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ALLEN

THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



An H3 rocket lifts off from the space center in Kagoshima. AP

Japan's H3 rocket achieves trajectory in test

Tokyo: A Japanese flagship H3 rocket lifted off from a space station in southwestern Japan Saturday, successfully achieving its planned trajectory and releasing two small observation satellites in a key second test, overcoming its failed debut launch a year ago and buoying hope for the country to be competitive in the global space race. The H3 rocket blasted off from a launch pad at the Tanegashima Space Centre on time Saturday morning, two days after its scheduled liftoff was delayed due to bad weather. The rocket achieved the trajectory and released the two satellites, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said. AP

UNITED KINGDOM

Indian-origin man gets jail for murder in 1994

London: An Indian-origin man has been sentenced to life imprisonment by a court here for murdering a woman 30 years ago after he was connected to the brutal killing through his strand of hair found at the crime scene. Sandip Patel, 51, was found guilty of the murder of Marina Koppel by stabbing her at least 140 times at her flat in the Westminster area of London in 1994 and sentenced at the Old Bailey court in the city on Friday. The Metropolitan Police said innovative work by its forensics team on his hair found on a ring worn by Koppel finally brought Patel to justice all these years later. PTI

IRAN

Man guns down 12 relatives in shooting spree

Tehran: A 30-year-old man gunned down 12 of his relatives Saturday in a remote rural area in southeast Iran, the deadliest shooting reported in decades. The gunman opened fire on his father, brother and other relatives early morning in a village because of family disputes. The report, which did not identify the assailant, stated he used a Kalashnikov assault rifle. This attack has had the highest death toll in Iran, in such incidents. AP



At Moscow's Wall of Grief monument, dedicated to victims of political repression, where people gathered to honour the memory of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Saturday. Reuters

Day after, over 300 detained in Russia over Navalny events

G7 foreign ministers call on Russia to clarify circumstances of the death in jail

REUTERS
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 17

AT LEAST 340 people have been detained at events across 30 Russian cities since the death of Alexei Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most formidable domestic opponent, according to rights group OVD-Info.

It is the largest wave of arrests at political events in Russia since Sept. 2022, when more than 1,300 were arrested at demonstrations against a "partial mobilisation" of reservists for the military campaign in Ukraine.

Navalny, a 47-year-old former



Police detain a man in Moscow, Saturday. Reuters

lawyer, fell unconscious and died on Friday after a walk at the "Polar Wolf" Arctic penal colony where he was serving 19-years sentence,

the prison service said. OVD-Info, which reports on freedom of assembly in Russia, said the largest numbers of arrests occurred in St Petersburg and Moscow, where Navalny's movement had traditionally been strong, with 74 and 49 detained, respectively.

'Sudden death syndrome'

Alexei Navalny's mother was told on Saturday that Russia's her son had been struck down by "sudden death syndrome" and that his body would not be handed over to the family until an investigation was completed, his team said. Navalny's 69-year-old mother, Lyudmila, braved Arctic

temperatures of minus 30 degrees Celsius on Saturday to visit the penal colony where her son perished. She was given an official death notice stating the time of death as 2:17 p.m. local time on Feb. 16, Navalny's spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, told Reuters.

"Sudden death syndrome" is a vague term for different cardiac syndromes that cause sudden cardiac arrest and death.

G7 foreign ministers Saturday called on Russia to fully clarify the circumstances of the death of Navalny. The foreign ministers of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US met in Munich on Saturday.

Big win for Russia as Ukraine troops leave stronghold in east

REUTERS
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 17

RUSSIA SAID Saturday that its forces had inflicted a series of defeats on Ukrainian forces along the 1,000-km front line just as Ukrainian troops withdrew from the devastated eastern town of Avdiivka.

The Ukrainian withdrawal from Avdiivka paves the way for Russia's biggest victory since the May 2023 capture of Bakhmut after a deadly battle that left thousands dead in a devastated city with barely a building intact.

After the failure of Ukraine to pierce Russian lines last year, Moscow has been trying to grind down Ukrainian forces just as Kyiv ponders a major new mobilisation and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy appoints a new commander to run the war.

"Avdiivka, as a major node of resistance for the armed forces of Ukraine, has fallen," pro-Russian military blogger Yuri Podolyak said on Telegram.

Avdiivka, which had a pre-war population of around 32,000 and is called Avdeyevka by Russians, was briefly taken in 2014 by Moscow-backed separatists who seized a swathe of eastern Ukraine but was recaptured by Ukrainian troops who built extensive fortifications.



A chemical plant in the town of Avdiivka on February 15

ZELENSKY WARNS OF 'ARTIFICIAL DEFICIT' OF WEAPONS

Munich: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned allies Saturday that an "artificial deficit" of arms for his country risks giving Russia breathing space, highlighting the need for artillery and long-range weapons after his military chief said he was withdrawing troops from Avdiivka. Zelensky spoke to the Munich Security Conference, an annual gathering of security and foreign policy officials.

The New York Times reported that there had been chaotic scenes as Ukrainian forces retreated, with some of their wounded abandoned and soldiers starved of ammunition.

No point in Gaza truce talks until Hamas changes delusional demands: Netanyahu

REUTERS
CAIRO/JERUSALEM, FEB 17

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Saturday that he had sent negotiators for truce talks in Cairo as requested by US President Joe Biden but they did not go back for further talks because Hamas' demands were "delusional".

He said there was no point in further negotiations until Hamas makes changes to its demands.

Netanyahu, speaking to reporters, also said that a broader diplomatic deal with the Palestinians could only be reached through direct negotiations without any preconditions.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces carried out arrests in Gaza's largest functioning hospital, health of-



Palestinians near a house hit by an Israeli strike in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on Saturday. Reuters

ficials and the military said Saturday, as airstrikes hit across the enclave and rain battered Palestinians taking shelter in Rafah. Israeli forces raided the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis

on Thursday. "Occupation forces detained a large number of medical staff members inside Nasser Medical Complex," said Gaza Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra.

The Biden administration is preparing to send bombs and other weapons to Israel even as the US pushes for a ceasefire in Gaza, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.

INDIA-BOUND OIL TANKER HIT IN RED SEA

Cairo: A Panamanian-flagged tanker carrying crude oil bound for India was struck with a missile in the Red Sea, the U.S. said. The missile launched from Yemen hit the M/T Pollux on its port side. It embarked from Russia's Black Sea port on Jan. 24 and was due to discharge in Paradip, India, on Feb 28. REUTERS

The Biden administration is preparing to send bombs and other weapons to Israel even as the US pushes for a ceasefire in Gaza, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.



Donald Trump

Trump hit with \$355-million penalty in NY civil fraud case

REUTERS
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 17

DONALD TRUMP must pay \$354.9 million in penalties for fraudulently overstating his net worth to dupe lenders, a New York judge ruled on Friday, handing the former U.S. president another legal setback in a civil case that imperils his real estate empire.

Justice Arthur Engoron, in a sharply worded decision, opens new tabs issued after a contentious three-month trial in Manhattan, also banned Trump from serving as an officer or director of any New York corporation for three years. Trump's lawyer Alina Habba vowed to appeal. Engoron canceled his prior ruling from September ordering the "dissolution" of companies that control pillars of Trump's real estate empire, saying on Friday that this was no longer necessary because he is appointing an independent monitor and compliance director to oversee Trump's businesses.

neighbour of aspiring actor Edward (Sebastian Stan) who undergoes a radical procedure to fix his face. When an actual disfigured man (Adam Pearson) gets the part Edward was 'born to play', questions arise: when the movies get 'normal' actors to play disfigured ones with the aid of prosthetics, isn't it unfair to those who live with it? For the record, Pearson does a better job, but he would, wouldn't he? And can we all be like Reinsve's blithe character, who doesn't appear to be at all bothered by the face of her neighbour, a face he can't wait to get rid of? Beauty does indeed lie in the eyes of the beholder.

Reinsve is equally luminous in her other Competition title *A Different Man*, which forces us to confront our complex feelings towards disfigurement. She plays a struggling playwright, and is the

AN ITALIAN FILM OF INTRIGUE AND SIMMERING POWER

Another End: All of us will die one day, but what if we could live forever?



SHUBhra GUPTA

FEBRUARY 17

DOES DEATH come as the end? And how final is that end? Poets and philosophers are not the only ones who have rhapsodised over the cyclical nature of all existence:

if you are born, then one day, you will die.

Medical science has taken giant strides in being able to save lives, and is pushing boundaries in this field with each passing day. But no one yet has found a way to prevent the cessation of life.

The 'what if' question — what if we could live forever — is one that has seen countless iterations, but it's been strictly rhetorical. But in movies, everything is possible, and this business of staying alive is the central theme of *Another End*, an Italian film of intrigue and simmering power starring Gael García Bernal, Renate Reinsve and Berenice Bejo.

The film, directed by Piero Messina, is set in the near future, where a technological leap manages to place the memories of a dead person in a living body. Bernal plays a man who is unable to come to terms with the loss of his wife in an accident. His sister (Bejo), who works with the organisation which 'matches' the dead person with a living body, ensures that the consciousness of the wife is 'placed' within the limber body of Reinsve.

The film is futuristic only to the extent of having this kind of technology available to those who desperately need it; in every other respect, it belongs to the earth as we

know it. Grieving humans, especially those whose loved ones die in an accident which they feel responsible for, always feel that they never had the time to say the things they would have, if they had known such a thing would happen.

Bernal is first-rate as the partner left behind, his attempt at taking his own life thwarted. The ethical and moral dilemmas that this kind of extension is apparent not just in his confusion while dealing with a woman who remembers the things that his wife did — they even snap at each other in familiar ways — but in the way he refuses to let go.

double defeats in by-elections that saw the governing Conservatives lose two of parliamentary strongholds, the 43-year-old British Indian leader reiterated a previous claim that the results were down to voter apathy and low turnout.

Sunak urged the electorate to back him and support his party in the general election. "The Conservative family must come together to defeat Labour and ensure a brighter fu-

ture for our country," Sunak wrote.

I know that the last year has not been easy. I understand why people feel exhausted with politics. I get why people choose to stay at home rather than come out in a by-election that won't change the government," he said and added, "But later this year, we will have a general election that will decide who governs our country. I am confident that by then we will have made more progress that the plan will be de-

livering the security and opportunity that people crave."

This direct plea to the voters comes amid some tough political times for the British PM, who is under pressure from within his party to change course before it is too late. Drawing a clear divide between his leadership and that being proposed by Labour Leader Keir Starmer, Sunak asserted that his opponent had no plan and would take the country backwards.

Reinsve is equally luminous in her other Competition title *A Different Man*, which forces us to confront our complex feelings towards disfigurement. She plays a struggling playwright, and is the



Actress Renate Reinsve of 'Another End' at the 74th Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin on Saturday. AP

Reinsve, who is having quite a Berlinale (she also stars in another Competition title 'A Different

Man') and Bejo triangulate Bernal effectively: the former dealing with her own grief of a lost child



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BJP NATIONAL COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION

Nadda and Rajnath lead BJP chorus: Modi will return for third straight term

PM tells party
370 seats will be
tribute to Syama
Prasad Mookerjee

VIKAS PATHAK & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17



PM Narendra Modi with BJP chief JP Nadda, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. PTI

Gandhi loyalist Kamal Nath, his MP-son likely to leave Cong for BJP

'If there is something, will inform you'

MANOJ G & ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, BHOPAL,
FEBRUARY 17

Nath is an
ex-CM and
9-time MP

IN WHAT will be another setback to the Congress on the eve of the Lok Sabha elections, party veteran leader Kamal Nath and

his son and Lok Sabha MP Nakul are likely to quit the party and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BOOST FOR ISRO AHEAD OF EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE LAUNCH



The GSLV-F14, carrying INSAT-3DS satellite, lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Saturday. PTI

'Naughty boy' tamed: ISRO's GSLV injects weather satellite into orbit

ANONNA DUTT & ANJALI MARAR
NEW DELHI, BENGALURU,
FEBRUARY 17

THE "NAUGHTY boy" may just have come of age. The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) GSLV rocket, known for its relatively spotty record, placed a weather satellite in precise orbit on Saturday after a textbook launch, recording its second straight success after an August 2021 setback—and giving India's space agency a boost ahead of the launch of a joint Earth-observing mission with NASA.

The relief was palpable among top ISRO officials after

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



THE WORLD

DAY AFTER NAVALNY DEATH, AROUND 340 DETAINED IN RUSSIA FOR RALLIES, EVENTS

Israel should have been very mindful of deaths of civilians: Jaishankar

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

FOR THE first time since the start of the Israel-Hamas war last October, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Saturday that Israel "should have been very mindful of civilian casualties" and that it has "an obligation to observe international humanitarian law".

