding its reach and engaging a broader range of policymakers and thinkers. Interestingly, both conferences currently have limited participation from China, which reflects a point of growing alignment between Delhi and Western capitals. This year's theme, "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create," reflects the growing recognition — and the aspiration of the Rest — of a multipolar world where the West no longer holds sole sway. Standing at a direct crossroads from Munich, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar urged for increased engagement with Moscow. "Russia is increasingly turning towards Asia or other regions outside the West. It is prudent to offer Russia multiple options. If we constrain

Russia to a single option, we risk creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Other countries, particularly in Asia, must engage with Russia," Jaishankar emphasised. He added: "It is certainly in Indian national interest but it is also in global interest. A lot of doors have been shut to Russia and the West."

The Raisina Dialogue saw questions about the application and perceived inconsistencies within the rules-based order, and the actual balance of power and growing influence of Brazil, India, and Indonesia.

The widening intellectual gap between the West and the Rest presents a challenge to fostering global cooperation on security and development issues, as global policy discussions lack global buy-in. This is not a simplistic binary of Munich versus Raisina but rather a story of a fragmenting global community.

The previously dominant Davos consensus has fractured into multiple communities, each with diverging worldviews on priorities and narratives. Platforms like the Raisina Dialogue, alongside formats such as the Doha Forum, World Government Summit, and TRT World Forum, provide a space for different policy agendas, empower different voices on the global stage, and reflect the evolving global landscape, particularly the rise of Eastern powers — unimaginable decades ago.

The writer is a director at the Middle East Institute, a member of McLarty Associates, and a visiting fellow at Third Way



## MARCH 2, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### SOLUTION FOR PUNJAB

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi condemned communal and terrorist activities in Punjab and said negotiations were the only way to end a dispute. She agreed with an Opposition member that no issue should be settled on the streets. Several Lok Sabha Opposition members have been suggesting that Mrs Gandhi and Harchand Singh Longowal meet to find a solution to the Punjab tangle.

### POLICE-CRPF TUSSLE

THE CONTINUING TENSION between the Punjab police and the Central Reserve Police

Force erupted when the CRPF personnel roughed up the Amritsar deputy commissioner and the senior superintendent of police after the bomb blast at a place of worship in which three persons were killed and scores of others injured. Governor BD Pandey dashed to Amritsar following the incident.

### STRIKE IN BANGLADESH

FIVE PEOPLE, INCLUDING a seven-year-old boy, were killed when police and paramilitary forces fired on demonstrators during a violent half-day general strike in Dhaka called by political parties opposed to the 23-month-old military government of President

General Hussain Muhammad Ershad. At least 500 people, many of them students, were injured as police fired tear gas shells on crowds at the Dhaka University campus.

### BUDGET CONCESSIONS

THE UNION FINANCE Ministry has directed the administrative ministries to discuss with representatives of industries the benefits to consumers, from the excise duties concessions announced in the budget. Finance Secretary PK Kaul hoped that the excise duty concessions announced on items like cloth, khandsari sugar, paper, fans and other items would be passed on to the consumers.

# Intelligence, as we don't know it

Technology-based companies shattered the domination of oil companies in financial markets.  
With Nvidia's meteoric rise, the AI revolution seems round the corner



**OPENING ARGUMENT**  
BY MENAKA GURUSWAMY

AS A SPECIES, human beings have always been deeply innovative. Each major innovation has led to a reimagining of how we live. In the early 1900s, Albert Einstein's theories of relativity exploded our minds by explaining gravity, space and time. In 1941, the cultivation of penicillin for therapeutic use on humans exponentially helped the fight against disease and increased life spans. In the contemporary era, especially in the last few years, it is innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) that will transform what constitutes intelligent life. For soon, human beings will not be the only source of intelligence.

The developments in AI, especially generative AI, are transforming our conceptions of "work", "worker" and "expertise". In this column, I have written multiple articles on AI, and its deployment in many areas from legal adjudication to medical surgeries. There is a need for legal regulation without hampering innovations in AI. Therefore, it is entirely unsurprising to see that globally, the most rapid growth in market capitalisation in the past 12 months has been in Nvidia — a company that is fuelling the growth of advanced AI. Perhaps, Nvidia is an indicator of what kind of company will be the most valuable in the future.

For readers who do not know, Nvidia is the world's leading producer of graphics processing units (GPUs) and semiconductor chips used in AI systems. It reportedly controls about 80 per cent of the market, and each chip is estimated to cost thousands of dollars. How sought after are these GPUs? Mark Zuckerberg recently remarked that his company Meta will be placing an order for 3,50,000 of Nvidia's H100 chips by the end of this year. This one order itself will be worth billions of dollars. Nearly every large tech company needs GPUs. Do the math!

It was technology-based companies that shattered the domination of traditionally natural resource-based (oil or gas) or large manufacturing behemoths in the list of the world's highest market-capitalised companies. In 2024, Forbes' list of top five companies has Microsoft with a market capitalisation of \$3.085 trillion at number one. This is followed by Apple (\$2.889 trillion), Saudi Aramco (the only oil and gas company in the top 10), Alphabet (Google) and Amazon. Four of the world's most valuable companies are technology-based.

Importantly, Nvidia with its then market cap of \$1.784 trillion was the sixth most valuable company, followed closely by Mark Zuckerberg's Meta. Nvidia was founded in April 1993 by three innovative people — an electrical engineer, a microprocessor designer and a graphic chip designer — in a meeting at a roadside diner in San Jose, California. Apple, Microsoft and other traditional tech companies were founded in the mid-1970s. Their journeys to the highest market capitalisations had



CR Sasikumar

taken a steady few decades. Nvidia's has been a little more dramatic. As *The Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) notes, Nvidia's first trillion dollars as a public company took 24 years to earn. But it took the company a mere eight months to achieve a two trillion market capitalisation, given that it's now powering the AI revolution.

Nvidia's initial foray into the human mind was through video games. Video games marry accelerated computing with lucrative market demand. The company's graphics-based processing became its calling card for this market. The WSJ reports that the "ability to secure GPUs governs how quickly companies can develop new artificial intelligence systems. Companies tout their access to GPUs to recruit AI workers." Nvidia's CEO, the rather high-profile Jensen Huang, is a Taiwanese American electrical engineer whose preferred outfit is a well-cut leather jacket over casual pants.

Today, Nvidia's GPU chips are used in generative bots like OpenAI's ChatGPT and by companies like Microsoft and Amazon. Like most tech companies, Nvidia has an India presence with 4,000 employees and new tie-ups with major Indian corporations. The company employs around 29,600 workers globally.

Last week, Nvidia's shares had shot up to \$807.90 before falling slightly to \$788.17. When it crossed the \$800 per share mark, Nvidia became a two trillion dollar company. This year alone, its shares have appreciated by 59 per cent.

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pany. This year alone, its shares have appreciated by 59 per cent. Of course, not everything AI will have an easy innovation or easier profit generation journey. There will be hiccups.

Last week, Google's Gemini AI image generation tool was withdrawn from the market. It was apparently giving unpopular and inaccurate answers, producing allegedly "ahistoric images" and blocking requests for depictions of White people. Amongst the issues that Gemini seemingly had was that it was generating historically White-dominated scenes with racially diverse characters. This may be because Google, wanting to address racial bias in AI, attempted to tweak its programming. Just like human beings, AI which is fed with human data, also reveals those biases.

Despite these hiccups and many others that will follow, the AI revolution holds great promise in this next phase of human evolution. Whether AI will be as dramatically beneficial to the human species as penicillin, remains to be seen. What is clear is that, in the next few years, what can be intelligent will be redefined. Human beings will no longer have a monopoly on intelligence. AI will give us tough competition. As this happens, the kind of company that generates wealth will also change. Are GPUs the new oil of our time?

The writer is a senior advocate at the Supreme Court

## Death of a US airman

How do we make sense of Aaron Bushnell's self-immolation?



AAKASH JOSHI

WHAT SHOULD WE make of Aaron Bushnell's self-immolation?

"I will not be complicit in genocide," said Bushnell. As he set himself on fire before a camera outside the Israeli embassy in Washington earlier this week, the 25-year-old member of the US air force shouted "Free Palestine".

Suicide has long been a topic of sociological, philosophical and of course, psychological literature. Yet, as you watch the video of a young man from Texas going against the direction of the political conversation promoted by the powers that be, in solidarity with strangers, they fall short.

The most tempting kind of reductionism with political acts of suicide is to pathologise them. Suicide, in this imagination, is a result of a diseased mind, of either untreated or incompletely treated mental health issues — in essence a result of diminished capacity.

To be fair, there is more often than not a psychological basis for suicide. Yet, as reports that hint at Bushnell having mental health issues emerge in the largely pro-Israel media in the West, there seems to be something wrong with treating all acts of self-sacrifice as somehow lacking agency.

All acts of suicide cannot be explained away through the prism of disease. Captain Mahendra Nath Mulla (Maha Vir Chakra), for instance, is among the most celebrated officers of the Indian armed forces. He chose

to go down with his ship, the INS Khukri, during the 1971 India-Pakistan war and save the lives of many of his crew in the process. His death was an act of will, of honouring a moral code even at the expense of his life.

For Emile Durkheim, a founding father of Sociology, suicide also needs to be studied as a "social fact" — external forces that emanate from society and act on the individual. These facts, though not visible in the same way as physical phenomenon, need to be examined empirically through the "sociological method" — observed, classified, defined and measured. While suicide is an individual act, a visible manifestation of the deepest melancholy, it is also the result of social forces. But Bushnell's act does not fit neatly into even Durkheim's broad categories.

The self-immolation was not, in the strictest sense, Egoistic Suicide. Such acts are the result of excessive individualism, of feeling depressed and untethered. While it can be argued that the dominant discourse in the US has ignored the suffering of Palestinians, Bushnell's last words were not about his own loneliness. They were about the suffering of others, a continent away, whom he did not know.

The US military man's death was also not a case of Fatalistic Suicide, at least not completely. Such deaths are the result of a society where people have no agency, where rules are so constraining that life

seems hopeless. Reportedly a trained software engineer, a white collar career was certainly a plausible choice for Bushnell. He could have, like so many of us do, lulled himself into a consumerist coma.

Anomie Suicide is the morally unmoored individual's response to social and economic upheavals. Bushnell, from all that we know, did not suffer any such upheaval.

Altruistic Suicide comes the closest to defining Bushnell's act. It occurs when an individual's identification with and solidarity to a group's goals and ethos is so great that they sacrifice their lives for it. Military personnel and religious martyrs, for example, fall under this category.

But does Bushnell? In a sense, yes. His act of protest was not, *prima facie*, about the self but others. Yet, it was not about the group he was socialised into, there is little celebration of his act in the society he comes from. To the contrary, US mainstream media has downplayed it.

The immorality and, in many jurisdictions, illegality attached to suicide emanates from a notion of sanctity of life. If life is sacred, logically, suicide is abhorrent. Philosopher David Hume, though, points out why this is not the case. One, given that human beings, as a fundamental part of their existence, often end life — animal, human, plant — and alter nature in various ways, an act of will towards one's own existence is not against the natural order.

Second, since a person makes no demands of society once they have passed, they do not "owe" it an explanation or ethical debt in return. Finally, since the natural impulse of all living beings is to survive, going against that instinct towards what Freud called *thanatos* (drive towards death) must be a result of rare suffering.

What, then, was Bushnell suffering from? Two things come to mind.

First, Bushnell saw. He saw the suffering of children and women, men and boys in Gaza. He saw what so many of us did, and he saw through the false equivalences that many of us don't. Second, he did not forget. His act, in a sense, was the ultimate form of non-cooperation. Of saying that "I will not be a part of a culture that supports mass killing".

No, Bushnell's is not an example for others to follow. What it should do, though, is make all of us who have been lobotomised by "content" open our eyes. From a lynching to a casual act of bigotry, from war and its crimes to politics and its deprivations, we must stop looking away.

In the ultimate analysis, his death is a tragedy, a loss that will never be worth it. Nor does his death do anything to obviate the suffering of Palestinians. But it does hold out the hope that the rest of us can change, even if a little.

aakash.joshi@expressindia.com

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Tax cuts may boost a party when they are seen as a reward for successful handling of the economy. But if they look like a giveaway at the expense of the rebuilding of the NHS and the public realm in difficult times, they deserve to be seen for what they are — an act of stealing from the public." — THE GUARDIAN

# Blue water power

Agalega project underlines Delhi's intent to bolster maritime security in Indian Ocean region and maintain it as a zone of peace

lowed to utilise the facilities in Agalega subject to prior notification from the competent authorities of Mauritius."