So far, New Delhi's statements

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secy of State Antony Blinken at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday. AP

Talks today, Punjab farm unions ask Govt to bring in ordinance on MSP

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 17

AHEAD OF a key meeting Sunday with Union Ministers to try and resolve issues that made them call for a protest march to Delhi, Punjab farm union leaders said Saturday that the govt

overnment should bring an ordinance to provide minimum support price (MSP) guarantee to the farmers.

Sarvan Singh Pandher, general secretary of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, told reporters at the Shambhu border: "If the government wants, it can

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

DAYS AFTER *The Indian Express* reported on the trend of state governments not appointing regular police chiefs despite the availability of eligible officers, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has told "defaulting" states to follow the Supreme Court's directives on such appointments.

Sources said a letter was sent last week from the office of the Union Home Secretary to the Chief Secretaries of seven states that have temporary DGP officiating as police chiefs. These states are Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Odisha and West Bengal.

An official of the ministry, which is the cadre-controlling authority for the Indian Police Service, said the letter underlined SC directives on appointment of DGP in the Prakash Singh case. The letter, the official said, has told states citing SC directions that temporary or "acting DGP" are to be avoided and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE CITY

KEJRIWAL WINS CONFIDENCE VOTE IN DELHI ASSEMBLY
PAGE 6

Chhattisgarh prepares conversion Bill: DM to be alerted, cops to assess motive

JAYPRakash SNaidu
RAIPUR, FEBRUARY 17

EXPLAINED

E Mentor's playbook

IN TRYING to regulate conversion, CM Vishnu Deo Sai seems to be taking a cue from his mentor, late Union minister Dilip Singh Judeo, who had launched the 'ghar wapsi' campaign in the state.

Chhattisgarh Assembly in the coming days, *The Indian Express* has learnt. While the draft is ready, sources said some amendments could be made before it is finally presented in the Vidhan Sabha.

The person who performs the conversion ceremony will similarly have to fill a form at least a month in advance.

The draft also states that conversion "cannot be done

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

AI's rising star frames challenge for India: Lack of hardware and shortage of talent

That's Aravind Srinivas, founder and CEO of Perplexity AI, an IIT Madras graduate who is making waves in Silicon Valley, pitted in a David vs. Goliath slugfest against titans Microsoft and Google.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* from his home in San Francisco, Srinivas says he's positioning Perplexity as a "conversational answer engine" to differentiate it from competition.

Having previously worked at DeepMind, Google, and Microsoft-backed OpenAI, Srinivas says Perplexity's USP is its attempt to re-imagine the future of search by delivering clear

personalised answers, cutting through the noise on the web that traditional search engine users have to navigate.

What helps is the list of heavyweights who are rooting for him. Perplexity was founded less than two years ago by Srinivas, Denis Yarats (former Facebook AI research scientist), Andy Konwinski (co-founder of Databricks), and Johnny Ho (former Quora engineer). Among its backers are US chipmaker Nvidia, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Turing award winning French-American scientist Yann LeCun, and former Tesla and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Avoid naming acting DGPs: MHA

appointed only in exceptional circumstances. It said states must follow the apex court's directions on appointing regular DGPs with a tenure of two years.

"We keep reminding the defaulting states that they must follow SC directions and Union Public Service Commission guidelines on appointment of DGPs. This letter has been sent as part of the same exercise," a senior Home Ministry official said.

Asked if a similar letter has also been sent to the Jammu and Kashmir administration, an official said the SC directions are understood to be applicable to states and not Union Territories.

On February 1, The Indian Express had flagged the case of the seven states mentioned above as well as that of J&K. The appointments acting DGPs are typically made by handing the additional charge of the police chief's post to a DG-rank officer in the state holding some other responsibility.

Such action is in violation of the SC guidelines on DGP appointments in the Prakash Singh case and the guidelines issued by the UPSC. The apex court has said no temporary or ad hoc appointments of police chiefs must be made barring exceptional circumstances. UPSC guidelines say states must send a list of eligible officers, with at

least three senior-most officers, to the Commission six months before the retirement of the incumbent DGP.

Sources in the administration of these states, however, pointed out "flaws" in the SC judgement in the Prakash Singh case. They said the order is such that UPSC invariably chooses the three senior-most police officers from the list sent to it by the states, and the state government is forced to choose one among them. The CM should have some discretion over who is best suited to lead the police force. The government's choice may not necessarily be among the three senior-most, they said.

While Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, UP and Punjab have had such temporary DGPs for almost or more than a year, three other states, Uttarakhand, Odisha and West Bengal, and the Union Territory of J&K, have recently appointed "acting DGPs".

Uttar Pradesh has had four acting DGPs in the past 20 months. The Uttar Pradesh government on January 31 appointed Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar as its acting DGP. He replaced Vijay Kumar, who, too, was an acting DGP. Prashant Kumar is 17th in the seniority list of IPS officers available for DGP's position in the state.

FROM PAGE ONE | FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Modi will be back for third straight term'

Rajya in the last 10 years", party president J P Nadda, Defence Minister and senior leader Rajnath Singh said Saturday that Modi would return to power for a third straight term with a roadmap for expanding the government's welfare and development programmes that have "been reaching every home".

Earlier in the day, setting clear targets for the BJP in the countdown to the elections, Modi said that party workers should see a target of 370 Lok Sabha seats as their tribute to Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and not just as a number.

Mookerjee had campaigned against Article 370, demanding complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India. In August 2019, the Modi government ensured the abrogation of Article 370, ending the special status of J&K.

Addressing BJP office-bearers at the start of the two-day meeting of the national council in New Delhi, Modi said each party worker should focus on his or her polling booth now, take the welfare measures and development work of the BJP government to the voters, and try to ensure that he or she gets

370 more votes than the last time for the party in his or her booth.

Briefing the press on the Prime Minister's address to the office-bearers, BJP general secretary Vinod Tawde said Modi announced the "names" of Lok Sabha candidates of the party: "The lotus". The message: party office-bearers and workers should look at just the party symbol, nothing else.

Later, addressing party delegates, BJP president Nadda said the party was the only one that had maintained the same ideological stand from 1951 to the present day.

He said the party saw victory the last time and will see victory in the future too.

Despite being very busy, Modi still gives priority to the party and constantly thinks how he can take the party to greater heights, Nadda said.

He praised party workers for making the party powerful at the grassroots.

He said that Jana Sangh and BJP saw the Emergency, struggles, electoral defeats, etc, but the last 10 years were a period of "success" and "happiness".

"In 2009, the BJP got 18 per cent votes, and this increased to

31 per cent votes in 2014 and 37 per cent votes in 2019 under Modi ji," Nadda said.

"We are today the world's largest political party. There was a time when we would have governments in about five states.

The NDA has governments in 17 states and BJP has governments in 12 states. Since 2019, we won 16 of the 26 Assembly elections," he said.

He also pointed to the rise of the party in West Bengal, and said "the next innings will be ours".

He referred to other instances of the BJP's successes, particularly in the North-East. He said the vote share of the BJP even in Telangana had doubled from 7 per cent to 14 per cent in the recent Assembly elections, and that the party would leave no stone unturned to become a major force in the state.

Nadda listed details of various welfare schemes of the Modi government. He said women's reservation was held up for political reasons for three decades but was passed in three days under the leadership of Modi - this had the delegates chanting "Modi, Modi!"

Nadda recalled that the BJP and Jana Sangh used to have a slogan that it would not accept

two flags, two Constitutions and two PMs in one country; that Modi also hoisted the Tricolour in Srinagar with Murli Manohar Joshi, and that the Modi government finally revoked Article 370.

On the issue of Ayodhya, Nadda said the party had said "Mandir wahan banaaveyenge", and Modi finally consecrated the idol in the temple on January 22. Mocking the Opposition for saying for years that the BJP had given no date for the Ram temple at Ayodhya, Nadda said that the date did come but such was the "karma" of Opposition leaders that they did not attend it. He then joined the delegates in chanting Jai Shri Ram.

He commended L K Advani for his contribution as a BJP leader and former minister, and acknowledged the contribution of Chaudhary Charan Singh, Karpoori Thakur, PV Narasimha Rao and M S Swaminathan, the other recipients of the Bharat Ratna this year.

Nadda said that under Modi, India had become the fifth largest economy of the world. The PM, he said, would return to power for a third term, and India would rise to be the third largest economy of the world (in GDP terms).

• Kamal Nath, son likely to join BJP

join the BJP, sources said.

A former Chief Minister and nine-time MP, Kamal Nath, who has worked with three generations of the Gandhis, is set to end his over 50-year association with the Congress at a time when the party is bracing for one of its toughest electoral battles till date.

Nath, 77, will be the tenth former CM of the Congress to leave the party in the last 10 years, joining the ranks of Maharashtra's Ashok Chavan - who switched to the BJP earlier this week - Mukul Sangma (Meghalaya), Amarinder Singh (Punjab), Ghulam Nabi Azad (Jammu and Kashmir), Vijay Bahuguna (Uttarakhand), late Ajit Jogi (Chhattisgarh), S M Krishna (Karnataka), Narayan Rane (Maharashtra) and Giridhar Gamang (Odisha) who returned to the party recently.

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Jitu Patwari dismissed the "rumours": "Can you imagine Indira's third son leaving the Congress? Even in your dreams, can such a thought occur that Kamal Nath, under whose guidance we fought the Assembly elections just two months ago, would leave the party?"

Senior leaders in the state Congress, however, expressed some anxiety. Said one party leader: "Kamal Nath has not dismissed any of the rumours. He has not said even once that he would take strict action against those spreading rumours."

Nath's exit would be a huge blow for the Gandhi family given his close personal ties, going back to the days of Indira Gandhi. Nath, a Doon School mate of Sanjay Gandhi, joined the Youth Congress in the 1970s and soon became a key member of Sanjay's inner circle with the likes of Jagmohan, V C Shukla, Bansi Lal, Om Mehta, Jagdish Tytler and later Akbar Ahmad Dumpy — a coterie that is often blamed for all that went wrong during and after the Emergency.

Nath, who hails from Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh, was rewarded for his friendship with Sanjay with the Chhindwara seat in Madhya Pradesh in the 1980 Lok Sabha polls. Chhindwara and Nagaur in Rajasthan were the only two seats the Congress had won in the 1977 elections after Emergency when the party was wiped out in the Hindi heartland. Since then, Nath won nine Lok Sabha elections from Chhindwara, losing only once. He was one of Sanjay's pointsmen who used to drum up political support for the Emergency. It is said that it was he who met Shiv Sena's Bal Thackeray on Sanjay's behalf and enlisted his support for the Emergency.

Nath had been a minister in the PV Narasimha Rao government and later in the UPA I and II governments led by Manmohan Singh.

Despite being in the Congress for decades, Nath was never really active in Madhya Pradesh politics. He was always a Delhi leader, known for his links with the corporates. He became active in MP politics only in 2018 when he was appointed the state Congress chief. Later that year, Rahul Gandhi anointed him as the CM after the Congress won the Assembly elections, much to the displeasure of the younger Jyotiraditya Scindia, who switched to the BJP in March 2020 after toppling the Nath government. The exit of Nath is hence going to be more of a psychological blow to the Congress.

• Draft conversion Bill

from one religion to another by the use or practice of abuse, force, undue influence, coercion, inducement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage".

If the DM discovers this was the case, the conversion will be deemed illegal, it states.

The draft for the "Chhindwara Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Bill" also states that following the conversion, a person will have to fill another declaration form within 60 days and present himself or herself before the DM for verification. If this is not done, the conversion can be deemed illegal, it states, adding that the DM will display a copy of the declaration on the notice board of his office until the date of confirmation.

A registry will be maintained by the DM of everyone who converts. In case of an objection, an FIR can be filed by a person who is related by blood or adoption to the person getting converted. The case will be non-bailable and triable by a sessions court, it states.

Those found illegally converting minors, women, or members of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe will face a minimum of two years and maximum of 10 years in jail, as well as a minimum fine of Rs 25,000. For mass conversion, the punishment will be a minimum of three years and a maximum of 10 years with a ₹50,000 fine.

Over the last few years, when the Congress was in power, the state saw several instances of tribals who had converted to Christianity being attacked in districts such as Kondagaon and Narayanpur. In the run up to the assembly polls, the BJP had made conversions an electoral issue.

It was the late Union Minister Dilip Singh Judeo, from the erstwhile Royal family of Jashpur, who first gave a push to the "Ghar Wapsi" campaign in his district.

Chhindwara Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, who also hails from Jashpur and sees Judeo as his mentor, has said religious conversion increased in the last five years. He said last month, "Judeo ji started the Ghar Wapsi campaign in Jashpur due to which our district is protected. Otherwise the second biggest church in Asia is in our district and conversion takes place rapidly. Though he was a king, he washed the feet of converted people and brought them back to Hinduism, and today his son is carrying forward this work."

THE STORY headlined 'The Jayant Factor' on the Big Picture page incorrectly mentioned that when the Janata Dal formed the government in UP in 1989, Charan Singh picked Mulayam over his son Ajit for the chief minister's post. Charan Singh died in 1987. The error is regretted.

• Talks today, Punjab farm unions ask Govt to bring in MSP ordinance

bring an ordinance overnight. If it wants a resolution to the farmers' protest, then it should bring an ordinance."

Jagjit Singh Dallewal, leader of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Siddhpur), agreed with Pandher and reiterated the demand for an ordinance.

"When the government wants to bring an ordinance, it does... Why can't they do it now?" Dallewal said, adding that it can be converted into a legislation within six months.

The demand for an ordinance on MSP has come a day prior to the fourth round of talks between the farm union leaders and the Union Ministers. The MSP guarantee has been one of

• 'Naughty boy tamed': ISRO's GSLV injects weather satellite into orbit

the INSAT-3DS launch. "The naughty boy has now matured as a very obedient and disciplined boy. GSLV has also become a robust vehicle for ISRO," said mission director Tony Joseph. GSLV stands for Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle.

Chairperson S Somanath, too, said: "With this mission, our confidence will help in diversification of crops. The government, he said, imports pulses and oil seeds. "We can also produce pulses and oil seeds. But we go for wheat and paddy as there is no assured purchase. If we get a guarantee, what stops us from producing these?" he said.

On farm debt waiver, Pandher said the Centre has been saying that the loan amounts have to be assessed. "What stops the government from collecting the data from banks? It is only a matter of political will," he said.

Not only was Saturday's launch a textbook one, the GSLV also carried an additional 50 kg to a 2,800-km higher orbit, in-

creasing the life of the satellite by three months, said Director of UR Rao Satellite Centre M Sankaran.

The weather observation satellite was injected into a geosynchronous transfer orbit. From here, over the next few days, orbit raising manoeuvres will be conducted to place the satellite in its final orbit. Once the satellite is tested in-orbit and becomes operational, it will provide advanced weather observations of land and ocean surfaces.

While the last GSLV mission, in 2023, also used the new and bigger four-metre ogive-shaped payload fairing — the top part of the launch vehicle within which the satellite is placed till it crosses the dense atmosphere — this was the first time the additional space was utilised for a bigger satellite.

The last failure of GSLV occurred in August 2021 when a malfunctioning valve led to insufficient pressure in the liquid hydrogen tank in the cryogenic upper stage, resulting in the stage not igniting.

The INSAT-3DS will help in short-range forecasts of extreme weather events such as thunderstorms, provide visibility estimation for aviation and help in studying forest fire, smoke, snow cover and climate. It will also help in detecting potential fishing zones. The satellite will provide imaging data in six wavelengths and will be an upgrade over the INSAT 3D and INSAT 3DR satellites that it is meant to replace.

The satellite will have a mission life of ten years and has been fully funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

During the past five years, the IMD's services included relaying vital meteorological information once every 15 minutes which was facilitated by the combination of INSAT 3D and 3DR. "But as INSAT-3D has completed its ten year lifetime, its data quality was not as expected. INSAT-3DR, too, has completed eight years of its mission. So, as satellites get older we need new satellites to replace the older ones. This is a continuous exercise," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general, IMD. Now, the data will be generated by INSAT-3DR and 3DS.

The next series of meteorological satellites — the INSAT-4 — will be a major upgrade to the meteorological services and products. "INSAT-4 will use entirely new technologies. We have placed an order for the same," Mohapatra said.

The last failure of GSLV oc-

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The GBC-IV in Lucknow is set to witness the groundbreaking of projects worth a staggering more than Rs. 10 lakh cr. This unprecedented level of investment will not only revitalize Uttar Pradesh's economy but also create a ripple effect across the nation, generating millions of jobs and fuelling growth. Aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of propelling India towards a \$5 trillion economy and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's dedicated efforts towards achieving a \$1 trillion economy for UP, this event marks a pivotal juncture. The forthcoming ground breaking ceremony orchestrated by the Yogi government holds the promise to bring a transformative overhaul in the state's industrial landscape, heralding unprecedented growth and development opportunities.

Investments across diverse sectors



- Diverse sectors receiving investment include Agriculture (0.37%), Animal Husbandry (0.25%), Automobiles and Electric Vehicles (0.33%), Biofuels/Biomass (0.82%), Dairy (1.04%), Defence and Aerospace (0.55%), and Distilleries (0.84%).
- Additional sectors benefiting from investment encompass Financial Services (0.12%), Food & Civil Supplies (1.08%), Health Services (2.73%), Hospitality & Entertainment (2.78%), and Infrastructure (0.02%).
- Investment extends to Textiles & Handlooms (1.28%), wood-based industries (1.00%), and miscellaneous sectors (0.11%), highlighting a comprehensive economic strategy.

Spotlight of GBC-IV

- Out of all investment projects, 52% will kickstart in Paschimanchal.
- Purvanchal, Madhyanchal, and Bundelkhand are set to accommodate 29%, 14%, and 5% of investment projects respectively during the event.
- The infusion of more than Rs 10 lakh crore in investment will open 34 lakh job opportunities throughout the state.
- More than 14,500 projects are slated for implementation throughout the state.
- More than 3,000 people will likely take part in the GBC-IV.
- UPSIDA lines up investments worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore for the Ground Breaking Ceremony.
- 'One District - One Product' will be showcased during the program in all districts.

UP, best destination for investment

Under the leadership of CM Yogi Adityanath's stable regime, UP built robust transport infrastructure and a skilled workforce, capitalizing on its vast population to become a prime investment destination with ready land and seamless connectivity.

- Holds 38% of India's expressways, making it a key region for efficient and rapid road transportation.
- Only state to have 5 international airports (4 existing & 1 upcoming).
- Dedicated effort towards fostering transparent and proactive policing, while simultaneously prioritizing

capacity building and the eradication of organized crime.

- Achiever State in 2020 and 2nd rank in BRAP Ranking 2019.
- Top Ranked State – Achiever category (90 % above) and jumped 7 positions to achieve the 6th position in LEADS Ranking 2021.
- Industry status in the warehousing and logistics sector.
- 3500 compliances reduced
- Largest digital single window-479 services of 37 departments.
- Abundant land reserves strategically distributed across key economic zones and along major expressways/corridors.
- Rapid facilitation of land allocation designed for mega projects, with approval granted in a mere 15 days.
- GIS-enabled land bank integrated with Gol portal.
- All the industrial development authorities are uploading comprehensive data on vacant plots on the Nivesh Sarathi portal, thereby giving investors uninterrupted access to this related important information.

Nivesh Sarathi portal has also shared details regarding available plots on their respective platforms. This transparency and accessibility ensure that potential investors can easily locate and assess opportunities.

**Target
\$1
Trillion**



Launch of gigantic projects valued at more than ₹ 10 lakh cr.

The launch of gigantic projects valued at more than 10 lakh cr. during the GBC-IV signifies a monumental step towards injecting new life into Uttar Pradesh's industrial sector, creating countless opportunities, and charting a path for future development. As over 25 sectoral policies are unveiled, the spotlight will illuminate the state's relentless pursuit of economic progress and its magnetic attraction for significant investments. The

forthcoming groundbreaking ceremony symbolizes not only UP's unwavering commitment but also its integral role in shaping India's journey towards economic prosperity. The Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC) is being organized to implement the investment proposals received at the UP Global Investors Summit. The Ground Breaking Ceremony 2024 will be inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi. Along with Lucknow, the Bhoomi Puja

Samaroh of GBC-IV will also be organized in all 75 districts of the state for investment projects.

Through the swift implementation of substantial investment proposals within just a year of the Global Investors Summit, where over Rs 40 lakh crore worth of MoUs were inked, the Yogi government stands on the brink of another significant achievement in its mission to elevate the state towards a trillion-dollar economy.

UP to become a 'power surplus state' through GBC-IV

With Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the helm, Uttar Pradesh gears up to inaugurate eight renewable energy projects worth Rs 67,000 crore at GBC-IV, showcasing its commitment to green energy initiatives. The move also seeks to make UP self-reliant in the field of power generation and a power surplus state. These projects, with a collective capacity of 13,250 MW, characterize a significant achievement in bolstering power generation in the state.

Notable industry leaders such as Greenko Group, Torrent Power Group, JSW Neo Energy Limited, ACME Cleantech Solutions, Amunra InfraTech and Agritech Pvt. Ltd., and Avaada Water Battery Private Ltd. are set to inject substantial investments, demonstrating their trust in Uttar Pradesh's renewable energy potential. Among the eight projects, six are situated in Sonbhadra, with the remaining two in Mirzapur and Chandauli districts.



43 investment projects worth Rs 79,000 cr. set to transform Sonbhadra

The government is gearing up for the launch of 43 investment projects valued at approximately Rs 79,000 crore in Sonbhadra. Following the UPGIS-23, where Uttar Pradesh secured investment proposals totaling Rs 40 lakh crore, Sonbhadra has emerged as a key focus area, attracting the second-highest investment after Noida. The upcoming investments are poised to not only catalyze development in Purvanchal, but also contribute to the overall progress of the state. Notably, two substantial projects in the energy and renewable energy sectors, amounting to about Rs 35,000 crore, are on the verge of initiation in Sonbhadra.

Government's clear agenda for progress

- Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission:** Provision has been made in the budget for a 33 percent increase this year compared to the current budget.
- MSME:** In 2022-23, a loan of Rs 1 lakh 60 thousand cr. was made available to MSME units. It has been resolved to increase it to Rs 2 lakh 91 thousand cr. for the year 2024-25.
- Yuva Udyami Vikas:** A new scheme starting in April 2024 is aimed at training new entrepreneurs, encouraging investment, and providing interest-free loans up to 5 lakhs in the first phase. After

repayment, the amount will be increased to 7 lakhs and 10 lakhs in subsequent phases.

- Uttar Pradesh Rozgar Protsahan Kosh** will facilitate training, internships, and apprenticeships for youth in the state.
- To promote the textile industry in 2024-25, work has also been done to develop Anganwadi along with a new NIFT.
- CM Apprenticeship Scheme,** a provision has been made to set up a facility in collaboration with IIT Kanpur for machine learning (ML) including artificial
- intelligence in the state.
- UP govt attracts investment of Rs 4,12,000 crore through various sources in last six years.
- Investment Promotion Policy 2023 for Uttar Pradesh FDI, Fortune Global 500 and Fortune India 500 Companies'. Special incentives are being provided to the investors by the Yogi government which is paving the way for ensuring new chapters of investment in the state.
- Uttar Pradesh has witnessed the 2nd highest increase in the number of newly registered companies among all states in November 2023.

UP, a land of opportunity for industries

Uttar Pradesh welcomes industries with open arms, offering a vast and readily available land bank across various industrial authorities like GIDA, NOIDA, and GNIDA.

- UPSIDA alone boasts over 17 million square meters of vacant land, perfect for setting up your dream industry.
- The Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor has a whopping 80 million square meters waiting to be allocated.
- Greater Noida has already allotted 2,568 plots and still has over 200,000 square meters available.
- Noida is a bustling hub with over 11,000 allocated plots and nearly 2,000 square meters more up for grabs.
- Even Gorakhpur offers over 580,000 square meters after
- allotting 981 plots to thriving industrial units.
- And for those seeking expressway access, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority recently allotted 261 plots totaling 244 acres within the last two financial years, with more land on the horizon.



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A pleasantly lingering, enriching and captivating reading experience awaits you within the pages of 20 extraordinarily compelling page-turners by BlueRose Publishers - India's most trusted self-publishing company.



"*Piya Ka Anubhav: Tween Se Teen Ki Guide*" by author Pranvy presents a series of children's stories aimed at delivering crucial health awareness lessons. Centered around Piya, a young girl, the narrative navigates topics like menstruation, mental health, and nutritional well-being.

"*Turn The Page*" by Divya Kesarkar unveils a poignant tale of marital discord between Anay and Meera, intertwined with Meera's arduous journey towards self-renewal. As Meera confronts heartbreak, fear, and uncertainty, she embarks on a transformative path, fueled by her unwavering determination.