Eight years after the MoU, and amidst intense speculation, the two prime ministers met again, virtually, earlier this week and announced the opening of the upgraded 3-km-long airstrip that can handle bigger aircraft, and a harbour that can anchor big ships. Six civilian projects, including a medical facility and a school, were also inaugurated.

Both PMs highlighted the maritime significance of the initiative hinting, at a larger geo-strategic objective. While thanking Prime Minister Modi "for helping Mauritius realise such major transformational projects", Jugnauth added that besides meeting the development objectives, they will also "significantly enhance the capabilities and capacities in marine surveillance and security". Prime Minister Modi too, on his part, referred to the "traditional and non-traditional challenges" in the Indian Ocean region and described Mauritius as a "natural partner in maritime security". "We are actively working to ensure security, prosperity and stability in the Indian Ocean Region. We are cooperating in all areas like monitoring of Exclusive Economic Zone, joint patrolling, hydrography, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief," he added.

Agalega thus entered the list of ports in the Indian Ocean that provide strategic access to India — dubbed by some analysts as the "necklace of pearls" — as against the "string of pearls" ports that provide access to the Chinese. India already has a naval air station in North Andaman called INS Kohassa, and another near Port Blair called INS Uttrakhand, which provide enough depth for the country's military to monitor the Eastern Indian Ocean thoroughly. With the maritime empowerment of Mauritius through the Agalega project, India can expect to get enough cooperation from that country, "a natural partner", in monitoring important ocean lines in the Western Indian Ocean too, including the crucial Mozambique Channel.

The Indian Ocean region has emerged as the axis of global power. The US and the UK, with the Diego Garcia base, and France, with Reunion Island, are already active in the region. China, too, joined them, investing heavily in spreading its tentacles. It built many assets in the Western Indian Ocean, such as the bases in Djibouti and Gwadar, and developed extensive influence over many leaders in Africa. For India, which depends on the Indian Ocean for almost 90 per cent of its imports and exports, growing Chinese activities in the region are a considerable challenge.

Besides, India, under Prime Minister Modi, nurtured the ambition of rising as an influential blue-water power and also the voice of the Global South. Befitting its current stature as a major regional power, Modi's India wished to convey through the Agalega project that it too has arrived and is serious about its critical role as a net peace provider in the Indian Ocean region, and willing to brook no interference in managing it as a "zone of peace".

The writer, president, India Foundation, is with the RSS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### GNLU'S INJUSTICE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Campus in the dock' (IE, March 1). The Gujarat High Court's castigation of the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) has exposed an oppressive ecosystem. Sadly, given the fact that it happened over a period of time, the role of the student body and faculty is also under question. Despite the HC's mandated inquiry that confirmed certain allegation of wrongdoing, the Registrar in his affidavit dismissed them. GNLU strives to be a leader in legal education, but it failed to live up to its principles. Oddly, so far, there is no report of FIR or arrest.

LR Murmu, New Delhi

### MONITORED EXAMS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'How to reduce cheating' (IE, March 1). Traditional examination methods have become inadequate in preventing cheating. However, with the increasing availability of technology, online exam systems are a solution. An online exam system can provide feedback to ensure that students have understood the topics. It enables the identification of areas where the student may require further instruction. With features such as randomisation of questions and answers, timed exams, audio and video monitoring etc., students are evaluated on their knowledge of the subject matter.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

### DANGEROUS CLAIMS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Lure of the magic cure' (IE, March 1). It is astounding that Patanjali Ayurved has violated the SC's explicit order restraining it from advertising products as valid treatments for serious diseases until further notice. There are many allegations of the firm violating, with impunity, the Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1945. Inaction by the Union and some state governments so far has only lent credence to rumours of the company's alleged political clout. Nothing justifies the publication of unverified claims regarding medicines.

SS Paul, Noida

### A PARADIGM SHIFT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Twinkle on, mom' (IE, March 1). There was a time when actresses faded into oblivion when they decided to get married. But both actresses and the audience have come a long way since. That the film audience of today accepts an actress with a baby on the way is a paradigm shift in audience attitudes. This change is part of the general shift in attitude towards working women. Let us welcome this change on the silver screen. It means that the heroines will not go through a career eclipse due to pregnancy and that fans will continue to support them.

Narendra Dani, Lucknow



SENSEX: 73,745.35 ▲ 1245.05 (1.72%) NIFTY: 22,338.75 ▲ 355.95 (1.62%) NIKKEI: 39,910.82 ▲ 744.63 HANG SENG: 16,589.44 ▲ 78.00 FTSE: 7,681.31 ▲ 51.29 DAX: 17,789.30 ▲ 111.11



GOLD

₹63,320



USD RATE

₹82.90



OIL

\$82.48



SILVER

₹74,500

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10g, silver per 1kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of February 29

International market data till 1900 IST

₹5.5-cr fine on Paytm Payments Bank for breach of anti-money laundering rules

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

INDIA'S FINANCIAL Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND) Friday imposed a penalty of ₹5.49 crore on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd for violating rules under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The action comes just a month after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) barred it from accepting deposits, credit transactions or top-ups,

FIU-IND is the financial intelligence arm of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance. It initiated a review of PPBL on information from law enforcement agencies in respect of a few entities and their network of businesses engaged in a number of illegal acts, including organising and facilitating online gambling, an official statement said.

"The money generated from these illegal operations, that is, the proceeds of crime were routed and channelled through bank accounts maintained by these entities with the Paytm Payments Bank," the ministry statement said.

After considering the written and oral submissions of the payments bank, FIU-IND found that the charges against it were substantiated. "The penalty pertains to issues within a business segment that was discontinued two years ago. Following that period, we have enhanced our monitoring systems and reporting mechanisms to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)," a spokesperson from Paytm said in response to the ministry's statement.

FIU-IND issued a compliance show cause notice to the bank for the violations.

On Monday, Paytm founder Sharma had resigned as part-time non-executive chairman and board member of the payments bank. Sharma owns 51 per cent in the payments' bank, while One97 Communications owns 49 per cent.

**Paytm ends pacts with Payments Bank**

REUTERS

MUMBAI/BENGALURU,

MARCH 1

PAYMENTS FIRM Paytm on Friday cut some ties with its payments bank unit, which India's banking regulator has ordered to be wound down, in its latest attempt to address compliance concerns that triggered a meltdown in its shares last month.

Paytm, formally known as One 97 Communications, and the banking unit mutually agreed to end various inter-company agreements, the company said. It did not specify what agreements were being ended.

**TMB PART-TIME CHAIR**

New Delhi: Tamilnad Mercantile Bank has announced the appointment of S Ravindran as part-time chairman till August 2, 2026. Ravindran will step down from his directorships in Shriram Finance Ltd and Bandhan AMCLtd before assuming the role, the bank said in the statement on Thursday. ENS

## Oil imports from Russia stable in Feb, little room seen for volume growth

SUKALP SHARMA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

INDIA'S CRUDE oil imports from Russia have stabilised at around 1.5-1.6 million barrels per day (bpd) over the past few months and the level could define the immediate to near-term limit on Indian refiners' capacity to purchase oil from Moscow, as per an analysis of shipping data and views from industry insiders.

A combination of reasons—including a drop in Sokol crude purchases by Indian refiners, narrowing discounts on Russian crude, increasing cost of freight and risk premiums amid the Red Sea crisis, and a rising number of tankers being sanctioned by the United States for G7 price cap violations—indicate low possibility of growth in India's Russian oil imports over the next few months.

In February, India imported a total of 1.55 million bpd of Russian crude, up 1.4 per cent from January volumes, as per preliminary data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler.



A crude oil tanker at a Russian port. India's oil imports from the country have declined from the highs of May-July. Reuters file

Russian oil imports, which had risen to over 2 million bpd in May-July, have averaged at around 1.6 million bpd in August-February. From a peak of over 45 per cent share in India's oil imports in May, Russian oil accounted for 32.5 per cent of India's oil imports in February. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over

85 per cent of its requirement.

With India's Russian oil imports falling from the highs of May-July, Indian refiners have been turning to their traditional oil suppliers in West Asia to ramp up supplies from that region. While January saw a spurt in supplies from Iraq and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), February saw higher import volumes from Saudi Arabia. Oil im-

ports from Saudi Arabia in February jumped 27 per cent over January to almost 900,000 bpd—the highest since March of last year.

Even as supply of Urals—Russia's flagship crude oil grade and the mainstay of India's Russian oil imports—has remained stable over the past few months at 1.1-1.2 million bpd, Sokol crude volumes have been hit largely due to payment-related issues between Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Russia's national oil company Rosneft.

There were no Sokol deliveries to India in December and January, against an average of 140,000 bpd in January-November 2023. In February, Sokol crude deliveries to India stood at around 100,000 bpd, but none were taken by IOC, the main buyer hitherto. Of the three Sokol cargoes that reached Indian ports in February, two were bought by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) and one by Nayaara Energy (NEL).

Chinese refiners are now ramping up Sokol imports, which could mean that deliver-

ies to India may not recover to previous levels anytime soon, unless there is a major breakthrough in the form of a contract between IOC and Rosneft. "Sokol might become a Chinese-dominated grade (going forward)...70 per cent of all Sokol cargoes in 2023 were purchased by IOC," said Viktor Katona, Kpler's lead crude analyst.

Apart from the fall in Sokol volumes, the price differential between Russian crude and oil from other major suppliers has also narrowed over the past few months amid competition for Russian barrels from China. And if the US continues to sanction more tankers hauling Russian oil due to alleged breach of the G7 price cap of \$60 per barrel, tanker availability could become a concern over the coming months, further driving up landed price of Russian crude for Indian refiners. This, in turn, leaves little room for a ramp-up in oil import volumes from Russia, according to industry executives.

FULL REPORT ON

[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Nifty, Sensex touch fresh highs on strong domestic growth data

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

MUMBAI, MARCH 1

BENCHMARK EQUITY indices Sensex and Nifty rallied more than 1.6 per cent to record highs Friday as better-than-expected third-quarter (Q3) GDP growth boosted investors' sentiments.

The BSE's 30-share Sensex zoomed 1,245 points, or 1.72 per cent, to end at a lifetime high of 73,745.35. The broader Nifty 50 jumped 355.95 points, or 1.62 per cent to close at a record high of 22,338.75.

Nifty gained 355 points and Sensex 1,245 points from the previous close, something unexpected for both bulls and bears, said Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities.

"As the general election draws closer, stellar economic growth data raised confidence among investors for a pre-election rally," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research,

### SENSEX ENDS 1.72% HIGHER



Geojit Financial Services.

India's GDP surged to a six-quarter high of 8.4 per cent in Q3 of FY24, pushing the growth rate for 2023-24 to 7.6 per cent as against the earlier estimate of 7.3 per cent, the data released by the NSO showed on Thursday. The Q3 GDP growth number was much higher than the market expecta-

tion of around 6.5 to 6.6 per cent.

According to Nomura, growth is likely to remain resilient, especially under the environment of stable global economic outlook. However, there are headwinds, including the impact of the general election code of conduct on public capex support, patchy recovery in private capex, weak state of consumption, and ebbing terms of trade advantage for corporates as input costs rise.

"We project GDP growth at 6.1 per cent in 2024 (vs 7.7 per cent in 2023) and 6.2 per cent in FY25 (vs 7.6 per cent in FY24), below the RBI's expectation of 7 per cent," Nomura said in a research report.

During the day, Bank Nifty provided great support in pulling the market beyond its all-time high, rising 2.5 per cent, the biggest gain in several sessions. The index closed at 47,286.9 compared to the previous close of 46,120.9.

Defensive sectors like IT and

pharma remained weak, while metals, BFSI and capital goods outperformed.

Among the NSE firms, the companies that gained the most include Tata Steel Ltd, Larsen & Toubro Ltd, JSW Steel Ltd, Titan Company Ltd and IndusInd Bank. RIL gained 1.9 per cent to close at ₹2,977 apiece on NSE.

"Now that the market has crossed 22,300 and 73,400 levels, the key levels to watch are 22,500/74,000 or 22,600/74,300. Conversely, 22,200/73,000 and 22,100/72,700 would be the crucial supports. It is advisable to have a strategy to buy on dips," said Kotak Securities' Chouhan.

Bank-Nifty could face a big hurdle at 47,400, but if it breaks quickly, it can reach 48,000 or 48,500 levels. Based on technical analysis, it is on the verge of hitting the all-time high level of 48,637. If the index drops, 47,000 and 46,750 would offer support, he said.