"*Krishna's Whisper: A Spiritual Odyssey for Modern Souls*" by Sharath A Haridasan is more than a book; it's a transformative journey through the teachings of Lord Krishna. In 18 meditations, Sharath explores faith, love, leadership, wellness, and overcoming challenges, offering profound insights and guidance for self-discovery.

In "*Covid-19 Pandemic: A Third Eye*" by Dr. Amitav Banerjee offers profound insights into public health crises with clarity and wit. Praised by Dr. Bhaskaran Raman for his ability to simplify complex concepts, Banerjee's essays serve as a vital resource for understanding past mistakes.

"*The Ocean Girl*" by Lavisha Jain immerses readers in Celestina's ordinary life, which transforms into an extraordinary adventure upon discovering her lineage. Set in California, this tale explores themes of identity, adoption, and sibling bonds as Celestina and her sister Marina uncover secrets that lead them to an enchanting underwater realm.

Nehesh Pali, an automobile engineer and filmmaker, embarks on a mission encapsulated in "#*Tryingtosavetheworld*". His initiative involves drafting a letter to the prime minister, advocating for the construction and design of a prototype road. This innova-

tive road aims to provide benefits to the public, with every step taken and challenges overcome documented and broadcasted live on national television.

Introducing "*Mommypedia: A Weekly Journey Through Pregnancy*" by Dr. Amrita Saha, an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist specializing in high-risk pregnancies and cosmetic gynecology. This comprehensive guidebook and scrapbook is designed as a cherished companion for expectant mothers, offering week-by-week instructions, doctor visit timelines, and vaccination reminders.

"*Spirituality & Success*" by Savinder Puri delves into the intersection of spirituality and achievement in both personal and professional realms. In a world driven by competition, Puri questions if spirituality can thrive. Through meditation and introspection, Puri aims to unravel the connection between spiritual principles and success, offering insights for creating fulfilling careers and nurturing happy homes.

"*The Haunted Series 1*" by Vipraj Singh Ranawat is an immersive journey into the realm of the supernatural, captivating readers with its gripping narratives and eerie tales. This book seamlessly blends real-based stories, fictional accounts, and articles on haunted areas in India, offering readers a captivating and spine-chilling experience. From invisible shadows to mysterious encounters in house basements and haunted forts, each story leaves readers on the edge of their seats, unable to tear their eyes away.

"*The Voyage of Amara*" by Mukesh Kumar embarks on a riveting journey through a world teeming with mystique and adventure. Amara, a supernatural being crafted by the Serpent Empire, is tasked with protecting a human empire and its prophesied prince from the resurgence of malevolent forces.

"*Some Essentials to Settle in the*

USA" authored by Keshav Lal, CPA-NJ-USA, offers practical tips and insights for those looking to establish themselves in the United States. Written in simple, layman's terms, the book aims to provide a basic understanding of various steps involved in settling in the USA.

"*How to Set Up a Business in the USA: Basic Guide*" authored by Keshav Lal, CPA-NJ-USA, offers a straightforward approach to understanding the steps involved in establishing a business in the United States. Lal's extensive experience and knowledge as a professional CPA inform the content of the book, providing readers with valuable insights into the process.

"*Dr. Nitin Mohan Lal: The Absolute Mentor*" penned by Garisha Patel is an inspirational guide aimed at empowering individuals to break free from their comfort zones and manifest their dreams with the guidance of divine forces. Encouraging readers to invoke the assistance of angels, known as Devdoot or Farishte, Patel underscores their willingness to aid us within the bounds of our free will.

"*Usha Dishahara Nibir Timir Aka*" by Pragati Banerjee is a poignant collection of poetry that delves into the depths of human emotion and societal reflection. Banerjee eloquently expresses the power of poetry as a medium to convey profound thoughts and share personal pain with the world. Each poem in the collection resonates with the anguish caused by the prevalence of violence in society, serving as a poignant reminder of the need for love and truth as the cornerstone of humanity.

"*Ignis Fatuus: The Delusions Created for You and In You by the Investment Sector*" authored by Nidadavolu Ashok sheds light on the pervasive fraud and deception faced by investors in the financial sector. Through insights and evidence, Ashok unveils how investors are misled by various

"*You, Your & Yourself*" by Mehak Chhabra is a powerful testament to resilience and self-discovery. Emerging from the shadows of depression, Chhabra shares her journey with raw honesty and profound insights, offering solace and guidance to others grappling with similar struggles.

entities including academicians, media, asset management companies, and fund managers..

"*Global Citizen's Manifesto*" by Eshan offers a compelling narrative on Singapore's journey towards democracy. Reflecting on the nation's transformation since independence, Eshan advocates for a reevaluation of democratic principles amidst concerns over the prolonged governance of the People's Action Party (PAP).

"*A Quest for the Sacred (Poems to Inspire and Enthrall)*" by Joe Anthony invites readers on a profound journey of self-discovery and spiritual awakening. Drawing from his extensive experience as an English teacher and a life lived across diverse landscapes, Anthony's poetry transcends the ordinary, weaving tales of pleasure and pain, awe and wonder.

"*Jindgi Ek Safar Hai*" by Uday Pankaj embarks readers on a poignant journey through life's myriad experiences. With profound insights and heartfelt narratives, Pankaj's book explores the depths of human existence, offering wisdom and solace along the way. Through this book readers can access this enlightening work, delving into themes of love, loss, resilience, and hope.

"*Durgaprasad Mishra presents 'Indu's Home-Coming and Other Stories'*, a captivating collection that delves into the intricacies of human emotions and relationships. Through poignant narratives, Mishra skillfully weaves tales that resonate with authenticity and depth. From heartwarming reunions to poignant farewells, each story encapsulates the essence of life's journeys.

"*INDU'S HOME-COMING AND OTHER STORIES*" by Original Ode Ramchandra Behira is a powerful testament to resilience and self-discovery. Emerging from the shadows of depression, Chhabra shares her journey with raw honesty and profound insights, offering solace and guidance to others grappling with similar struggles.



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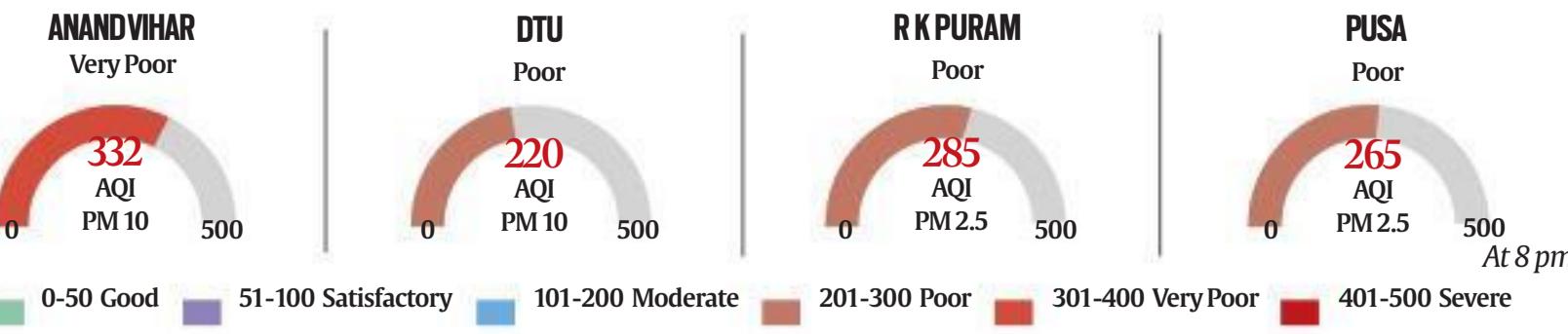


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BRIEFLY

Drone crashes while delivering food in Gurgaon

Gurgaon: A drone delivering food crashed in a residential housing complex in Gurgaon on Thursday, said police, adding that an FIR has been registered against the company for violating Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) Section 144 imposed in the city. Head constable Sonu mentioned in the complaint that a drone of the company concerned fell at a housing complex of G Block of South City 2, Gurgaon Sector 50. "An order under CrPC Section 144 on unmanned aerial devices was in effect as CM Manohar Lal Khattar was visiting the city. So, an FIR has been registered against the company," said Sonu. The Sector 50 police station SHO said they are checking DGCA norms for operating drones and the height prescribed for flying such unmanned vehicles. ENS

Man duped of Rs 38 lakh in cyber fraud

Gurgaon: A Gurgaon man was cheated of Rs 38 lakh by a woman he met on a matrimonial site on the pretext of investing in cryptocurrency, said police on Saturday, adding Naman Aggarwal (38), who works at a consulting company in Gurgaon, had met a woman named 'Ridhi Sharma' on a matrimonial website on November 12. She told him that she was a native of West Bengal's Kolkata and had been living in London for the last five years. She then asked him to invest in Bitcoin and created a trading account on a website called Deuncoin. Aggarwal said in his complaint. Even after paying her Rs 38 lakh for investment, he did not get any return, so, the man approached police. A case under IPC Section 420 has been registered. ENS

Man held for making threat call to airport

Gurgaon: Aman, 38, was arrested on Saturday for allegedly making a threat call to blow up the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi on January 28, said police. Krishan Mahto, a native of Bihar's West Champaran, was arrested from Delhi's Kapashera DCP (IGIA). Usha Rangnani said during an interrogation, Mahto confessed to making the bomb threat call. On January 28, he was heavily inebriated when he made the call from a cellphone and threatened to blow up the IGIA, said Rangnani. He was arrested following a long chase as he had switched off his cellphone after making the call. Police visited his native place in Bihar as the number was registered at his home address. PTI

DELHI ASSEMBLY

54 of 62 AAP MLAs present, Kejriwal wins confidence vote

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17



Arvind Kejriwal arrives for the sitting of the Delhi Assembly to discuss the motion of confidence on Saturday. Amit Mehra

THE MOTION of confidence tabled by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi Assembly on Friday was passed almost unanimously on Saturday. The BJP opposition alleged the motion was a bid to "divert attention from corruption".

Barring dissent from Leader of Opposition BJP MLA Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, the vote of confidence was passed with the support of 54 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs, including the chief minister. The remaining seven BJP Opposition legislators are under suspension.

Of the 62 AAP MLAs in the 70-member House, 54 were present during the legislative show of strength by the party on Saturday. Kejriwal has presided over three such exercises so far including two in August 2022 and March 2023.

Terming it a "parliamentary manoeuvre", the Delhi government had on Friday stated that the rationale behind instigating the motion, according to the chief minister, was "to demonstrate...that once again, the BJP's 'Operation Lotus' has faltered in Delhi. None of our MLAs defected, and all remain steadfastly aligned with us."

Attacking the BJP during the discussion on the motion, Kejriwal addressed concerns about his possible arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in the excise policy case, accused the

Sabha or not. Elections should be held today on this issue. You (MLAs) also go to every street and tell people that if you vote for the BJP, then the BJP is going to snatch your right to vote," he said.

Accusing the BJP of seeking to "destroy Delhi" by harassing bureaucrats into stalling administration in the city and seeking to destabilise the AAP government by poaching its MLAs, Kejriwal said all that remained in its bid to "finish the AAP" was to arrest him.

"...Not even a single MLA of our party broke away. We have in total 62 MLAs...there are 54 present in the assembly, two are ill, three are out of station, two are in jail -- Satyendar Jain and Manish Sisodia -- and one is busy with a wedding in the family," he said following which the motion was passed by voice vote.

Responding to the development, LOP Bidhuri questioned the need for the motion terming it "a ridiculous situation" and a bid to divert attention from "corruption and the failure of the government on every front".

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal presented the Motion of Confidence in the Assembly only to divert attention from corruption...it is a ridiculous situation where the allegation after which the Motion of Confidence has been moved in the Assembly. CM Kejriwal and Minister Atishi are not cooperating with the Delhi Police in the investigation of this allegation," he alleged.

"Today the BJP should make it clear whether it will dissolve the Delhi Assembly after the Lok Sabha or not. Elections should be held today on this issue. You (MLAs) also go to every street and tell people that if you vote for the BJP, then the BJP is going to snatch your right to vote," he said.

The collapsed temporary structure that was being installed for a wedding ceremony. Express

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

MORE THAN 25 persons were left injured on Saturday after a temporary structure (pandal) being installed for a wedding near a gate of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium collapsed, officers said.

DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan said police received a call around 11 am that a pandal, being set up for a wedding ceremony near the stadium's gate number 2, had been working for the past 10 days to put up the tent.

Police said sportspersons practising at the stadium also helped rescue the trapped workers.

On the reason behind the collapse, an officer said that the steel rods on which the structure was based was installed without appropriate support, due to which it became weak and collapsed.

A police officer said a case under IPC sections 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) has been registered against the contractor at the Lodhi Colony police station.