It noted that defying all esti-

mations, the economy grew 8.4 per cent in the third quarter of 2023-24 after exhibiting more than 8 per cent growth in the preceding two quarters.

"The third quarter GDP numbers jolted the psyche and cognitive framework of most in markets, while sweeping some by a pleasant surprise. Clearly, right policy prisms and perspectives can trump irrational expectations bordering fault lines," SBI said in its report.

It noted that defying all esti-

## GST mop-up grows by 12.5% in February

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

GROSS GOODS and Services Tax (GST) collections stood at ₹1.68 lakh crore in February (for sales in January), up 12.5 per cent from the year-ago period, data released by the Finance Ministry Friday showed. It was, however, lower than the revised level of ₹1.74 lakh crore in January (earlier estimate was ₹1.72 lakh crore).

GST revenue, net of refunds, was ₹1.51 lakh crore, up 13.6 per cent from the corresponding period in the previous year. "This growth was driven by a 13.9 per cent rise in GST from domestic transactions and 8.5 per cent increase in GST from import of goods," the ministry said.

Gross GST collections for FY24

stood at ₹18.40 lakh crore, 11.7 per cent higher annually. The average monthly gross collection for FY24 is ₹1.67 lakh crore, up from the ₹1.5 lakh crore in FY23. Net of refunds, GST revenue stood at ₹16.36 lakh crore during April-February, a growth of 13 per cent over the same period last year.

"Overall, the GST revenue figures demonstrate continued growth momentum and positive performance," the ministry said.

In February, Central GST collection was ₹3,178 crore, State GST ₹39,615 crore, Integrated GST ₹84,098 crore, and cess was ₹12,839 crore. The government settled ₹41,856 crore to Central GST and ₹35,953 crore to State GST from Integrated GST. The revenue for the month post settlement was ₹73,641 crore for the Centre and ₹75,569 crore for State GST.

INDIA'S MANUFACTURING sector growth climbed to a five-month high in February amid a sharper uptick in factory production and sales, supported by both domestic and external demand, a monthly survey said on Friday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 56.5 in January to 56.9 in February, pointing to the strongest improvement in the health of the sector since September 2023. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

According to the survey, production rose at the fastest pace

in five months and fuelled the quickest increase in sales since last September and the strongest expansion in new export orders for 21 months.

"The HSBC final India Manufacturing PMI indicates that production growth continued to be strong, supported by both domestic and external demand," said Ines Lam, Economist at HSBC.

Despite the uptick in growth momentum, manufacturing employment in India was little-changed.

"Goods producers mentioned that payroll numbers were sufficient for current requirements," the survey said.

Musk sought a court ruling that would compel OpenAI to make its research and technology available to the public and prevent the startup from using its assets, including GPT-4, for the financial gains of Microsoft or any individual.

OpenAI, Microsoft and Musk did not respond to Reuters requests for comment.

The billionaire is also seeking a ruling that GPT-4 and a new and more advanced technology called Q\* would be considered AGI and therefore outside of Microsoft's license to OpenAI.

Reuters in November was first to report on Q\* and warn-

ings from OpenAI researchers about a powerful AI discovery.

Musk, who runs Tesla and rocket maker SpaceX and bought Twitter for \$44 billion in October 2022, stepped down from OpenAI's board in 2018 and has on several occasions called for regulation on AI.

OpenAI's tie-up with Microsoft is under antitrust scrutiny in the US and UK following the startup's boardroom battle last year that resulted in the sudden ouster and return of Altman and the creation of a new temporary board. The startup is planning to appoint new board members in March, the Washington Post re-

ported on Thursday. Microsoft said in November it would have a non-voting, observer seat.

Some legal experts said Musk's allegations of breach of contract, which is partly based on an email between Musk and Altman, could fail to hold up in court. While contracts can be formed through a series of emails, the lawsuit cites an email that appears to look like a proposal and a "one-sided discussion", said Brian Quinn, a law professor at Boston College Law School.

To the extent Musk is claiming that the single e-mail in Exhibit 2 is the 'contract', he will fall well short," Quinn said.

## Google removes popular Indian apps in fees tiff

Naukri, Shaadi among affected apps

SOUMYARENDR BARIK

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

GOOGLE FRIDAY delisted over a dozen popular Indian apps from its Play Store citing non-compliance with its billing policies.

These apps include hiring platform Naukri, matrimony services Shaadi and Bharat Matrimony, audio storytelling platforms Kuku FM, Alt Balaji's Alt, dating platform TrulyMadly and real-estate manager 99acres.

This marks a major escalation in the souring relationship between the Internet giant and some Indian app developers, who have opposed its policy of charging 11-26 per cent commission on in-app payments. But decisions by the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court earlier this year effectively gave Google the green light to charge the fee or remove the apps.

Developers now face a major dent to their business for the time they are offline — Google dominates the Indian market with over 90 per cent of phones based on its Android platform.

Bharat Matrimony's founder Murugavel Janakiraman called it a "dark day" for the country's start-up ecosystem, while KukuFM's founder called Google the "most evil company in the world".

"...for an extended period of time, 10 companies, including many well-established ones,

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Dated: 29.02.2024

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The following tenders are uploaded/being uploaded on the E-procurement site (<http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>) of Delhi Govt./IHBAS website:

S. No.	Name of items	Uploading Site
1.	Tender for Annual Maintenance Contract of Hospital Furniture items	E-procurement portal
2.	Tender for supply of Dietary items (Fruits, Vegetables, etc.)	E-procurement portal
3.	Tender for Procurement of Consumable Surgical items	E-procurement portal
4.	Tender for Empanelling of Local Chemist	E-procurement portal
5.	Tender for Procurement of Plasticware, Glassware and Miscellaneous items	E-procurement portal
6.	Tender for Procurement of Reagents and Chemicals	E-procurement portal
7.	Tender for Procurement of Drugs/Medicines	E-procurement portal

Interested firms/suppliers may please see the detailed Terms & Conditions of the respective Tenders from the above mentioned sites before submission of the tender.

Sd/-

OIC Purchase (Non-Medical) Sd/- OIC Purchase (Medical) OIC Purchase (Lab)

DIP/Shabdhar/Classified/0362/23-24

Bharati Reserve Bank Note Mudran (P) Limited

(Wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India)

P.O.: RBML, Salboni - 721132, Paschim Medinipur Dt., West Bengal.

Phone No. 03227-280176 / 280317, Fax No.: 03227-280744 / 280222

**OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY (OTE)/NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (NCB)**

Bids are invited under Two-Part bidding system for the following e-Tenders through MSTC Portal:-

1. SUPPLY OF ACTIVATED CARBON AT BRBNMPL, SALBONI; MSTC EVENT NO. BRBNMPL/SALBONI PRESS/MMD/36/23-24/ET/59 [ACTIVATED CARBON]; BRBNMPL TENDER NO. 032/SAL/PUR/2023-24; [ESTIMATED COST-₹32.88 LAKH]

2. SUPPLY OF LOCAL WOOD BATTENS FOR MAKING PACKING BOXES AT BRBNMPL, SALBONI; MSTC EVENT NO. BRBNMPL/SALBONI PRESS/MMD/37/23-24/ET/62 [LOCAL WOOD BATTENS]; BRBNMPL TENDER NO. 033/SAL/PUR/2023-24; [ESTIMATED COST-₹56.38 LAKH]

3. DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL VISTA AT BRBNMPL, SALBONI; MSTC EVENT NO. BRBNMPL/SALBONI PRESS/MMD/38/23-24/ET/63 [DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL VISTA]; BRBNMPL TENDER NO. 023/SAL/MMD-CIVIL/2023-24; [ESTIMATED COST-₹349 LAKH]

4. CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL BUILDING WITH MDM HALL INCLUDING SUBMERSIBLE PUMP IN PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOL OF PASCHIM MEDINIPUR DISTRICT UNDER CSR; MSTC EVENT NO. BRBNMPL/SALBONI PRESS/ADMINISTRATION/7/23-24/ET/61 [SCHOOL BUILDING-MDM-PUMPSET]; BRBNMPL TENDER NO. 006/SAL/CSR/2023-24; [ESTIMATED COST-₹39.5 LAKH]

Last date of tender submission - 02.04.2024 by 11:00 Hrs. For downloading tender documents and other details, kindly visit website [www.mstcecommerce.com](http://www.mstcecommerce.com). Tender details are also available at our website [www.brbnmpo.in](http://www.brbnmpo.in). Further extension or amendment/s, if any, shall be uploaded on the above websites.

Senior General Manager

**STORES E-PROCUREMENT**

Tender Notice No.: S/41/2023-24, Dtd: 28-02-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

**SI.No.1: Tender No. : 30/24/5024/OT/305/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 15-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** Stainless wash basin and dustbin complete with fixing arrangement as per Drg. No. M1004725 Alt. "D" (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-1440 Nos for SSE/C/IC/Kamakhya, NFR (Assam), P.L.No.-334300370026.

**SI.No.2: Tender No. : 37/24/0165/OT/306/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 20-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** DOOR OPERATING COMPLETE FOR "BOBYN" as per RDSO'S SK-77549, Item No. 1 to 5, Alt No.-3. Mat. Spec: As per Drg. Qty-250 Set for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam), P.L.No.-38450884.

**SI.No.3: Tender No. : 10/24/4530/OT/307/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 25-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** Ring Set Std and width consisting of following 5 ring to EMD Part No. 40033365, DLW pt. No -16030618 (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-150 Set for New Guwahati/Depot, NFR (Assam), (2) Qty-150 Set for Siliguri Jn. Diesel Depot, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-16030618.

**SI.No.4: Tender No. : 30/24/5007/OT/308/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 18-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** "Improved High tensile tight lock CBC with AAR H type head and balanced draft gear with complete all other item for BG LHB passenger coaches confirming to RDSO Specification No. RDSO/2011/CG-03 rev 3". Qty-50 Nos for SSE/CLS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.: 331301240014.

**SI.No.5: Tender No. : 30/24/5003/OT/309/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 25-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** Supply and installation of retro-fitment kit without speed sensor FS01 with cable assembly consisting of 15 items as per annexure-A. (Revised wiring scheme for WSP System as per RDSO Drg. No.: CG-18246 ALT-0 with modified IP67 Grade Junction Boxes and connectors as per RDSO Drg. No. CG-19005, Alt-1) (1) Material to be Supplied as per Annexure-A for type of Coaches Fitted with Knorr Bremse Type Brake System. (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-200 Set for SSE/ABS/Dubia, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.: 33161110001.

**SI.No.6: Tender No. : 61/24/5059/OT/310/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 28-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** (1) WIDER CURVE SLACK GAUGE SLEEPER 1675 MM Drg. No.-O.T-8979 (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-800 Nos for SSE/P/Way/Dharmangan, NFR (Tripura). P.L.No-60190206. (2) WIDER CURVE SLACK GAUGE SLEEPER 1682 MM Drg No.T-8982 (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-3444 Nos for SSE/P/Way/Dharmangan, NFR (Tripura). P.L.No-60190206. (3) WIDER CURVE SLACK GAUGE SLEEPER 1675 MM Drg. No. T-8981 (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-800 Nos for SSE/P/Way/Dharmangan, NFR (Tripura). P.L.No-6019020600. (4) WIDER CURVE SLACK GAUGE SLEEPER 1677 MM Drg. No. T-8980 (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-310 Nos for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/New Haflong, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60111008. (5) Wider Curve Slack Gauge Sleeper 1675 mm Drg No. T-8982 (Warranty Period: 120 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-2556 Nos for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/New Haflong, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60110206. (3) Wider Curve Slack Gauge Sleeper 1675 mm Drg No. T-8980 (Warranty Period: 120 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-310 Nos for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/New Haflong, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-6011020600.

**SI.No.7: Tender No. : 61/24/5058/OT/311/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 25-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** Supply and installation of retro-fitment kit without speed sensor FS01 with cable assembly consisting of 15 items as per annexure-A. (Revised wiring scheme for WSP System as per RDSO Drg. No.: CG-18246 ALT-0 with modified IP67 Grade Junction Boxes and connectors as per RDSO Drg. No. CG-19005, Alt-1) (1) Material to be Supplied as per Annexure-A for type of Coaches Fitted with Knorr Bremse Type Brake System. (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-310 Nos for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/New Haflong, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-601902060. (4) Wider Curve Slack Gauge Sleeper 1675 mm Drg No. T-8982 (Warranty Period: 120 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-310 Nos for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/New Haflong, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-601902060. (4) Wider Curve Slack Gauge Sleeper 1675 mm Drg No. T-8981 (Warranty Period: 120 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-800 Nos for SSE/P/Way/Dharmangan, NFR (Tripura). P.L.No-6019020600.

**SI.No.8: Tender No. : 61/23/5019A/OT/312/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 18-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** Manufacture and supply of prestressed Monoblock concrete sleeper (Pre tensioned type) for Narrow Gauge (610mm) to RDSO Drg. No. EDO/T-2213 to 2215 to suit 66 ? R rail as per RDSO design and IRS specification No. T-39-85 along with latest revision (5th revision 2016) as amended up to tender opening date duly loaded into wagon/road vehicle. Sleeper requirement:- (1) T-2213=6197 Nos. (2) T-2214=518 Nos. (3) T-2215 (LC)=55 Nos. (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). Qty-20756 Nos for SSE/P/Way/Kurseong, NFR (West Bengal). P.L.No-6010070700.

**SI.No.9: Tender No. : 61/24/5060/OT/313/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 29-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** PSC Sleepers Turn Out sleeper 1 in 8.5, 60 kg (Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). (i) Qty-10 Set for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Rangiya, NFR (Assam). (ii) Qty-10 Set for SSE/P/Way/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60111008.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

**SI.No.10: Tender No. : 61/24/5060/OT/313/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 29-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** PSC Sleepers Turn Out sleeper 1 in 8.5, 60 kg (Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). (i) Qty-10 Set for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Rangiya, NFR (Assam). (ii) Qty-10 Set for SSE/P/Way/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60111008.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

**SI.No.11: Tender No. : 61/24/5060/OT/313/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 29-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** PSC Sleepers Turn Out sleeper 1 in 8.5, 60 kg (Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). (i) Qty-10 Set for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Rangiya, NFR (Assam). (ii) Qty-10 Set for SSE/P/Way/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60111008.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

**SI.No.12: Tender No. : 61/24/5060/OT/313/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 29-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** PSC Sleepers Turn Out sleeper 1 in 8.5, 60 kg (Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). (i) Qty-10 Set for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Rangiya, NFR (Assam). (ii) Qty-10 Set for SSE/P/Way/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60111008.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

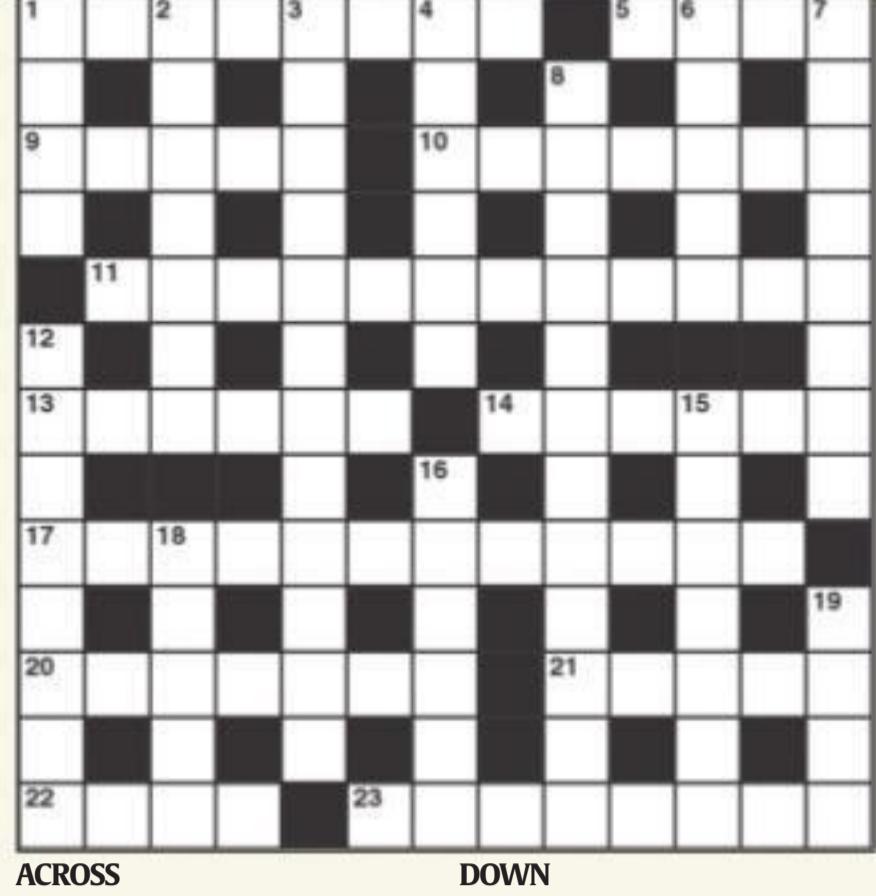
**SI.No.13: Tender No. : 61/24/5060/OT/313/2023-24.****Closing/Opening Date: 29-03-2024.**

**Brief Description:** PSC Sleepers Turn Out sleeper 1 in 8.5, 60 kg (Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No. Stages:0). (i) Qty-10 Set for Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Rangiya, NFR (Assam). (ii) Qty-10 Set for SSE/P/Way/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-60111008.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

**SI.No.14: Tender No. : 61/24/5060/OT/313/**

## CROSSWORD 5302



ACROSS

- 1 Buy a holding (8)  
5 Head for the food (4)  
9 Incorrectly and badly grown (5)  
10 Train or coach (7)  
11 One looking for scraps may show it (12)  
13 Latins put out or put in office (6)  
14 Really can fit when adjusted properly (2,4)  
17 Round trip? (8,4)  
20 You have to do so (7)  
21 The select type (5)  
22 Bird from northern Europe (4)  
23 Tie completely round (4,4)

Solutions Crossword 5301 Across: 1 Argentine, 8 Noise, 9 Notable, 10 Pierce, 11 Castor, 12 Agitated, 13 Trident, 18 Exempt, 20 Tonics, 21 Deliver, 22 Endure, 23 Distemper Down: 2 Rhoda, 3 Effects, 4 Tolerate, 5 Enlist, 6 Vibrant, 7 Dependant, 11 Cassettes, 13 Interest, 14 Grenade, 16 Docked, 17 Medium, 19 Piece

## JUMBLE WORDS

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

The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and

(5,6)

SVAAE AOYCNM  
CWALR ELMPGH

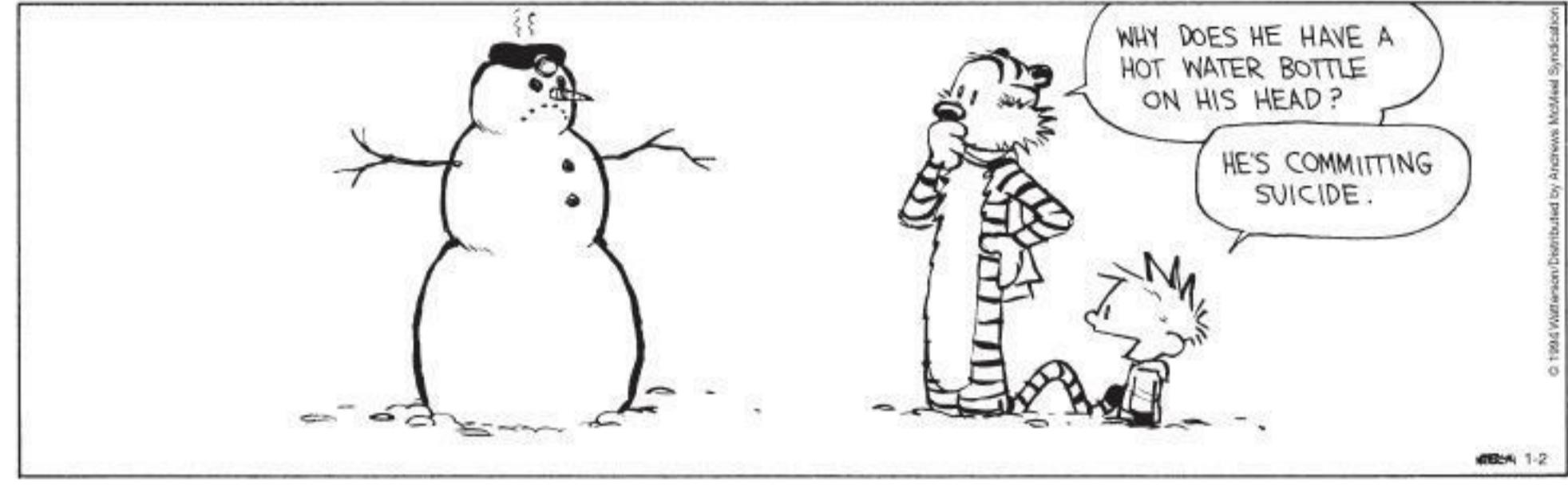
Jumble - Carl Rogers  
Answers: The only person who has learned how to learn and

SOLUTIONS: EAVES GRAW CANYOU PHIGM

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry &amp; I Lewis



## CALVIN &amp; HOBBES by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## Difficulty Level 1s

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

## SOLUTION SUDOKU 5488



## DAY TODAY

## ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Somewhat challenging planetary patterns relate to life's pleasures in curious ways. The celestial advice is therefore to set out to indulge yourself with determination and discipline! Cultural and high-brow outings will provide excellent stimulation.

## TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

There still seems to be too much uncertainty about personal decisions and choices. There really is no point in trying to get others to sign on the dotted line just yet. There is plenty of time before final arrangements must be reached, so wait and see what happens next week.

## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

If you have your wits about you, and you certainly should, nobody will be able to get the better of you or pull the wool over your eyes. You may be angry one minute, the very essence of charm the next. If other people are confused, it's because they can't keep up with you.

## CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Partners or close companions are not as cold or hostile as they seem. Your best policy is to stop worrying about other people and look after your own affairs. Once you have sorted out your top priorities and principles then you will be able to extend proper help to those in need.

## LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

If you ever dreamt of living far from home, now could be the perfect moment to investigate the options. Also, do make sure that any travel plans are sufficiently adventurous to satisfy your bold and confident spirit. Also, be sure to listen to an older relation's words of wisdom.

## VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You're entitled to feel annoyed, but your behaviour should be carefully considered. You are torn between making a public song and dance on the one hand, and keeping yourself to yourself on the other. Perhaps you should wear your mystical or spiritual convictions on your sleeve.

## PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You know what it is like to be caught off guard, and if someone takes advantage today, it could be over a matter of money. That said, this is a superb time for improvements in family relationships and a step up in your living conditions. Start by fixing everything that's in need of repair.

## LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Your best option is to take expert or legal advice before you go any further. Your social optimism should be boundless, but may be so carried away that you take on too many commitments. Someone is waiting to hear from you.

## SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Contentment, it is said, comes from total immersion in worthwhile activities. This should be a busy day, one to take on more responsibilities. You may stretch yourself to the limit, for the more you accomplish now, the more time you will have to relax and enjoy.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

The winds of change are blowing through your relationships. The whole point about the current situation is that you must learn to listen. You must also try to understand other people's feelings and points of view without being unnecessarily judgmental.

## CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Some of the strongest energies in your chart concern home, work and money. The problem is how best to integrate all these different areas. One interpretation suggests that if you work harder, you'll be able to for an improvement at home sooner than you thought.

## AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

It's an ideal day for short excursions and meetings, and pleasant agreements could be concluded. Insist that everyone conforms to your ideas as to what is practical and possible, and they will prosper. However, whether they agree with you is another matter.

## PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You know what it is like to be caught off guard, and if someone takes advantage today, it could be over a matter of money. That said, this is a superb time for improvements in family relationships and a step up in your living conditions. Start by fixing everything that's in need of repair.

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल बांका आवश्यक-सूचना

निविदा आवश्यक संख्या-RCD/BANKA-09/2023-24 पर P.R. No.-018253 (RCD) 2023-24

एवं P.R. No.-018253 (RCD) 2023-24 द्वारा निकाले गए निविदा में क्रमांक-(1) एवं (2) में वर्णित कार्य यथा Repair work of Jethorenath Bridge at 4th km of English More-Punisia Road for the Year 2023-24 एवं Pot-Patch Repair & Road Furniture work of Bhagalpur-Amarpur-Banika Road (SH-25) KM 16.00 to 41.30 for the year 2023-24 को अपरिवर्त्य करारणवास रह किया जाता है।

नीचे :- निविदा संख्या- RCD/BANKA-07/2023-24 में शेष क्रमांक- (3) एवं (4) के लिए दिए गए अव्याप्ति सुनिधारणे।

एवं शर्त यथावत रहेंगे।

उपर दर्शना [www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

## SUDOKU 5489

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



## NANAJI DESHMUKH VETERINARY SCIENCE UNIVERSITY, JABALPUR, 482004 M.P.

No. 557/Tender/Registrar/2024

## e-TENDER NOTICE

Dated 01.03.2024

e-Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers and their authorised dealers for the supply of equipment items. Tender document and detailed information are available on website [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) and information on university website [www.ndvsu.org](http://www.ndvsu.org)

Schedule : Purchase of online tenders from 04.03.2024 to 18.03.2024. Online submission of bid upto 18.03.2024. Submission of technical / physical bid to the office upto 21.03.2024. Corrigendum, if any, will only be posted in above websites. No press notice will be issued separately.