The DCP said that the event was booked under the name of one Rajesh, adding police are seeking details of the private event organiser.

As many as 18 patients injured in the incident have been admitted at the Emergency department of AIIMS, Delhi. While seven of them are severely injured, 11 have moderate injuries, said officials.

The workers admitted at AIIMS have been identified as Ashish, Gopal, Sahil, Sameer, Nijam, Sujoy, Devdas Haldar, Shantu, Vikram, Amar, Shantanu, Ashok, Kanai, Sujet, Saa, Bula, Shiv Nath and Mahadev.

One injured was yet to be identified, an officer said. Those admitted at Safdarjung Hospital have been identified as Rajendra Das, Raju, Monu Kumar, Raaj Babu, Rajeev, Phoolchand, Ram Pravesh, Ramji Paswan, Mukesh, Mahadev and Guddu Kumar.

-WITH PTI INPUTS

Excise policy case: Delhi CM appears before court via video-conferencing

Says could not appear physically due to confidence motion, Budget session

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday appeared before a Delhi court through video-conferencing in the excise policy case, saying that he could not appear physically due to the confidence motion and Budget session

cussed the motion on Saturday.

Tabling the motion, Kejriwal said on Saturday, "A few days ago, two MLAs came to me and said that they had been approached by the BJP and were told that we are going to arrest your chief minister in a few days... That we have already contacted and convinced 21 MLAs to leave the party... We are also in touch with others."

Speaker Ram Niwas Goel admitted the motion for a discussion at 11 am on Saturday. In August 2022, Kejriwal had won a similar confidence vote, which he moved after accusing the BJP of trying to poach AAP MLAs under 'Operation Lotus'.

On February 3, a day after Kejriwal skipped its summons for the fifth time, the ED had filed a complaint before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra under relevant Criminal Procedure Code sections for not complying with its summons issued under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Section 50 (power to issue summons) and not joining the investigation.

Delhi Congress protests against freezing of bank accounts by I-T

SAMAN HUSAIN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

THE DELHI Congress on Saturday, while chanting "Har Zor Zulm ki takkar mein sangharsh hamara nard hai" and "Tanashahi Bhajpa hosh me aao", held a demonstration against the BJP for freezing the former political party's bank accounts by the Income Tax (I-T) department on Friday.

The Congress's main bank accounts were frozen over an income tax demand of Rs 210 crore, but an I-T appellate tribunal later allowed it to operate them pending a further hearing next week, a huge relief for the party, which said the move had impacted all political activity. With the I-T department action ahead of the general polls, Congress raised questions on "integrity of the democratic process in India".

"BJP is rattled by the SC's ruling to strike down the Electoral Bonds scheme, which was bringing in unaccounted cash of thousands of crores to the BJP coffers," said DPCC chief Arvinder Singh Lovely outside the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) office. Senior Congress leader and former MLA Mukesh Sharma said, "BJP sees Congress as a threat to its autocratic rule... Congress has been championing the causes of the common people."

Schools from which the students will be shifted are situated at Sonia Vihar and Sabhapur, and

Over 9,000 students from eight NE Delhi schools may be shifted to new building next academic yr

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

MORE THAN 9,000 students from eight schools in Northeast Delhi are likely to be asked to shift to a newly constructed school building from the upcoming academic year onwards, to deal with the shortage of space in the existing schools.

A PIL filed by NGO Social Jurist in the Delhi High Court in 2022 had pointed to classes being conducted for only two hours daily or on alternate days in some schools in Northeast Delhi, where the student enrollment is more than the existing infrastructure can accommodate.

In an affidavit on Friday (February 16), the Delhi government's Directorate of Education (DoE) told the High Court that out of the 14 schools that are the subject matter of the PIL, a total of

9,071 students from eight schools will be shifted to a newly constructed school building at Sri Ram Colony in Khajuri Khas.

This new building will have 112 rooms, including 60 classrooms, and will function in two shifts -- the morning shift for 5,206 girls, and evening for 3,865 boys.

Schools from which the students will be shifted are situated at Sonia Vihar and Sabhapur, and

other schools "wherein they can be imparted full-time formal education like in other Delhi government-run schools".

In its recent affidavit, the DoE said that 48 schools in 24 buildings operate in the Northeast-I district, with 1,32,607 students. "It is important to mention that District NE-I has the highest population density in Delhi... Due to overpopulation, the existing number of school buildings are not sufficient to accommodate the current strength of students. Further, the Covid-19 pandemic added woes to the situation as a large number of students from public schools have taken admission in government schools, due to financial problems..." read the affidavit.

The management committees of these schools have conducted meetings on the same and gave their consent, saying that the students are likely to be shifted in the new academic session of 2024-25 since the current session is nearly complete and students are preparing for examinations, going by the affidavit.

In a December 2023 order, the High Court had referred to the matter as an "alarming situation as young children are deprived of proper education due to the lack of proper infrastructure and facilities", and asked the government to file a detailed affidavit specifying students in the Northeast district schools, while outlining how the government intends to adjust the students in these schools to



Suhani Bhatnagar. Archive

Dangal actor Suhani dies at 19; was undergoing treatment after fracture: family

AISWARYA RAJ
FARIDABAD, FEBRUARY 17

ACTOR SUHANI Bhatnagar, who had played the role of young 'Babita Phogat' in 2016 film Dangal, died in Delhi on Friday.

The 19-year-old actor, who was admitted to AIIMS on February 7, was undergoing treatment in the hospital's medicine department. "She was in ICU, and passed away on February 16," said an AIIMS official on Saturday.

The actor's family said her funeral was held at their house in Faridabad Sector 17 on Saturday. "She had suffered a fracture in her foot two months ago, and later developed complications due to the medication. There was water retention in her body and even doctors were uncertain about what was happening," said the actor's grandfather, AP Bhatnagar.

Officials of AIIMS, however, have not confirmed this.

Bhatnagar was pursuing a bachelor's degree in journalism from Faridabad's Manav Rachna University. "She was in the first year of college, and was focusing on her studies. Though she had acting opportunities, we let it pass as she wanted to complete her studies first... She wanted to do more films in the future," said the actor's grandfather.

The deceased actor's father works at an MNC, and her mother is a housewife. "It is difficult to talk about it... The whole family is in grief," he said. Bhatnagar, a native of Faridabad, was a child model, which later made her bag the role of young 'Babita Phogat' in Aamir Khan-starrer Dangal. "A photographer had approached us about the film's audition, and she got the role. Life was going well for her...," his grandfather added.

Dangal starred Khan as Mahavir Singh Phogat, an amateur wrestler who trains his daughters Babita and Geeta -- roles played by Bhatnagar and Zaira Wasim, respectively -- to become international female wrestlers.

EVENT KICKS OFF WITH HERITAGE WALK AT MEHRAULI ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Explore the layered history, culture of Delhi with month-long walk fest

SAMAN HUSAIN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

FROM 'DEKHO Apna CP' which will acquaint people with history of the shopping district to 'Zaika Purani Dilli Ki' that will give them a chance to sample the culinary delights of Old Delhi, Delhi Tourism department is organising a month-long walk festival to help tourists and local residents explore the "centuries-old" city in its full glory.

The festival kicked off on Saturday with a guided tour of Mehrauli Archaeological Park.

Inaugurating the walk, Delhi Tourism Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "Delhi is not just the capital of modern India, it has been seat of power for many centuries. Our vision is to

ensure a tourist is able to see and understand the historical marvels of Delhi during their visit to the city."

Other events which would be held as part of the festival are 'Roshan-e-Dilli' at Qutub Minar Complex, 'Jewels of Delhi', and 'Partition Diaries' at Purana Qila. The series of guided walks will help tourists and history enthusiasts delve into stories surrounding the seven cities of medieval Delhi and will help highlight the hidden gems of the national capital, according to the Delhi Tourism Department.

Other events include a Sufi Walk, a stroll around the Mehrauli village that will engage people in pottery, 'Delhi ka Dil Dekho' walk that will start from the National War Memorial leading to the Kartavya Path, and 'Purane Dilli

'Naye Log' as part of which participants will get to explore heritage churches, temples, and mosques around the city.

As part of its initiative, the tourism department has invited historians, scholars, walk conductors, storytellers, and licensed guides to highlight unique aspects of Delhi's history and culture.

Nitinika Arora, co-founder and director of Darwesh Heritage Walks, was the walk leader for the inaugural session. "Northern India, being an arid region, used to be the host of many baolis or stepwells. During the Independence Census, it was found that the national capital alone had as many as 100 baolis...many were lost over the years; as of today, Delhi has only 10 to 12 baolis," Arora said while explaining the history of Rajon Ki Baoli.

She further said baolis were used for the purpose of washing, cleaning and bathing, adding the steps around them would make it easier to clean them. "Baolis were built under the patronage of the rulers to impress the citizens," she said.



Delhi Tourism Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj with a group of visitors during the inaugural heritage walk at Mehrauli Archaeological Park in Delhi on Saturday. Express

zens... They were like the Facebook and Instagram of the era as people would come here to socialise, for which rooms were also built on the baoli premises," Arora said.

A number of history, travel and photography influencers such as Dr Divya and Lavish Chandra were also invited to the event.

Rahul Bansal, a YouTuber, said, "The heritage walk is a great initiative by the tourism department to help explore the hidden heritage of Delhi."

Heritage enthusiasts can book their slots at a "festive offer price" of Rs 500 by logging on to www.delhitourism.gov.in or contacting the Delhi Tourism office, from where they can also collect information on future events.

POLICE TO CONDUCT DOOR-TO-DOOR AUDIT OF FACTORIES IN THE AREA

Co-owner, landlady arrested in Alipur fire incident; all bodies identified

ARNABJITSUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

TWO DAYS after a massive blaze engulfed a paint factory in Outer Delhi's Alipur and killed 11 workers, Delhi Police arrested a co-owner of the factory and a woman who had rented her premises to the factory owners, police said.

Meanwhile, bodies of all the victims of the blaze have been identified by their relatives.

The owner of the factory, Ashok Jain, had died in the accident. The co-owner, Akhil Jain, 37, a resident of Sonipat, and 58-year-old Rajrani, a resident of Alipur Dayal Market, who gave the land to Ashok Jain, have been arrested in connection with the case.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police said it would carry out a door-to-door audit of all factories in the area to check their licences. A senior officer told *The Indian Express*, "There are several factories operating out of small houses, probably running without a licence, in the area...in a bid to crack down on these premises, beat officers have been



11 people were killed in the accident on Thursday. Express

briefed to check on such factories and ask for their licences."

He said a report in this regard will subsequently be prepared and sent to the MCD for further verification.

Another officer said police will also write to the Delhi Fire Services to ascertain the circumstances under which the fire could have started and later spread. "We will ask them to carry out an inquiry apart from a probe launched by us... statements of occupants of

the de-addiction centre (in the neighbourhood) will also be taken," said the officer.

Prima facie, officers said that a spark from the welding operation – underway both inside and outside the factory – spread to the drums storing paint thinners and resulted in the massive blaze.

Police are also probing allegations levelled by residents regarding a letter they had sent to the area SDM two years ago, flagging safety hazards of a chemical fac-

tory operating in the locality. "The letter will be part of the probe," added an officer.

'Identified him by the colour of his shirt'

Meanwhile, the bodies of three more persons were identified by their family members on Saturday. Eight out of the 11 deceased persons were identified by their kin till Friday night. They were Kripa Shankar, 42, hailing from Prayagraj, Ram Pravesh Kumar, 18, a resident of Muzaffarpur, and Harish Chander Yadav, Kripa's uncle.

Waiting to collect the bodies of the deceased, Vijay Yadav, a neighbour of Kripa and Harish in Prayagraj, told *The Indian Express*, "While Kripashankar used to operate the paint machine, Harish used to package and affix seals on the paint containers... Kripashankar had four children, two sons and two daughters while Harish has five daughters, two of whom are married... both used to earn around Rs 10,000 and would often complain of lack of

ventilation and difficulty in breathing on the premises."

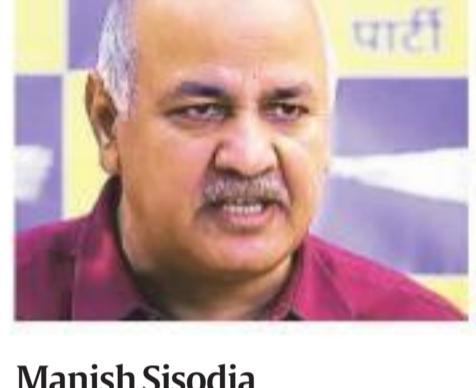
Ram Pravesh, 21, who used to live in a one-room house a few kilometres away from the accident site, had been working at the factory since he was 16. Said his brother-in-law Deepak, "He (Ram) used to package the paint material and earn around Rs 10,000... we got his body identified today after checking the colour of the clothes he used to wear."

Meanwhile, at the spot where the factory was located, debris could be seen accumulating in the middle of the road.

Krishan Kumar, a resident of the area, said, "The exterior of my house has been damaged in the blaze and a shop space I had rented out has also been destroyed. It will take a heavy financial toll on me to get things back in order."

Gaurav, whose household appliances like fridge and washing machine got destroyed in the blaze, said he has shifted to a relative's place nearby with his family as the house is "currently uninhabitable".

Delhi court denies bail to Sharjeel Imam

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

Manish Sisodia

NOTING THAT the contents of Sharjeel Imam's anti-CAA speeches given at Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University could be termed "seditious" in the "dictionary meaning", a Delhi Court on Saturday denied him bail.

".... if the acts and actions of the applicant are considered, in a normal dictionary meaning, they can be termed as seditious," held Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai of Karkardooma Courts.

Imam was booked by Delhi Police's Special Branch in 2020 for allegedly making inflammatory speeches against the Citizenship Amendment Act. Later, Section 13 of the UAPA was invoked against him. He has been in judicial custody since January 28, 2020.

His counsels Ibrahim Ahmad and Talib Mustafa argued in court that after the Delhi High Court in 2022 stayed the trial in the sedition case against the accused, only four offences remained against him.

KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA

Sector-3, Sector-8, Sector-22, Sector-25 & Sector-28, Rohini, Delhi

Walk-in-Interview

Walk-in-Interview for drawing panels of contractual teachers for session 2024-25 for different posts/ subjects will be held on 24-02-2024 at 8.30 am at Kendriya Vidyalayas mentioned below in the table. The panel drawn will be applicable for all 5 KV's of Rohini hereunder.

Sr. No.	Venue	Website	Post
1.	PM SHRI KV Sector-3, Rohini	https://rohinisec3.kvs.ac.in/school-announcement	PGT-Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics TGT- Science, Mathematics
2.	PM SHRI KV Sector-8, Rohini	https://rohinisec8.kvs.ac.in/school-announcement	Nurse, Special Educator, Counsellor, Yoga Teacher, Coach, TGT-Art & Craft, Music Teacher
3.	KV Sector-22, Rohini	https://rohinisec22.kvs.ac.in/school-announcement	PGT-History, Geography, Political Sc., Hindi TGT- S.St., Hindi, Sanskrit
4.	PM SHRI KV Sector-25, Rohini	https://rohinisec25.kvs.ac.in/school-announcement	PGT-Commerce, Economics, Comp. Sc., English TGT-English and Computer Instructor
5.	PM SHRI KV Sector-28, Rohini	https://rohinisec28.kvs.ac.in/school-announcement	Primary Teacher (PRT), Bal Vatika Teacher (ECCE Teacher)

Note-1. Interested and eligible applicants must download the application form from the link given below : <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qVFMM31R721MLLzfrY9CnklUNqQwmJnJ/view?usp=sharing>. 2. Applicants must register online by filling personal information through the link <https://forms.gle/McdGQdLzYP8fngq7>. 3. Registration time for the interview is 8:30AM to 10:30AM. 4. For more details, kindly visit concerned KV website mentioned above.

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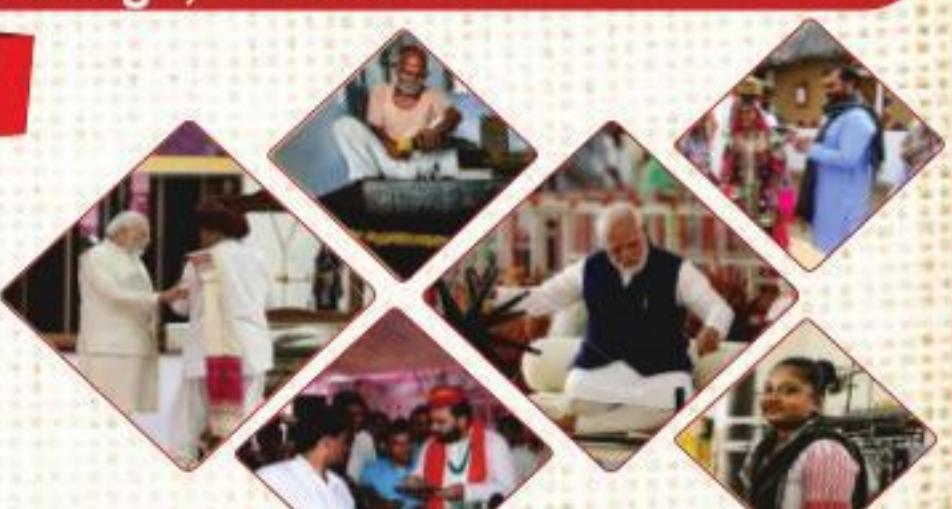
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Ragpicker, 70, crushed to death as train derails near Sarai Rohilla station

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

10 bogies of the goods train had got derailed. ANI

A 70-YEAR-OLD ragpicker hired by the Railways to clean the tracks was crushed to death after a bogey of a goods train fell on him following a derailment near the Sarai Rohilla Railway Station on Saturday, police officers said.

Three other workers also came under the bogey but were unharmed, they added.

As many as 10 bogies got derailed in the accident, they added.

The accident took place in the morning when the train was passing under the Zakhira flyover.

Officials from the Northern Railways said a committee is being formed to look into the cause of the derailment. The committee

Basti stations.

"We are focusing on restoring the track, and operations will be as usual from tomorrow (Sunday) morning," said Prem Shankar Jha, executive adviser to the divisional railway manager. Officials said the derailment did not cause any interruption or hindrance to operations.

Officers said the body of the ragpicker, identified as Rafiq, was recovered from under a bogey. Rafiq was hired by a contractor for the job at the Railways.

DCP(Railways) KPS Malhotra said that no foul play has been reported in the incident after an inquiry from co-workers and initial probe of the accident site.

Officers said teams of local police and fire department assisted in rescue operations.

Delhi Tourism presents

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CMPDI : Ensuring Inclusive Growth Vision of Hon'ble PM

Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDI) is a Government of India enterprise having its corporate headquarters at Ranchi and is a fully owned subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL). CMPDI as a responsible corporate; is working towards transformation of the lives of people through its Corporate Social Responsibilities contributing its share in achieving Honorable Prime Minister's vision of Inclusive Growth. CMPDI has built strong partnership with the communities around its surrounding and also with the wider society through different CSR interventions for the betterment of lives of the people. Approximately seven crores rupees per year is being spent by CMPDI in different CSR projects for improving the lives of the people by CMPDI HQ and all its seven Regional Institutes. Putting PM's vision of "Health for All" on the forefront; the prime focus of the CSR projects has been on Healthcare and major part of the funds are utilized towards strengthening the healthcare system in peripheries of the working areas of CMPDI. CMPDI to mitigate the pain and difficulties being faced by people suffering from cancer, is extending support to socio-economic underprivileged at the Ranchi Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (RCHRC), Ranchi for detection of cancer

Jharkhand. As part of PM Modi's flagship program Swachh Bharat, CMPDI has been actively involved in improving facilities of sanitation and potable water. The facilities have been improved in more than 150 schools located in Asansol, Ranchi, Bilaspur, Singrauli, Nagpur and Bhubaneswar in the last four years. As per Hon'ble Coal Minister's vision of empowering youths of India; CMPDI has imparted skill development training to approximately 902 people in different domains like Footwear designing through Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI), Nagpur; as Machine Operator in Plastic Processing through CIPET : Ranchi, Nagpur; Bilaspur and Bhubaneswar. Currently, training to 40 youths in under progress in Ophthalmic Assistants at Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital, Nagpur. To provide healthcare facilities at doorstep of rural people/villages/poor people, one ambulance has been provided to Ram Krishna Mission at TB Sanatorium, Ranchi. Moreover, one mobile medical van has been provided to NBJK, Hazaribag for doorstep treatment of eyes diseases to make Jharkhand free of preventable blindness. During Corona times, CMPDI joined hands with State & District authorities to fight against Covid-19 by extending support in installing a 200 LPM PSA Oxygen Plant at CHC Burmu; & Strengthening of facilities at District Hospital, Ranchi and at Jan Swasthya Kendra, Chhattisgarh along with other activities. CMPDI recently launched Project, "Badhte Kadam" aimed at elimination of disability from Clubfoot in children in Jharkhand State and also under Project "Anibhrit", CMPDI is Promoting Healthy Menstrual Hygiene practices through trainings, access to sanitary napkins and easy disposal to students of govt. schools of

As per Hon'ble Coal Minister's vision of empowering youths of India; CMPDI has imparted skill development training to approximately 902 people in different domains like Footwear designing through Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI), Nagpur; as Machine Operator in Plastic Processing through CIPET : Ranchi, Nagpur; Bilaspur and Bhubaneswar. Currently, training to 40 youths in under progress in Ophthalmic Assistants at Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital, Nagpur. Also, it is worth mentioning that Solar light facilities provision has been made in areas near camps/drilling sites of Asansol and Bhubaneswar for safety and security of people residing in the vicinities. CMPDI is committed to continuously putting its efforts to contribute significantly towards the growth of the society and help India move towards a sustainable society in its endeavours to contribute towards "VIKSIT BHARAT".



Amanatullah Khan moves anticipatory bail plea in Delhi Waqf Board case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan has moved anticipatory bail in the Delhi Waqf Board case, being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate where it is alleged that he acquired "huge proceeds of crime" in cash through illegal recruitment of staff and invested the amount to purchase immovable assets in the name of his aides.

The ED had also summoned Khan to appear before it on February 19 — the same day CM Arvind Kejriwal is supposed to appear for questioning in the Delhi liquor excise policy case.

The ED had also led a prosecution complaint in the matter against five entities, including three alleged associates of Khan arrested by the agency in November 2023. Khan was not named as an accused in the chargesheet.

In the chargesheet, however, the agency had alleged that properties were purchased at Khan's behest. "It is further revealed that out of Rs 36 crore, Rs 8 crore mentioned to be transacted directly by Shri Amanatullah Khan in cash whereas rest of the amount mentioned to be transacted by Daud Nasir, Zeeshan Haider, Yamin Ali Chaudhary, Saquib Ul Islam Khan, Nawab Ahmed and others," alleged the ED chargesheet.



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- Narendra Modi
Prime Minister



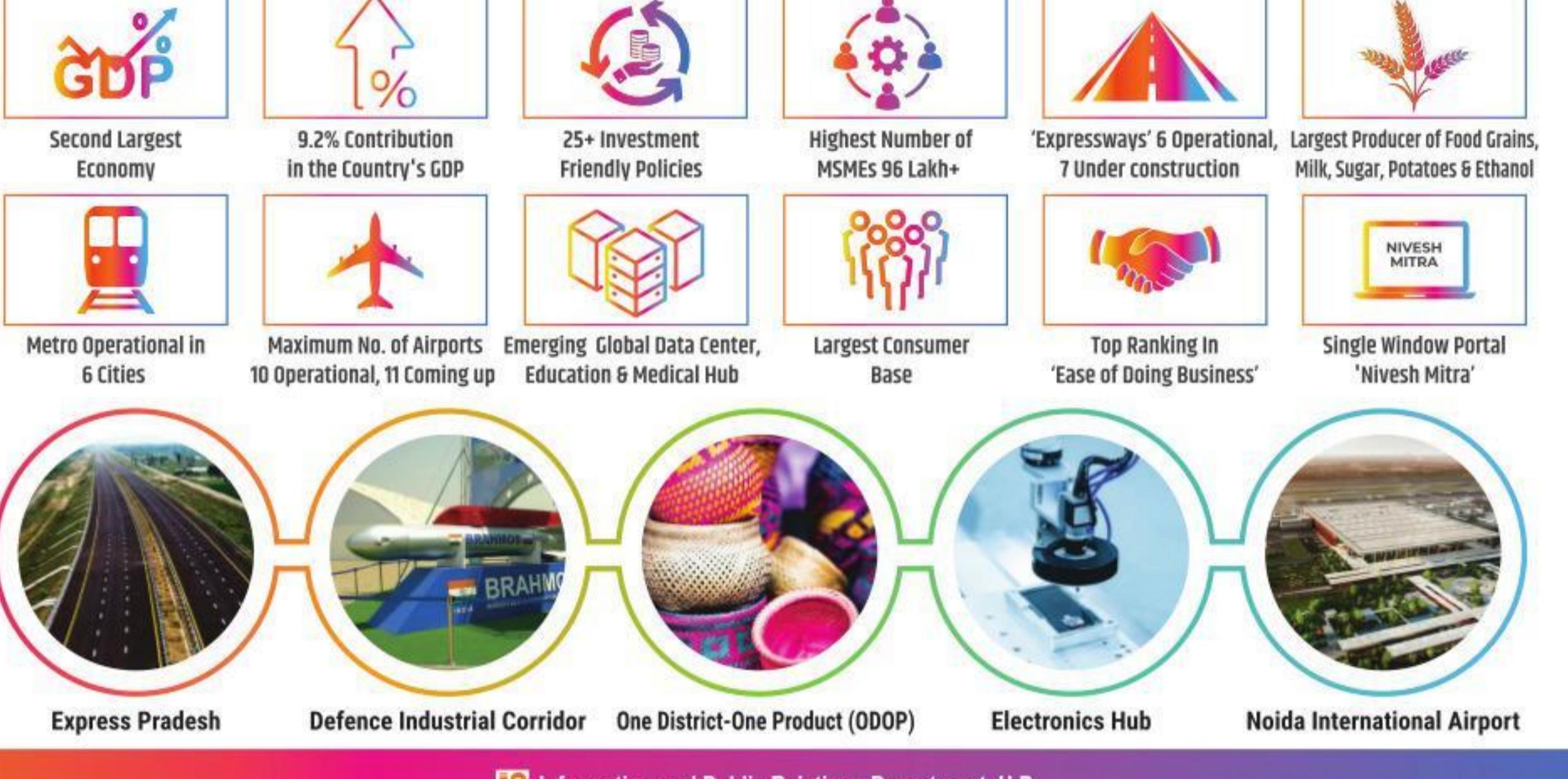
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[Rule 8 (1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, The undersigned being the authorized officer of the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (second) Ordinance 2002 (Ord. 3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notices on following date calling upon the following loanee under below mentioned loan A/c to repay the below mentioned amount within 60 days from the dates of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules on the following date