Sd/-  
REGISTRAR

## NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

## e-Auction Notice No.C/54/Khanpan WVM/e-Auction Date: 23.02.2024

The bids are invited from registered entities on IREPS by Sr. DCM/IZN (ACO) through e-Auction for the Water Vending Machines contracts. The Catalogue has already been published on IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). The detail of upcoming e-Auctions of Izzatnagar division is as under:

Category	Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Auction End
WVM	C-54-WVM-24-01	08.03.2024/10.00.00	08.03.2024/12.00.00
Sr. No.	Station	Station Code	Category
01	Kathgodam	KGM	A
02	Haldwani	HDW	B
03	Lalkuan	LKU	B
04	Rudrapur City	RUPC	B
05	Kashipur	KPV	B
06	Pilibhit	PBE	B
07	Bareilly city	BC	B
08	Kasganj	KSJ	B
09	Farrukhabad	FBD	B
10	Kannauj	KJN	B

1. Bidders are advised to visit website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for more information related to e-Auction. 2. The bids have been invited through e-Auction Leasing module of IREPS website. 3. All the e-Auction related information as eligibility, scope of work, contract period, terms & conditions of contract etc. are available on IREPS. 4. Bidders can participate in e-Auction only as per the date & timing as indicated above. 5. All the prospective bidders are requested to visit website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) regularly for any corrigendum related to above e-Auctions. CPRO/C - 266

## NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

## E-TENDER NOTICE

No. 160 to 162-23-24

Divl. Rly. Manager, N.W. Rly. Bikana for and on behalf of President of India invites open E-Tender for the following works up to 15.00 hours on 21.03.2024 as below:

Tender No.: 160 Name of Work with its Location : Renewal TSEJ (60KG)-14 Sets & TSEJ(52KG)- 25 Sets of main line

Section Under the Jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/West Bikana. Approx. Cost of Work : Rs. 2366736.45 Earnest Money :

Rs. 47400.00 Tender No. : 161 Name of Work with its Location : Provision of 225 KL OH Tank and other ancillary works at BAP station under ADEN/Line/BKN.

Approx. Cost of Work : Rs. 5481671.95 Earnest Money : Rs. 109600.00 Tender No. : 162 Name of Work with its Location : Repair to Track, damaged RCC beams, columns, catwalk and other ancillary works at old washing line at Bikaner under ADEN/Line/BKN. Approx. Cost of Work : Rs. 5616804.00 Earnest Money : Rs. 112300.00 Note : Other terms & conditions will be shown on the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) 271-C/24

Follow us on : [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NWRailways) [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/NWRailways) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/NWRailways)

## देवी अहिल्या विश्वविद्यालय

विश्वविद्यालय भवन, इंदौर-452001

क्रमांक यांत्रिक/2024/T/3/2024

दिनांक : 1.3.2024

## निविदा सूचना

विश्वविद्यालय के तकाशिला परिसर स्थित कार्मस अध्ययन शाला और्डिटोरियम एवं प्रबंध अध्ययन संस्थान के आंतरिक साज सज्जा कार्य हेतु मध्यारेदास लोक निर्माण द्वारा केन्द्रीयकृत इलेक्ट्रोनिक्स प्रणाली से पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से फार्म वी आयटेम एवं पर ऑनलाइन ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से संबंधित विस्तार विवर विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट [davv.mptenders.gov.in](http://davv.mptenders.gov.in) पर देखे जा सकता है।

म.प्र. माध्यम/ 114064/2024

कूलसचिव

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भारत सरकार

# Viksit Bharat, Viksit Bihar Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee



**Gifting ₹27 thousand crore development projects to Bihar and ₹1 lakh 62 thousand crore worth development projects to the nation**

- ④ Deepwater Oil Field-M in Krishna Godavari KG-DWN-98/2 Block
- ④ Koyali - Ahmednagar - Solapur Product Pipeline
- ④ Naphtha Cracker Expansion Project at Panipat Refinery & Petrochemical Complex
- ④ PX-PTA Expansion Project at Panipat Refinery & Petrochemical Complex
- ④ Catalyst Manufacturing Plant at Panipat Refinery & Petrochemical Complex
- ④ Various other projects

- ④ Panipat Refinery Capacity Expansion Project
- ④ Barauni Refinery Expansion Project
- ④ City Gas Distribution Network project at Fazilka (except area already authorized), Ganganagar and Hanumangarh Districts
- ④ POL & Lube Oil Base Stock (LOBS) Installations with receipt pipelines at Rasayani
- ④ Poly Butadiene Rubber plant at Panipat Refinery and Petrochemical Complex
- ④ Augmentation of Cryogenic Facilities at Uran LPG Import Terminal
- ④ Doubling of railway line between Katihar - Kumedpur and Katihar-Mukuriya
- ④ Various other projects

- ④ Visakh Refinery Modernisation Project
- ④ Mumbai High North Redevelopment Phase-IV
- ④ Heera Redevelopment Phase-III
- ④ New Guntakal Depot, Guntakal, Andhra Pradesh
- ④ Sultanpur-Jhajjar-Hisar Pipeline Project
- ④ Doubling of Hajipur-Bachhwara Rail Section (72 Km)
- ④ Doubling of Hajipur-Ram Dayalu Nagar Rail Section (48 Km)
- ④ Kerosene Hydrotreater Unit Integrates with existing Diesel Hydrotreater Unit at Mumbai Refinery, Maharashtra
- ④ Barauni Fertilizer Unit of Hindustan Fertilizer and Chemical Limited
- ④ Bharat Pashudhan Database of Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying
- ④ Various other projects

## Inauguration

Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy Campus at Anakapalli District, Andhra Pradesh

## Bhoomi Pujan

## Foundation Stone Laying

### 1<sup>st</sup> Crude Oil Tanker (Swaran Sindhu) from KG DWN 98/2 project

- ④ Danapur-Jogbani Express (via Darbhanga-Sakri)
- ④ Jogbani-Saharsa Express
- ④ Sonpur-Vaishali Express
- ④ Jogbani-Siliguri Express

## Dedication to the nation

1962 Farmers application

## Launch

By

# Shri Narendra Modi Prime Minister

In the august presence of

**Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**  
Governor, Bihar



**Shri Nitish Kumar**  
Chief Minister, Bihar

**Shri Hardeep Singh Puri**  
Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs

**Shri Giriraj Singh**  
Member of Parliament (Begusarai Lok Sabha)  
Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

Ulao, Begusarai, Bihar | Saturday, 2 March 2024, 04:30 PM

## Project Benefits

- ④ Building Atmanirbhar Bharat by ensuring energy security
- ④ Creation of more than 36 crore man days of employment
- ④ 7% increase in national oil and gas production
- ④ Better rail connectivity to ease commuting
- ④ Cost effective urea for farmers
- ④ Information on animals and animal husbandry for animal keepers across the nation
- ④ 5 lakh tonne decrease in green house emission
- ④ Commitment to realise net-zero target



Watch the programme live on DD News

## What Lies Beneath

THE INDRANI MUKERJEA

STORY: BURIED TRUTH

★★★

Director: Uraaz Bahl, Shaana Levy

Streaming on: Netflix



ALAKA SAHANI

IF YOU take the title of this four-part documentary literally and expect it to uncover some startling "buried truth" related to the trial of Indrani Mukerjea and others in the alleged Sheena Bora murder case, then you are going to be disappointed. Even though the docuseries updates the audience regarding the details of the case and features several insightful interviews, it does not reveal many new facts. What it does is make one ponder over the consequences of broken familial bonds, deception, and ruthless ambition.

It traces the mysterious disappearance of 25-year-old Bora and the shocking allegation made by Shyamwar Rai, the driver of well-known power couple and media executives Peter and Indrani Mukerjea, that she was murdered. Rai, who was held in August 2015 for illegal possession of a firearm, disclosed during his interrogation about his involvement in Bora's murder that allegedly took place a couple of years before. He told the police that he, along with Indrani and Sanjeev Khanna (Indrani's second husband), had murdered Bora, before dumping her body in Raigad the following day.

This case, replete with twists and turns, makes it evident that the road to gaining success and power is tough, and holding on to them is even tougher. As the investigation progressed, it also bared the crisscross of relationships that the people involved in the case shared. Indrani had introduced Bora to Mukerjea as her sister. When it came to light that Bora was Indrani's daughter, it shocked everyone. The police arrested Indrani and Khanna. After the CBI took over the case, Peter was arrested too. The CBI said that the Mukerjeas killed Bora as they were against the relationship between Bora and Rahul, Peter's son from a previous marriage.

It was a distraught Rahul who kept looking for Bora. He also recorded his conversations with Peter. Parts of these conversations, featured in the series, give emotional depth to the narrative.

The documentary reveals that though they had reached out to all the four accused, the only person who agreed to face the camera was Indrani. And Indrani does that in style, exuding charm and unwavering confidence. Indrani has continued to deny CBI's charges and maintained that Bora is alive. From the various accounts featured in the documentary, including that of her son Mikail, one pieces together the complex life of Indrani and the ambition that drove her. The documentary's biggest feat is to make Indrani's younger daughter Vidhie (Khanna is her biological father and she was later adopted by Peter) open up before the camera — sharing her confusion over these dark and almost bizarre turn of events.

The decision to make a series on this murky case, which is sub judice, and to put one of the accused at the centre of the narrative is questionable. Even though Indrani, in a lighter vein, talks about her ordeals and that she is thinking of starting a WhatsApp group called 'Justice for Indrani', what stays with the audience is the emotional toll broken relationships take on young ones.

## THE ZONE OF INTEREST

★★★

Director: Jonathan Glazer

Cast: Christian Friedel, Sandra Hüller

## SHALINI LANGER

HANNAH ARENDT called it "the banality of evil"; screenwriter-director Jonathan Glazer captures it, in this harrowing, disturbing film about life's quotidian routine adjacent to the unspeakable horrors of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

That routine belongs to the Höss household, Rudolph (Friedel) and wife Hedwig (Hüller), their five children, their dog and their countless servants, at least some of which have been borrowed from the camp next door, identifiable by their timidity and their uniforms.

Rudolph Höss (based on the real guy) is the commandant of Auschwitz, and has perfected the exercise of exterminating the Reich's unwanted, including Jews, Poles, Romans, etc — enough to get him noticed in Berlin. And to draw to his side engineers offering prototypes of the latest chimneys, which can work non-stop, through control of temperature and air flow. Conversations such as this happen next door to where Rudolph's wife and children are going about their daily work, of play, school, training for induction into Hitler Youth, gardening, and gossip, as Hedwig and the other wives gush over the latest possessions, that once belonged to the rich Jews being gassed next door, to have fallen into their laps.

If Rudolph has earned his stripes with the typical German efficiency for detail, Hedwig feels she has done her part too, turning the house into a slice of "paradise" — of white linen (any soot scrubbed off), of clean shoes (any blood washed outside), lake-side picnics, canoe rides, strudel meals, and her particular pride, a garden. It is full of flowers, vines, vegetables, a green house, even a beehive, topped by a swimming pool and deck chairs. Rows of neat flowers and a pathway separate the garden from the boundary it shares with the concentration camp, topped by barbed wire. Soon enough, the vines will cover the whole wall, Hedwig assures her visiting mother.

It's clear how much this life of dreamy comfort means for the mother and daughter. Without saying much, Glazer gets across that it has been a hard life, and that but for the war and its windfall, Hedwig may have been a cleaning lady like her mother. The mother, in fact, wonders once if the Jewish woman she worked for is among those in the camp across, her only regret being that she could not win her curtains in an auction.

But the mother brushes away that thought almost as quickly as an irritated Hedwig tells a servant, off-handedly, "I can



have my husband spread your ashes across the fields of Babice (Poland)."

Based very loosely on a book by Martin Amis of the same name, *The Zone of Interest* wants us to think once, twice, and again, how easy it is for evil to thrive among us, and for us to turn a blind eye. How it is "normal" people such as us who allowed the unthinkable to happen, and could as easily allow it again. How mass killing can be reduced to a pedantic bureaucratic exercise of working out the perfect crematorium, and mass looting to an expensive fur coat, that "just needs some washing and mending".

And yet, evil clings to us like shadow too, much as it does the Hösses. It hangs over them in the form of chimneys belching smoke and often fire; it enters their home in the form of sounds of shootings, cries, clang-ing machines, and often screams; it washes

against them in the form of bones and ash on a dip in the nearby lake (followed by frantic, panicky washing); it chases them in the form of fear in the eyes of their servants; it clings to them like the lipstick Hedwig finds in her new fur coat, that won't rub off; it haunts their future in the form of the games their children play, with extracted teeth; it inhabits their home in the form of their daughter who sleepwalks; and it won't let them alone in the form of their constantly irri-table youngest child and their restless dog, the infant and the animal sensing what others won't say.

The evil even pollutes the dreams the Hösses had once, in their teens, long before the war started, of raising a farm. Both Rudolph and Hedwig show that love of nature, the irony being that it is only living with death — in the rural outposts of the East, as

Hitler demanded of his followers — that has allowed them the luxury to nurture it. The one time Rudolph finds himself at the high table in Berlin, he is literally nauseous.

Nominated for five Oscars, including Best International Film and Best Motion Picture, *The Zone of Interest* can be faulted for almost entirely excluding the horror of Holocaust in favour of just suggestion of it. There is a Polish Jew family that appears briefly, but Glazer does absolutely nothing with them but lip-service, though in a visual flourish, when they step outside their home, they are projected as thermal images — the only things shining in the dark.

For how dark that dark really was, you would be better served to keep your ears peeled for the music, by Mica Levi, of such haunting quality that you dread what's coming next.



## LAAPATAA LADIES

★★★

Director: Kiran Rao  
Cast: Sparsh Srivastava, Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta, Ravish Kishan, Chhaya Kadarm, Durgesh Kumar, Satendra Soni, Bhaskar Jha, Geeta Agarwal

station, the second reaches the wrong *sasural*, much to all-round consternation. Phool tries desperately to remember the name of the husband's village (*kuch phool ke naam se shuru hota hai*); the more *padhili* Jaya tries equally desperately to keep herself hidden, for reasons that are revealed as we go along. Both are lost. But are they really?

The proverbial daughter-sister-wife-mother sobriquet forces women to be faceless, whether they wear a *ghoonghat* or not. I have memories of women in my family, especially the new *dulhans*, hidden neatly away inside their veils; this pernicious 'tradition' is still alive and kicking. Come hither, those who want lessons in Patriarchy 101, and see how the ladies of the house, back in the day, learned how to work their way around it:

faces completely covered in front of the *sasur* and *jeth* (the older men), and lifted a little, when it comes to the *devar*, the younger brothers and male cousins of the husband. In this constant pull-and-push, women learned to 'adjust' and live a little.

"*Biwi kho gayi*," chorrels Manohar (Kishan), the cheerfully corrupt *thana* in-charge where Phool's devastated husband (Srivastava) fetches up to file a missing persons report. To show us the casual misog-

yny of the cops, the skewed power structures in places where the public expects a hearing, and the treatment of women in homes and outside, is all part of Rao's plan. And though some situations feel a tad contrived, and some characters — the good-hearted trio at the station which becomes Phool's support system is straight up filmi — are on the nose, you want to leap up and cheer when things go belly-up for the male jerks, and right for the lovely ladies.

The cast, mostly new faces, is perfect for this kind of film: it would have been ruined by recognisable stars. Aamir Khan, who's also produced the film, playing the *dulha*? Please, no. Kishan does a great job of the cop who does the right thing, but I'm glad he wasn't shown turning over a new leaf. That would have been a stretch. Also, Geeta Agarwal needs a new role: she's now a fixture as Bollywood's go-to mother. But both

Goel, armed with her flowerlike innocence, and the more worldly-wise yet not-as-independent-as-she-would-like-to-be Ranta, who has the more difficult role to pull off, win the day.

The film doesn't shy away from slipping in political jibes (*sarkaar badli, gaon ka naam bhi badla*), and ridiculing the truisms trotted out to keep women in check. "*Pati bhi naya, joota bhi naya, koi bhi gadba jaata*", is a cheeky response to how the whole mix-up is the hapless bride's fault — she should have recognised the groom by his shoes!

The film is unapologetically message-y, but its strongly beating feminist heart overrides the broad brush strokes. Sometimes things need to be stated loud and clear. At the end of it all, what's lost is difference and delusion. What's found is a sense of identity and self-worth. And I'm here for it.



creating the perfect setting for a story that can never settle down for one thing. Chalamet's Paul Atreides is that perfect putty too, to mould and behold.

One has to doff one's hat to Villeneuve for not taking his eyes off that transition of Paul, from a boy to a man-boy, to a man who pushes that boy deep down as he becomes a 'Messiah'. Is it the screenwriter-director's fault then that the stuff around is just too spectacular to overwhelm these little details? It was the dilemma that the Frank Herbert novels also jostled with, and Villeneuve has it worse given the format,

There is more of the latter in *Part Two* as Paul finally gets to spend extended moments with Chani (Zendaya), the woman he has been dreaming about (but with a love that is surprisingly passion-less). He also sees his mother Jessica (Ferguson) changing into someone he doesn't recognise as she tastes ambition.

There is the warm Stilgard (Bardem), a leader of the Fremen, who is determined in his belief, and in his efforts to convince others, that Paul is Lisan al-Gai, the Messiah prophesied to "lead us to Paradise" — where "water falls from the sky", for one, and is not extracted out of even bodies, to not let a single drop go waste. Stilgard's training of Paul (who comes from an ocean planet) to survive their desert planet, to control, and then ride, the dangerous sandworms, is exhilarating.

Other characters come and go, including Skarsgård as Baron Harkonnen, whose corpulence stands for his bottomless greed;

Bautista as his nephew Rabban, still trying to control the Fremen; Butler as the other, charismatic nephew Feyd-Rautha, who has built a reputation for brute cruelty; Walken as the Emperor of the Imperium, who has compromised his position after pitting one Great House against another; Pugh as his daughter Princess Irulan; and Brolin as Gurney Helleck and a father figure to Paul.

That is not counting Anya Taylor-Joy, who is as yet just a foetus in Jessica's womb, and already asserting herself telepathically. Villeneuve does not have it easy as he weaves these characters into a story of inter-planetary ambitions, disparate worlds, and countless battles, involving atomic warheads and artillery, to gladiatorial duels and hand-to-hand combats.

And while the spectacles — and, the sandworms — threaten to run away with *Dune: Part Two*, Villeneuve pauses to bravely ask us to look at not just the Messiah but also the little peo-

## STREAMING WATCH LIST

BY ALAKA SAHANI



## AMERICAN FICTION

PRIME VIDEO

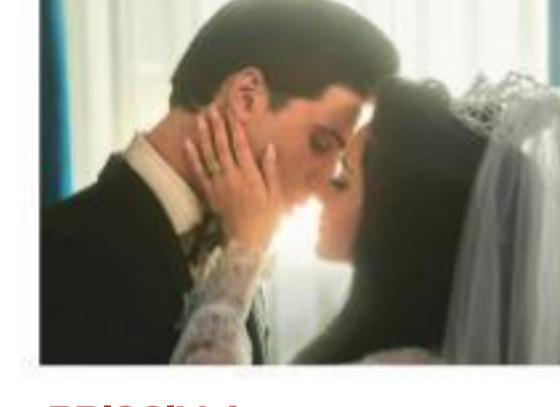
Based on the 2001 novel titled *Erasure* by Percival Everett, *American Fiction* is a comedy-drama directed by Cord Jefferson. The movie follows a frustrated novelist-professor who writes an outlandish satire in stereotypical 'Black' books, only for them to be mistaken by the liberal elite for serious literature and published to both high sales and critical praise. The film, which has received five Oscar nominations, features Jeffrey Wright, Tracee Ellis Ross, Issa Rae and Sterling K. Brown in the cast.



## MY NAME IS LOH KIWAN

NETFLIX

Escaping from China, North Korean defector Loh Kiwan (Song Joong-ki) sets out to fulfill his mother's dying wish — to find a place where he can truly own his name. He travels to Belgium to seek refugee status but ends up with no means to make a living. Things take an interesting turn when Marie, who used to represent the Belgian national shooting team, steals his wallet.



## PRISCILLA

MUBI

Sofia Coppola-directed *Priscilla*, an adaptation of Priscilla's own memoir, is a portrait of the complicated romance between Elvis and Priscilla Presley, charting the highs and the lows of a life spent in the shadow of the King. Told through Priscilla's eyes, Coppola presents the unseen story of the couple's long courtship and turbulent marriage that spanned decades and oceans.



## RIDE ON

DISNEY+HOTSTAR

This Chinese action drama, written and directed by Larry Yang, is a story of Luo (Jackie Chan), a former stuntman, and his desperate attempts to protect his stunt horse from debt collectors. Reluctant to let go of his horse, Luo gets in touch with his estranged daughter. The comedy features a series of stunts by the horse and is a celebration of stunt people in cinema and their passion.

ple looking up to him. They dress in robes reminiscent of Arabia, their warriors are called fedaykin, their Messiah is named Muad'Dib, they talk of the "fundamentalists" among them, they are borned from the skies, and they take refuge in makeshift shelters. Meanwhile, the war waged by the powers-that-be doesn't stop. Princess Irulan ponders about the hold of religious belief, how "repression will only help it flourish", and the need to let Prophets be, because "a dead Prophet is more powerful". Hence, the Emperor's strategy: "Let war happen, and then we come in to bring peace." Above all, as Chalamet finally grows up in his role — though without an extra sinew of muscle or facial hair — Villeneuve gives us glimpses of how power can corrupt even the purest of souls. As Paul barks "silence" and commands loyalty, as Chani fears her love has changed, you can see that corruption taking hold.

## A Striking Spectacle

## DUNE PART TWO ★★★★

Director: Denis Villeneuve Cast: Timothée Chalamet, Zendaya, Rebecca Ferguson, Javier Bardem, Josh Brolin, Austin Butler, Florence Pugh, Christopher Walken, Dave Bautista

THERE HAS been much discussion over the years into the politics of the *Dune* books. Do they exorcise the cult of the hero, or do they only seem to do so, even as a 'superior' race proves the bravest of the brave? It's not easy to walk this thin line in a blockbuster of the scale that Denis Villeneuve has mounted to bring the books to the big screen. *Part Two* — two long years after the first *Dune* — is where he

gives this a shot. *Part Two* is bigger, bolder, and more beautiful; its vistas of shimmering sands and chilly shadows (cinematographer Greig Fraser again)



creating the perfect setting for a story that can never settle down for one thing. Chalamet's Paul Atreides is that perfect putty too, to mould and behold.

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1

## Patidar set to play in final Test at Dharamsala

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, MARCH 1

HE HAS not been among the runs but middle-order batsman Rajat Patidar (in pic) is likely to retain his place in the playing XI for the fifth Test match against England starting in Dharamsala on Thursday. The Indian Express understands that the team management wants to back Patidar for the final Test. This means Devdutt Padikkal, the Karnataka batsman, won't get a Test cap yet.



Patidar has played three Test matches during the series and has scores of 32, 9, 5, 0, 17 and 0. Patidar's place was under scrutiny after the fourth Test match in Ranchi which India won by 5 wickets to take an unassailable 3-1 lead. "The team wants Patidar to get one more chance as they feel Patidar has talent and it's a matter of time before he gets runs. As India has already won the series, the team wants to try him out one more time instead of giving a debut to Devdutt Padikkal," a source said.

Patidar, 30, was named in the Test squad as a replacement for Virat Kohli, who had taken a break. Patidar made his debut in the second Test at Visakhapatnam after KL Rahul was injured. If Rahul had recovered from the quadriplegic injury and was available for the fifth Test, Patidar would have been released and he could have played for Madhya Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Vidarbha.

Rahul's participation in the final Test was subject to fitness but he was ruled out on Thursday. The BCCI medical team is monitoring him and coordinating with specialists in London where he is for injury management.

Rahul had played the first Test of the series in Hyderabad and scored 86 and 22.

The Indian team will reach Chandigarh on Saturday en route to Dharamsala.

Meanwhile, Patidar has got the backing of former RCB and South African captain AB de Villiers. "Rajat Patidar not having the series of a lifetime or the one to remember. But the good thing about this Indian team and the culture is that you will survive in that side because of the great cricket they are playing and the results coming their way," de Villiers said on his YouTube channel.