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD for below mentioned amount.

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

Name & Address of Borrower & A/c No.	Date of Demand Notice / A/c No. / Amount Dues / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Jitendra Kumar, S/o Late Yadunandan Prasad, At - Mohalla - Rikabganj, Patna City, P.S - Malsalami, Patna, Bihar	15.12.2022	All that part and parcel of the flat bearing Original Sale Deed No. - 12124/10976, Dated - 18.10.2016 At - Mohalla - Katra Bazar, Rikabganj, Patna City, Sadar Registry Office and District - Patna, Thana No. - 39, Khata No. - 256, 62 and 43, Plot No. - 270/742, 271 and 272 Circle No. - 228, Holding No. - 82/73 (Old) and New Holding No. - 63, in the name of Jitendra Kumar, S/o Late Yadunandan Prasad, Boundary - South - Legal Hair of Late Babu Ram Yadav, South - Ashok Raj Path, East - Gali, West - Upendra Kumar (Brother of Mortgagor)
Shri Abhay Shankar Kumar and Smt. Shweta Kapoor	18.11.2023	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Deed No. - 9447 & Serial No. - 10693, Flat No. - 305, Sanyal Enclave, Mauza - Adra, P.S. - Kotwali, Circle No. - 242, Ward No. - 33, City - Patna and District - Patna, Bihar Boundary - North - Front Set Back of The Building, South - Flat No. - 304, East - Corridor, West - Dead end of the building
Shri Rajeev Kumar and Neetu Singh	24.11.2023	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Deed No. - 287/1995, Khata No. - 413, Khesra No. - 237 (P), Ward No. - 15 (O) & 21 (N), Under Mouza - Sandalpur, Thana No. - 11, PS - Sultanganj, Tauzi No. - 303, City - Patna and District - Patna, Boundary - North - Sri Girija Pathak, South - Sri Girija Nandan Singh & Others, East - Sri Awadh Bihari Choudhary & Hari Gopal Sharma, West - Sri Ashok Singh
Ms. Mina Kumari, W/o Sri Anju Kishore Prasad with Co-Applicant Mr. Anuj Kishore Prasad, At - Chankya Nagar, Near East Handicapped School, Patna, Bihar - 800026	16.02.2024	All that part and parcel of the flat bearing Original Sale Deed No. - 17970/2008, At - Khata No. - 296, Survey Plot No. - 533 (P), Under Mouza - Kunmhar Chanakya Nagar, Pargana - Azimabad, Survey Thana - Sultanganj Hal Thana - Agamkuan, Thana No. - 12, Dist. - Patna, in the name of Ms. Mina Kumari, W/o Sri Anju Kishore Prasad, Boundary - North - 10 feet wide Road, South - Sri Sitaram Mahato, East - Smt. Shalini Kumari Devi, West - Immoza Kharidar Sri Chandeswar Sinha

Name & Address of Borrower & A/c No.	Date of Demand Notice / A/c No. / Amount Dues / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
A/c No. 211000004352 Rs. 1,14,79,721.43	15.12.2022	All that part and parcel of the flat bearing Original Sale Deed No. - 12124/10976, Dated - 18.10.2016 At - Mohalla - Katra Bazar, Rikabganj, Patna City, Sadar Registry Office and District - Patna, Thana No. - 39, Khata No. - 256, 62 and 43, Plot No. - 270/742, 271 and 272 Circle No. - 228, Holding No. - 82/73 (Old) and New Holding No. - 63, in the name of Jitendra Kumar, S/o Late Yadunandan Prasad, Boundary - South - Legal Hair of Late Babu Ram Yadav, South - Ashok Raj Path, East - Gali, West - Upendra Kumar (Brother of Mortgagor)
A/c No. 211000005894 Rs. 42,68,762/- +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	14.02.2024	
A/c No. 211000009782 Rs. 42,68,762/- +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	18.11.2023	
A/c No. 211000005597 Total Amount Rs. 23,91,934.01 +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	24.11.2023	
A/c No. 900110000695 Rs. 46,51,290.22 +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	16.02.2024	

Name & Address of Borrower & A/c No.	Date of Demand Notice / A/c No. / Amount Dues / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
A/c No. 220200002259 Rs. 37,34,350.19	15.12.2022	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Deed No. - 287/1995, Khata No. - 413, Khesra No. - 237 (P), Ward No. - 15 (O) & 21 (N), Under Mouza - Sandalpur, Thana No. - 11, PS - Sultanganj, Tauzi No. - 303, City - Patna and District - Patna, Boundary - North - Sri Girija Pathak, South - Sri Girija Nandan Singh & Others, East - Sri Awadh Bihari Choudhary & Hari Gopal Sharma, West - Sri Ashok Singh
A/c No. 220200002087 Rs. 54,09,793.61	14.02.2024	
A/c No. 211000009782 Rs. 42,68,762/- +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	18.11.2023	
A/c No. 211000005597 Total Amount Rs. 23,91,934.01 +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	24.11.2023	
A/c No. 900110000695 Rs. 46,51,290.22 +Sarfaesi+Other Charges	16.02.2024	

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WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM
THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

दाक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम ला०
कार्यालय अधीक्षण अधिकारी
विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, चिक्रूट

अल्पकालान इनैवेदा सूचना
01.03.2024 को समय 18:00 बजे प्रतिष्ठित एवं योग्य टेक्स्टों/निविदाताओं से निम्न कार्य होते हैं - 1. निविदा आप्तित की जाती है एवं दिनांक - 04.03.2024 को समय-13:00 बजे खोला जायेगा। विस्तृत जानकारी ३०३० शासन की आधिकारिक ई-प्रोक्रेसेट पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> एवं दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम ला०, अगर के पोर्टल <https://www.dvnv.org> पर उपलब्ध है। 2. ई-निविदा विशिष्टिकरण संख्या - 47 / SE / EDCCKT / 2023-24 : कार्य: विद्युत वितरण मण्डल चिक्रूट की सीमान्तरी वर्ष- 2024-25 हेतु निकटम भवित्व में देवीय आपात से क्षतिप्रसंग पोलों एवं लाइंसों के अनुशङ्खण एवं मरम्मत का कार्य धरोहर धनराशि-रु 5,00,000, निविदा शुल्क - रु 1180.00 (जीएसटी० सहित)। प्रति संख्या - 1723 / विविदा०/2023-24 : आधिकारी विशिष्टिकरण संख्या - 12, ई-निविदा विशिष्टिकरण संख्या - 47 / SE / EDCCKT / 2023-24 : कार्य: विद्युत वितरण मण्डल चिक्रूट की सीमान्तरी वर्ष- 2024-25 हेतु निकटम भवित्व में देवीय आपात से क्षतिप्रसंग पोलों एवं लाइंसों के अनुशङ्खण एवं मरम्मत का कार्य धरोहर धनराशि-रु 5,00,000.00, निविदा शुल्क - रु 1180.00 (जीएसटी० सहित)। प्रति संख्या - 1724 / विविदा०/2023-24 : आधिकारी विशिष्टिकरण संख्या - 50 / SE / EDCCKT / 2023-24 : कार्य: विद्युत वितरण ख

From Ram Rajya to Ayodhya, farmers to economy, BJP resolution hails accomplishments under Modi

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

A POLITICAL resolution passed by the BJP's national convention Saturday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "effectively implementing the concept of Ram Rajya" and for taking the Indian economy from the "Fragile five" to the "Top five" in the past 10 years.

From Yoga to Ram Mandir, Kartarpur Corridor to the Abu Dhabi temple, the resolution also praised Modi for his attempts to honour India's cultural heritage at the global stage.

As leader after leader endorsed it, the resolution, while lauding the BJP for winning "hearts of all" from "Kashmir to Kanyakumari", attacked the Opposition on a range of issues including "caste-based politics".

The resolution — "Viksit Bharat-Modi ki Guarantee" — was moved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and seconded by Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Amid the Punjab farmers' protests, Singh, while proposing

Dabholkar case: Prosecution concludes its final arguments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 17

SEEKING MAXIMUM punishment for the accused persons allegedly linked to the Sanatan Sanstha, the prosecution Saturday concluded its final arguments in the Dr Narendra Dabholkar murder case before a special court in Pune.

Rationalist, anti superstition activist and founder of Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirman Samiti (MANS), Dr Dabholkar, was shot dead by two assailants in Pune in 2013.

The accused who are being tried for murder include ENT surgeon Dr Virendrasinh Tawade who was charged in September 2016; the two alleged shooters Sachin Andre and Sharad Kalaskar who were charged in February 2019; a Mumbai-based senior lawyer Sanjeev Punalekar and his aide Vikram Bhave who were charged in 2019.

According to the CBI, which is probing the case, all the accused are allegedly linked to radical outfit Sanatan Sanstha.

Defence lawyers will begin their final arguments on March 1.

How long will 5 members override 188 nations: India on UNSC reform

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, FEB 17

UNDERLINING THE need for comprehensive reform of the Security Council, India has questioned how much longer can the will of five permanent members of the powerful UN body continue to override the collective voice of the world organisation's 188 member states.

India's Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, speaking at the Inter-Governmental Negotiations on Security



PM Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, BJP chief J P Nadda; and (right) UP CM Yogi Adityanath, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

the resolution, said no government had done as much for farmers as the Modi dispensation. "Farmers are no less than family for the prime minister," he said. Sitharaman spoke on the global gaze shifting towards the "thriving economy of India" amid recession elsewhere.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath saying the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya ended the wait of devotees for over five centuries and brought joy to "the followers of Sanatan Dharma".

"In the last 10 years," the resolution said, "the people of the nation saw Modi's Guarantee reaching every home... Not only did the country's economy break all records, become more secure and decisive than before, it also added a new chapter in global leadership. Narendra Modi ji speaks, the whole world listens."

The resolution assured that the dream of 'Viksit Bharat' will come true before 2047. "India is currently the fastest growing major economy in the world. India has moved from Fragile 5 to Top 5 within 10 years. India is now on track to become a \$5 trillion

lion economy and the third largest economy by 2027. The dream of 'Viksit Bharat' will definitely come true before 2047 because this is the Modi Guarantee," it said.

Pointing out that Modi had "set an ideal example of Sanatan culture", it said: "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, not only has the temple of Lord Shri Ram been built, but he has also effectively implemented the concept of Ram Rajya in the

last 10 years. Whenever there will be a discussion in the future, historians will consider this event as a milestone in years, the continuous rediscovery of India's civilizational heritage."

Citing the success of the G20 Summit last year, the resolution said India had also become the voice of the Global South. At home, the outcome of the recent state elections shows people's deep faith in the "intent and commitment" of the BJP-led

government, and "unbroken trust" in Modi's leadership, it added. "Last year, there were nine state elections and the BJP succeeded in forming the government in six of them... These elections showed that the people in this country had faith only and only in Modi's guarantee. These results were an outright rejection of the divisive and caste based politics of an arrogant coalition (INDIA bloc)," the resolution said.