He further added, "If Patidar's attitude is catchy and if he is a likable character in the dressing room, Rohit and the selection panel will have the ability to say, 'Hold on, we do believe this guy has a future and we see him as a part of the team moving forward. Even though he hasn't been scoring runs, let's give him a longer run'."

### Bashir the new Ash: Vaughan

England's Shaobai Bashir has had an impressive outing in the fourth Test against India in Ranchi. He picked up eight wickets in the match including a five-wicket haul in the first innings. The 20-year-old has looked temperamentally sound and has displayed efficient skills in a couple of Tests he played.

Former cricketer Michael Vaughan would even go on and compare with Indian off-spinner R Ashwin. "One of the great weeks, celebrating another world-class superstar that we've unearthed, Shaobai Bashir. That's what we're celebrating. Second Test match, he eight wickets, he's the new Ravi Ashwin, and we've unearthed him. So, we're celebrating a new superstar in English cricket," he would say on Club Prairie Fire's YouTube channel.

Both Tom Hartley and Bashir have had only a handful of experience in first-class cricket before the ongoing series. However, both have been impressive with their bowling despite their inexperience and look like long-term spin bowling prospects for England who have been struggling to find spinners for the red-ball side since Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar duo.

ENS

### WANDERER, WORD-LOVER & WAR-LEADER

## A skipper who takes off to hills and seeks inspiration from fiery lyrics

VENKATA KRISHNAB  
CHENNAI, MARCH 1

TAMIL NADU Ranji captain R Sai Kishore is a bag full of surprises.

For a cricketer who comes across as disciplined on and off the field, he is hard to predict. Sai Kishore best describes himself as 'paithiyakaran' (eccentric). He has a reason for it too. "I don't know what I'm going to do next. I'm very unpredictable and hard to understand. I will do something, because the thought strikes my head. There is no reason behind it," the Ranji skipper says.

It is a notion even some of his teammates agree to. There are reasons for it. In 2021, having spent three weeks in a bio-secure bubble as a reserve player of the India white-ball squad at the end of West Indies series in Guwahati, Sai Kishore didn't pack his bags and head home to spend time with his family. Instead, he dropped a text message to his family and took a trip down to remote places in the Northeast, exploring the local culture, before finding a serene spot in a hilly terrain, somewhere between Assam and Nagaland, to meditate.

"I just went to explore the places and found myself in a totally remote hilly region. Except for the sound of the birds, there was nothing else and I started to meditate for a while," he tells The Indian Express. "When I opened my eyes, there was a monk for company. Once we finished meditation, we walked for a few hours, where he shared about his journey. He had then walked more than 1500km, which was stunning. And I joined him for a couple of hours," he says.

This isn't a one-off. Sai Kishore, who is spiritual, has a habit of taking off to temples and hilly terrains. One can often find him at Tiruvannamalai temple, which is four hours by road from Chennai. It is the place he frequents these days, where he will cover the 14-km long girivalam (walk around the hill).

It sounds common, but he doesn't end there. He will meditate for hours and rest with the hermits, sleep on the floor, using his elbow as his pillow. The mornings are spent cleaning the murti and the spots he hung around, before he indulges in annadanam (serves food) in the afternoon. "There is so much calmness and positive vibe over there. I like such places. Just like our dressing room. This is all Iraivan arul

(God's grace)," he says pointing skywards.

### Knows words' worth

Like all spiritual souls, he is philosophical too. To drive home his thoughts, Sai Kishore often leans on late Tamil lyricist and poet Na Muthukumar's words for inspiration. Donning the role of a RJ, certain nights at the hotel tend to become in Sai Kishore's words "Na Muthukumar iravugal" (Muthukumar nights)

have also included a few Arjit Singh's romantic melodies and invariably have become a tight-knit bunch. "I knew we would be spending a lot of time away from home. We need to enjoy each other's company and nothing unites us like music. I don't believe in forcefully having a team bonding session. If there is a team, there will be different types of personalities and they will mingle accordingly. The young boys in the team may not enjoy our company and would like to do something on their own. So why stop that?" he says.

It is this unpredictable, looking at things from a different perspective, abandoning the common methods as captain, that has seen Sai Kishore take this team to its first Ranji Trophy semi-finals in seven years. When he took over the reins this season, it looked like the Ranji campaign would end similar to the previous six years. And this time they had more reasons as well. Under new head coach Sulakshan Kulkarni, for a team that is known to be white-ball giants, TN made a group stage-exit in Syed Mushtaq Ali T20s. In the Vijay Hazare, they were saved by Dinesh Karthik, who carried them to semi-finals. And when the Ranji commenced there was no hope. The team was yet

to embrace Kulkarni's methods. The likes of Baba Indrajith, Vijay Shankar, N Jagadeesan found themselves in a perform-or-perish moment. All of it signalled towards another catastrophic season. But Sai Kishore turned the tables around with the help of these three players, who the powers-that-be wanted to push away.

"To be honest, we haven't done anything different to last season. We were unlucky not to qualify last year. This time, certain things have gone out way though compared to last season, we are a bit inexperienced this time.

We have had three new batsmen and one bowler who is just starting off. We can't expect them to deliver match-winning performances straightaway. So between us (seniors), we have shared the responsibility," Sai says.

As they face heavyweights Mumbai at the BKC grounds, TN are happy to be considered underdogs. And Sai Kishore riffs off Muthukumar to describe the mood in the TN dressing room. "Karai varum neram parthu, kapil kathirupom, erimalai vandhal kooda yeri nindru por thodupom (As we wait patiently in the ship for the shores to arrive, if we happen to land on a volcano, we will wage a war.)

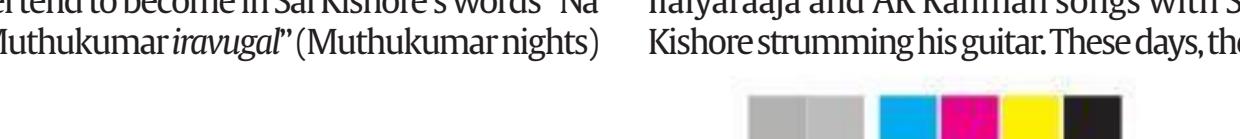


Tamil Nadu Ranji skipper R Sai Kishore describes himself as 'paithiyakaran' (eccentric).

where some of his lines are used to best define the moment the team finds itself in.

"I've always believed lyrics are under-rated. But that is where the beauty is. Everyone remembers the actor and music director and the visuals. But not the lyrics or lyricist. Without that, there is no soul in the music."

The evening then invariably drifts to Ilaiyaraaja and AR Rahman songs with Sai Kishore strumming his guitar. These days, they



### LONG READ

The finds of the ongoing Test series against England have spent years polishing their skills under the watchful eyes of the Rajasthan Royals coaching team at their state-of-the-art facility in Talegaon — a remote village 100 kms from Nagpur

## Jurel and Jaiswal's finishing school

PRATYUSH RAJ  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

TALEGAON IS nondescript a village as they come. In the middle of nowhere, some 100 km from Nagpur. In a district, Wardha, that hits the headlines mostly for a high farmer suicide rate. And the only industry, if it can be called one, is the manufacturing of iron products – daggers, knives and kitchenware.

In this unlikely place, from the house of Royals, the skills of two batsmen, sharp as knives, were honed. Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel, India's two big finds from the ongoing Test series against England, have spent weeks and months in Talegaon, training at the base of Rajasthan Royals, the Indian Premier League franchise they play for.

There are one too many uncanny similarities between Jaiswal and Jurel. The duo hails from Uttar Pradesh, Jaiswal from Bhadohi and Jurel from Agra. They left their homes early to chase their cricketing dreams. Played the U-19 World Cup together before being subsequently scouted by the Rajasthan Royals. And even though their careers are at a nascent stage, they are already touted as India's next-gen superstars.

With 655 runs, Jaiswal is the leading run-getter in the ongoing five-match Test series. Jurel, who has shown maturity beyond his age while batting at No 7, is already being compared to his idol MS Dhoni after his player-of-the-match effort in the Ranchi Test.

Behind their unprecedented emergence is a unique training programme designed by some of the best cricketing brains who have been associated with the Rajasthan Royals, from Shane Warne and Rahul Dravid in the past to Kumar Sangakkara and Zubin Bharucha now.

In the list of stalwarts, Bharucha might not be a name that immediately stands out. But the 54-year-old, who has played all of 17 first-class matches, is known for uneartthing diamonds from the rough.

In the cases of Jaiswal and Jurel, Bharucha says the 'inherent hunger' and 'desperation to succeed', coming from very humble backgrounds, gave him the necessary launchpad to mould them into top-class cricketers. He credits the Rajasthan Royals for providing him with the world-class infrastructure at Talegaon and the 'vision of the franchise to put the country first'.

"The facility is world-class. We have 40 cricket wickets (Talegaon, Nagpur). (For) Each of those wickets, the soil has been brought up from different parts of India. We are trying to prepare our players to perform in different conditions," Bharucha tells *The Indian Express*, adding that 'you probably need 250 bowlers to produce one batsman'.



Dhruv Jurel and Yashasvi Jaiswal with Zubin Bharucha, head of cricket Rajasthan Royals. Also seen is former Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara (left) and fast bowler Lasith Malinga.

### '140 overs'

Bharucha gives a glimpse into Jurel's preparation before he was picked for India A', and eventually India.

In a general practice session in cricket, you will see two fast bowlers, four spinners, that's pretty much it. In one round a batter will play six balls max. For us, one round for the batsman is close to 15 deliveries," he says.

From 14 yards, instead of 22, four players will throw the ball towards the batsman. Each of them serves a role and has been named cut, pull, flick and drive. Right behind these four 'bowlers' are another four who throw using a sidearm action. They are followed by four spinners and finally, four fast bowlers.

"That constitutes one round," Bharucha says. "When Dhruv Jurel came to Talegaon to practice before he went to play the Test match, he faced 140 overs in four-and-a-half hours. That's the training model we have set, be it Dhruv, Jaiswal, Sanju (Samson), Riyam (Parag) or Devdutt (Padikkal), who we

traded this year to Lucknow Super Giants."

The thinking, he adds, isn't to make the player practice for any one format. The focus instead is on the quality of shots, position at the crease, and the pitch they are playing on.

"We are looking just at the quality of shots and where the ball is going. One of the practices we do is, we try to hit the ball where there are no fielders. But based on the fact is, what is your capability?"

Some of their takeaways were fascinating. In the IPL last year, Bharucha adds, Jaiswal never played a shot through long on and mid-wicket. "He was either hitting towards mid-off, cover and so on. We have been practising the slog shots over the over long-on and mid-wicket for the past two years. It was in this series, where he has perfected it," he says.

### 360-degree batsman

Jaiswal, in these Tests, has bolstered his reputation for playing 360-degree shots. That would have been a distant dream if the batsman would not have been open-minded in

the training sessions and shown the willingness to spend hours practising the shots.

For the reverse sweep alone, Bharucha says they spent 'close to six months'. He would sweep and reverse-sweep the same ball to the boundary until it was perfected. Sweep wasn't the only shot he had to work on.

After his first IPL, the biggest weakness in Jaiswal's batting that Barucha pointed out was his inability to play shots on the on-side. And so, Bharucha employed baseball drills in developing Jaiswal's power game.

"We used heavy bats. He played a lot with tennis balls and heavy balls but with different weights of bats as well. That's something that comes from baseball. We have done that with Jurel, Yash, Riyam and Sanju as well. Yash's power generation has gone through the roof," Bharucha says.

The other technical aspects took a lot longer to improve. Eighteen months, to be precise. Jaiswal, Bharucha recalls, used to bend his elbow at the point of impact. Because of that, he couldn't generate enough power.

for Mumbai he has done well. I don't think he needs any encouragement or advice, we are thrilled to have him during the semifinals. Having a player like him will help other players," Rahane said.

Iyer was dropped from the Test team after the first two games against England. He, along with Ishan Kishan, was dropped from the list of centrally-contracted players for not playing Ranji Trophy. The BCCI and the selectors have taken a call that he will have to play domestic cricket to have a chance of being picked for the Indian team again. Big runs in a knock-out match will help him in the long run with IPL just around the corner.

"The preparation these guys are putting in and the hour they are devoting to the skill is quite extraordinary. To bat 140 overs in four hours, I can almost tell you that (there are) less than five and seven people in the world who can possibly do that. The credit must go to Yash & Jurel for doing it. You cannot substitute it in any other way or form. This is not a one-time thing, Jurel has been doing it for 18 months. The same is true with Yash."

Opportunity knocks for Rahane, Iyer as Mumbai face Tamil Nadu



Ajinkya Rahane is key for Mumbai. File

same innnings in First-Class history – helped Mumbai get past Baroda in the quarterfinals. The good news for Mumbai is that Shreyas Iyer will be playing. The next five days will also give an idea about Iyer's fitness levels. Iyer had back issues when at the same time the BCCI medical team declared him fit.

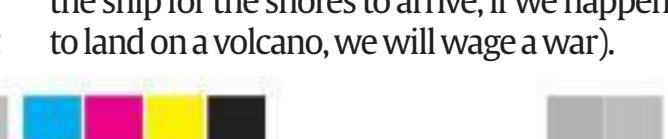
He had informed the Mumbai Cricket Association that he would not be available for the quarterfinals because of a back injury.

Experience counts in big games and Iyer presence will be handy. Rahane knows what Iyer brings to the table. "Shreyas is an experienced player, his contribution for Mumbai has been amazing. Whenever he has turned up

to embrace Kulkarni's methods. The likes of Baba Indrajith, Vijay Shankar, N Jagadeesan found themselves in a perform-or-perish moment. All of it signalled towards another catastrophic season. But Sai Kishore turned the tables around with the help of these three players, who the powers-that-be wanted to push away.

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## BRIEFLY

## Harris, Ecclestone power UP past Gujarat

Grace Harris made a powerful fifty that helped UP Warriorz negate a sluggish surface to register a facile six-wicket win over Gujarat Giants in their Women's Premier League match here on Friday. Harris (60 not out, 33 balls, 9x4, 2x6) and skipper Alyssa Healy (33, 21b, 7x4) helped Warriorz hunt down 143 in 15.4 overs for their second win in the tournament. Giants were restricted to 142 for five after left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone (3/20) used a rough deck to her advantage. Harris gave finishing touches to her good work with an outstanding innings. The Australian right-hander used her reach and force to telling effect to keep the pressure on the Giants bowlers after Healy gave them a fantastic start in the powerplay.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Gujarat Giants 142/3 (Litchfield 35, Ecclestone 3-20) lost to UP Warriorz 143/4 in 20 overs (Harris 60, Kanwar 2-23) by six wickets. PTI

## Puneri Paltan lift first-ever PKL title

**Hyderabad:** Puneri Paltan overcame a young and resilient Haryana Steelers to lift their maiden Pro Kabaddi League trophy here on Friday. In a contest which could have gone either way, Puneri Paltan won 28-25 at the GMC Balayogi Stadium. Puneri Paltan took the early lead with their defenders giving a good account of themselves. Ankit opened the account for the Steelers with Rahul Sethpal leading the charge to keep the clash interesting. PTI

## Praggnanandhaa goes down to Raport

**Prague:** Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa blundered for the second day running and lost to Richard Raport of Romania in the third round of the Prague Masters Chess tournament underway here. After briefly going ahead of Viswanthan Anand and attaining the top Indian status in the live rating list, this double blow cost the Indian dearly, and now a lot of hard-work remains in the last six rounds of the 10-player round-robin contest. PTI

# Horner before the red flag

Powerful partners, marriage to Spice Girl, ruthless operator: Red Bull team boss rose up ranks quickly in F1

NAMIT KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

IN 2005, when an energy drinks manufacturer, keen to have their brand associated with high octane adventure sports, decided to enter motor racing as outsiders in an environment dominated by legacy automobile companies, they hired an outsider to run the ship too.

At 31, untested and relatively unknown, Christian Horner joined the high table of Formula One as team boss at Red Bull Racing. Motorsport legends like Ron Dennis at McLaren and Jean Todt at Ferrari became overnight contemporaries. A highly politicised sporting environment became his home. Fierce competition, cutthroat margins, intense public scrutiny became an everyday reality.

19 years, seven drivers championships, and six constructors' titles later, Horner stands as the longest serving team principal in the paddock. Beneficial high-power partnerships, an aptitude for racing strategy, and a ruthless management style have allowed him to excel in an unusual sport. He has shaped the careers of some of the most successful drivers of this century, and built a team that is currently enjoying one of the most dominant runs in F1 history. His personal charisma, seen in detail in Netflix's reality-show style documentaries 'Drive to Survive' and his regular appearances at social events alongside his popstar wife, former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell, has given him a public profile equivalent to some of his drivers.

Yet, over the past month, all of that has threatened to come crashing down. Accused of "inappropriate" and "controlling" behaviour, the team's parent company, Austria-based Red Bull GmbH, announced an internal inquiry into what they deemed to be serious allegations last month.

A lack of transparency allowed the rumour mill to take over, and what had begun as reports of complaints with his aggressive management style were later reported, by Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf, as accusations of sexual misconduct. On Wednesday, the company announced the conclusion of its inquiry, and gave Horner a clean chit as he joined the team for the first race weekend of the year in Bahrain. Less than 24 hours later, though, as attention finally seemed to have shifted to action on the track, screenshots and images that were allegedly used as evidence during Horner's inquiry were leaked in emails to journalists, team bosses, and the sport's executives from an anonymous email id. The leaks eventually began doing the rounds on social media. The leaks have proven to be a damning setback for Horner — who has maintained his innocence throughout the process — especially given the magnitude of the allegations, that



Red Bull team principal Christian Horner has been accused of inappropriate behaviour by a female employee.

Reuters

have put into question how Horner has been allowed to continue to function in his role as team boss, as well as CEO of each of Red Bull's three racing units, during the process.

Horner has always benefited from personal relationships with important figures. Foremost of these was with Bernie Ecclestone, long-time chief executive of F1. Horner grew up well, in the town of Leamington Spa in the UK. Racing had never been in his DNA, but car manufacturing was. His father sold car components to manufacturers in England in a business that was inherited from his grandfather. After a short stint in lower leagues of motor racing, Horner quickly gave up on a career as a driver and began one as a team manager.

#### Ecclestone connection

He was first noticed when he was running a team in the lower-rung F3000 series, then owned by Ecclestone. When Red Bull was looking into taking over the erstwhile Jaguar team to enter F1, it was Ecclestone who effectively lobbied for Horner to take the reins and floated his name to the Austrian company's founder and co-owner, Dietrich Mateschitz.

Mateschitz entrusted him alongside Helmut Marko, the Austrian's motorsports adviser with whom Horner had a pre-established

EXPLAINED

#### On the track, Red Bull, Max still on pole

FRIDAY'S QUALIFYING session put doubts over Red Bull's race pace, in the wake of the recent controversy, to bed as the reigning world champion Max Verstappen put the RB20 on pole position, two-tenths of a second quicker than Ferrari's Charles Leclerc. The team's new car comes with a bold design and remained quickest throughout testing, and Verstappen has shown little signs of slowing down. Even with the distractions brewing in the background, indications are that it will be tough to stop the Dutchman's bid for a fourth successive world championship this year.

relationship during his F3000 days. According to a 2011 interview with Motorsport magazine, Horner said the job had been offered to him through Marko. The latest email leak has further expanded rumours — again not helped

by the lack of transparency in the process — of an apparent rift between Horner and Red Bull's senior management after Mateschitz's death last year. Horner is said to have also fallen out with Marko. Despite reaching the seat of power with Marko heading the team's young drivers programme, Horner would not have been able to steer Red Bull to the summit of the sport without courting car designer Adrian Newey from McLaren to become the upstart team's chief technical officer. Newey had attended the same school as Horner, and the two got along instantly and having already established himself, his work with Red Bull has made him the most successful car designer in F1 history.

It was Newey's innovative design that made Red Bull the formidable car it was when it won four straight drivers and constructors titles between 2010 and 2013 with Sebastian Vettel in the cockpit. The team's current dominance is also down to Newey acing the latest technical regulations, handing Max Verstappen the perfect car, suited to his strengths, utilizing his generational driving talent to steer him to three consecutive drivers titles. Last year, when Red Bull won 21 out of 22 races and Verstappen alone won 19, is perhaps the most dominant single season for one constructor. This year, Horner and Newey have

FIA president holds talks with Horner after leaked email

ACCORDING TO reports in *The Guardian*, Red Bull team principal Christian Horner held crunch talks with Mohammed Ben Sulayem, the president of FIA, Formula One's governing body, at the Bahrain International Circuit where the season-opening race is set to take place on Saturday.

The newspaper said the talks are regarding the controversy that broke out after an internal investigation being held by Red Bull into allegations of inappropriate behaviour by the 50-year-old Briton made by a female employee.

The internal probe exonerated Horner, as the team announced on Wednesday, but less than 24 hours later, a leaked email from an anonymous source containing files, reportedly presented as evidence in the investigation, was sent to journalists, team bosses, and the media.

The FIA and F1 are reportedly in close discussions to assess the issue.

Horner has maintained his innocence even after the leak, saying: "I won't comment on anonymous speculation. But to reiterate I have always denied the allegations."

Neither the FIA nor the F1 have released an official statement on the matter. ENS

attempted to rectify what is their one weakness — slow-speed corners on narrow circuits of the kind in Singapore, the only venue they did not win at last year — with another bold design of this year's vehicle, the RB20. They topped the charts in pre-season testing, despite the entire off-season being dominated by the investigation. While it is too early to judge whether the controversy will have any bearing on race pace, at best, it's an unwelcome distraction. Even when Horner was cleared internally, he remained on shaky ground with no information about his defence, the allegations, or the process. The leak has now crushed the ground under him. Red Bull's team structure is such that replacing Horner will require an entirely new leadership team, and there remains no clarity on whether Newey will stay if Horner leaves. Yet, it's a decision that the team may have to resort to as scrutiny intensifies in the coming weeks.

Horner rose to prominence thanks to his strategic and important relationships, and understanding of the finer details of F1. But now, his position in the team that he built, and the sustained run of dominance he has cultivated, remain under threat.

## HOPE FOR RECOGNITION

## Indian badminton soars but will coaches get due acclaim, money?

SHIVANI NAIK

ARUN VISHNU is just back from the Asia Team Championships where the Indian women he coached defied all expectations to win gold. "If my wife says, don't go for the tournament, I won't!" he laughs. "But I know she will handle things at home. It's not easy though," says India's young doubles coach, who travels extensively helping eke out tough wins, while leaving a toddler at home with former international shuttler and his spouse Arundhati Pantwane. "She's also a coach and has her own career," he reminds.

Vishnu, a former national doubles champion, retired early as a player as he couldn't afford travelling for tournaments, and jumped into coaching. His good outing as coach in this last week though, an Asian title no less, is the feather that will be celebrated more than his playing wins.

Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand came out victorious against a couple of Top-10 pairings to earn India crucial points while winning the title. Planning for them was a pair of Indian coaches, Vishnu along with Pullela Gopichand. An under-appreciated fact as more youngsters burst through the ranks and get Top-10 scalps on the big stage is the contribution of former India players-turned-coaches



Arun Vishnu with his wards Treesa Jolly (L) and Gayatri Gopichand. BAI

An under-appreciated fact as more youngsters burst through the ranks and get Top-10 scalps is the contribution of former India players-turned-coaches

young Indian talents at the top stages is taken for granted, expected even of them, while giving back to the sport.

"But all that travelling and staying away from families and trying to build a strong foundation in doubles... I hope we are recognised too. If you want former players to get into top coaching, they should be able to financially take care of their families," he urges.

Parupalli Kashyap, Guru Siddu at the Gopichand academy, and Chetan Anand, Sumeeth Reddy, as well as Manu Attri independently have plunged into coaching. The situation isn't too different in Bangalore where Anup Sridhar, Arvind Bhat, Ajit Wijetillek and Sagar and Sayali Chopda can help India's next generation if they are persistent with.

Vishnu cites the example of veteran coach Vijaydeep Singh, who shepherded countless doubles pairings at international meets, while India was still finding its feet.

"He shifted to Hyderabad, stayed away from his family in Chandigarh. Those are huge sacrifices. Even other Indian support staff—physios, trainers and S&C coaches who travel and put in long hours. It's tough for everyone," Vishnu says.

Coch Siadutullah has the respect of all top Indian names whom he travelled with during their development years. But though both the big academies of Hyderabad and Bangalore do their best to offer them decent remuneration, it is nowhere near what foreign pros will get offered.

The Badminton Association of India have announced a coaches development program for grassroots mentors in four cities, and certification and upskilling. But will the country offer competitive salaries to Indian coaches who are expected to deliver the same results, or merely expect them to carry on selflessly?

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