"From Kutch to Kamrup, from

Kashmir to Kanyakumari, the BJP won hearts of all," it added.

The political resolution condemned the Opposition for boycotting the inauguration as well as the consecration ceremony of the Ayodhya temple.

Praising Modi's attempts to honour India's cultural heritage, the resolution said: "Yoga, Ayurveda and conservation of Indian languages as well as Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Mahakal Corridor in Kashi, Kartarpur Corridor, reconstruction of Pavagadh Shaktipeeth and temples like Kedarnath, Badrinath and Somnath were the eight examples of Modiji's hard work for the revival of cultural centres. Today, under his leadership, the noises of India's great cultural heritage are being heard all over the world. The Prime Minister has also inaugurated the grand temple in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates). It's a symbol of changing India."

The political resolution made

special reference to Sandeshkhali in TMC-ruled West Bengal, saying the violence there had "shamed humanity".

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

'WILL COMPLY'

In favour of transparency: EC on SC poll bonds verdict

SUJIT BISOYI
BHUBANESWAR, FEBRUARY 17

TWO DAYS after the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to publish details of electoral bonds received by political parties on its website by March 13, the poll panel said it has always been in favour of transparency and would comply with the top court's order.

"The ECI was also a party in the (electoral bond) case. You might have seen our affidavits. The commission has always stressed on two things — transparency in terms of information flow and involvement. We are in favour of transparency. When the order has come, we will take action as directed by the Supreme Court," said chief election commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar during a press conference in Bhubaneswar.

Kumar said that if anyone has doubts on EVMs, the commission addresses it in the 'frequently asked questions' segment on its website.

"It will not only clear the doubt of the individual but everybody at large can understand and know it. Over hundreds of questions have been answered. Orders of more than 30 cases in high court and Supreme Court have also been published," said Kumar.

On the authenticity of EVMs, the CEC said that if one examines the results in the past five to seven years from the commission's website, it's clear that "there is no single pattern of election results. It changes".

In its order on Thursday, the apex court had directed the State Bank of India to share details of all electoral bonds purchased from its designated branches, including the date of purchase, the name of the buyer, and the value. The bank has also been instructed to provide details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties to the ECI in three weeks. The ECI has been asked to publish the details on its website by March 13.

In 2019, in its affidavit submitted to the apex court, the poll panel had informed the SC that changes made in several laws relating to political funding would have "serious repercussions" on

transparency. On the pending case in the apex court on electronic voting machines (EVMS), Kumar said they are waiting for the decision. "There were a large number of cases in the high court and the Supreme Court, which have been decided already. The commission works on the basis of these directions. Whatever decision will come and changes required, we will do accordingly," said the CEC.

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On behalf of ECI, Kumar said instruction has been issued to maintain absolute impartiality, transparency and to ensure a level playing field. He also cautioned state election officials about violence during the poll process.

Colonial era reminds us law can be instrument of injustice too: CJI



CJI D Y Chandrachud in Prayagraj, Saturday. Express

ASAD REHMAN

LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 17

CHIEF JUSTICE of India DY Chandrachud on Saturday said that "the colonial period reminds us that law can be used as an instrument of justice, but can also be used as an instrument of oppression and injustice".

Speaking at the inauguration of the Arbitration Centre and the launch of a book titled "Courts of Uttar Pradesh" in Prayagraj, the CJI said, "The colonial period reminds us that law can be used as an instrument of justice, but can also be used as an instrument of oppression and injustice."

"All BJP leaders, when they come to offer prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple, are allowed to enter with cameras. No cameras were allowed with Rahul Gandhi and till now no photos have been released by the administration," UP Congress president Ajay Rai told reporters.

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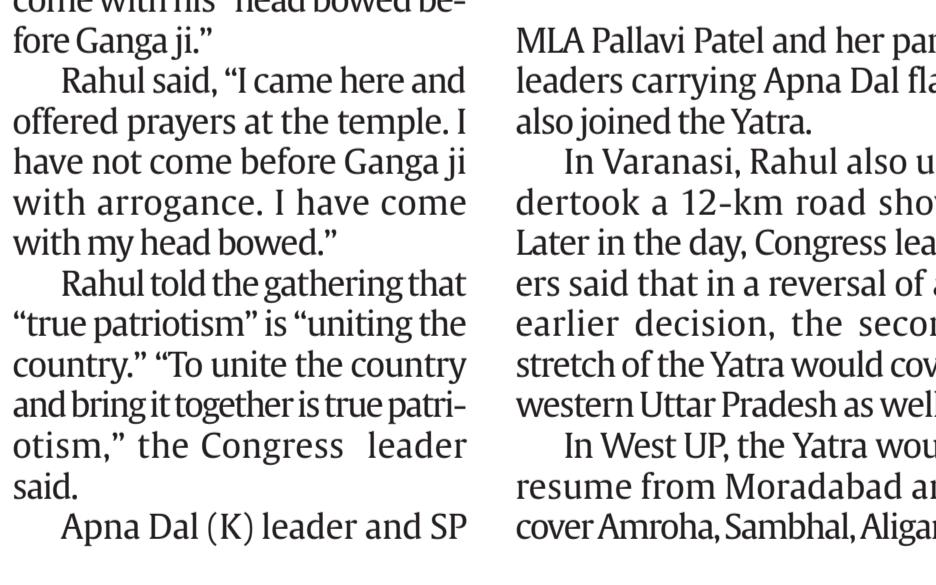
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photographs of Sunetra and Ajit have also been moving around, raising speculation about Sunetra being pitted against Sule, who is her sister-in-law, in the coming polls.

State NCP chief Sunil Tatkare also indicated that Sunetra might be fielded. "There is a demand and wish of party workers from Baramati to get Sunetra Pawar elected to the Lok Sabha. She has been doing social work in the constituency for long and has been helping her husband handle the responsibility of the area. However, the final decision has to be taken," he said.

Sunetra, 60, was born into a political family from the Dharashiv district. She is the sister of former state minister and Lok Sabha MP Padamsinh Patil, who is a close confidant of Sharad



Sunetra Pawar (centre) has never contested an election earlier, but campaigned for her husband in Baramati. ANI File

modal garment manufacturer's park under the central government, since 2006. She is also a board member of the Vidya Pratishtan Trust founded by Sharad Pawar.

The Ajit Pawar led NCP is now showcasing her social work before the voters in Baramati.

On Friday, addressing his party workers in Baramati, Ajit said he would declare a suitable candida-

date for the Baramati constituency. "I am going to put up a candidate in Baramati because we want to be part of the ruling alliance to enable development work in the constituency. It is clear that Narendra Modi will become the Prime Minister for the third time from the way he has got the Ram Mandir constructed and carried out development work across the country," he said, adding that the party cadre "should reach out to voters and tell them that my candidate will do more work than the MP (Sule)".

A party leader said Sunetra was the force behind getting her elder son Parth Pawar to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Maval in 2019. Parth's candidature had been an issue between Pawar and Ajit, leading to friction

between the uncle and nephew.

The decision to field Parth came at the cost of Pawar withdrawing from the race as the latter was said to be keen that not more than two members of his family should contest the elections. Parth lost the seat with a margin of over two lakh votes.

Sunetra, an NCP leader said, had also played a role in the surprise swearing-in of Ajit as the Deputy CM in November 2019, alongside Devendra Fadnavis as CM. He resigned within days, with Pawar then managing to stop a split in the party.

The situation, however, flared up again last July when Ajit, along with many party leaders, joined the ruling alliance of the BJP and the Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde.

FIR to be lodged against MLA for inciting violence: Manipur CM

Imphal: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh Saturday said the police will book a Churachandpur MLA on charges of inciting the February 15 violence in the district that left two dead and scores of others injured. The chief minister made the announcement while speaking to media persons at his official bungalow in the state capital.

The MLA, whose identity has not been disclosed yet, posted a controversial statement on X (formerly Twitter) barely an hour before the latest violence broke out in

Churachandpur. Biren Singh said punitive action would be taken against individuals and organisations including the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF) for 'conspiring' against district officials in Churachandpur.

The Chief Minister also claimed that para-military forces have been pressed into action to curb the ongoing violence in Sugnu, and if they failed to bring the situation under control then special commandos of the Manipur Police would be deployed.

ENS

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj in terms of Railway Board letter dated 13.06.2022 invites bids through E-Auction module in IREPS for Commercial Publicity/Advertisements, Clock Room, Executive Lounge (BOT), Catering, Water Vending Machine, Parking, and Leasing of SLRs/VP in the following stations/locations/Trains of Prayagraj Division.

COMMERCIAL PUBLICITY/ADVERTISEMENT:

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-ADVT-23167

Details of publicity: Commercial publicity/advertisement right through RDN Non Digital of following stations for a period of 03 years. Prayagraj, Subedarganj, Phaphund, Manikpur, Vindhya Chai.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 19.02.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-ADVT-23168

Details of publicity: Commercial publicity/advertisement right through Vinyl Wrapping on following train coaches for a period of 03 years. (14119/20-14113/14) 14115/16, 14163/64, 14111/12, (04143/44-4133/34), (04151/52-01905/06), 22431/32, 12417/18, (14101/02-4123/24), 12417/18, (14151/52-22445/6-22443/44), 12451/52, 12403/12404.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 04.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-ADVT-23169

Details of publicity: Commercial publicity/advertisement right through Out of home for a period of 03 years: Fatehpur, Panki Dham, Govindpuri, Aligarh, Naini, Prayagraj Chheoki

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 05.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-ADVT-23170

Details of publicity: Commercial publicity/advertisement right through RDN Digital (DDIS) of following stations for a period of 05 years. Prayagraj Chheoki, Mirzapur, Tundla, Kanpur Anwarganj, Subedarganj, Firozabad, Fatehpur, Phaphund, Manikpur, Naini, Govindpuri.

Details of publicity: Commercial publicity/advertisement right through RDN Digital of following stations for a period of 05 years. Subedarganj, Kanpur Anwarganj, Fatehpur, Prayagraj Chhewani, Vindhya Chai.

Details of publicity: Commercial publicity/advertisement right through RDN Non Digital of following stations for a period of 03 years. Govindpuri.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 07.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: Cloak Room-CNB

Details of publicity: Contract for work of up-gradation, maintenance and manning of cloak rooms at Kanpur Central Railway Station.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 06.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-EL-BOT-PnU

Details of publicity: Setting up of world class, Airport standard Executive Lounge on BOT (Build Operate Maintain and Transfer) basis at PRAYAGRAJ CHHEOKI Railway station at Prayagraj Division for a period of 15 years.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 04.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

LEASEING OF SLRS/VPs

S. N.	Compartment	Train No.	CC (In tones)	From-To	Frequency (in a week)	E-Auction Catalogue No.	E-Auction Start Date & Time
1	FSLR-1	22431	3.9	PRYJ-UHP	02 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
2	FSLR-1	12033	3.9	CNB-NDLS	06 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
3	FSLR-1	12275	3.9	PRYJ-NDLS	04 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
4	FSLR-1	12451	3.9	CNB-NDLS	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
5	FSLR-1	12294	3.9	PRYJ-LTT	02 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
6	FSLR-1	14163	3.9	PRYJ-MTC	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
7	FSLR-1	22968	3.9	PRYJ-ADI	01 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-05	26.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
8	FSLR-1	12447	3.9	MKP-NZM	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-06	27.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
9	FSLR-1	12469	3.9	CNB-JAT	06 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-06	27.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
10	FSLR-1	14116	3.9	PRYJ-DADN	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-06	27.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
11	FSLR-1	12944	3.9	CNB-BL	01 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-06	27.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
12	FSLR-1	14151	3.9	CNB-ANVT	01 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-06	27.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
13	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	11802	4.0	PRYJ-VGLB	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-06	27.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
14	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	11904	4.0	ETW-VGLB	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-07	28.02.2023, 11.30 Hrs
15	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	14102	4.0	CNB-PYGS	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-07	28.02.2023, 11.30 Hrs
16	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	14110	4.0	CNB-CKTD	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-07	28.02.2023, 11.30 Hrs
17	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	14124	4.0	CNB-PBH	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-08	29.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
18	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	18088	4.0	ETW-GWL	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-08	29.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs
19	FSLR-1,2 RSLR-1	19812	4.0	ETW-KOTA	07 days	PRYJ-PRCL-24-08	29.02.2024, 11.30 Hrs

Catering units and Water Vending Machines:

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-CATG-24-02

Catering units at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Panakdham (01 location), Jalesar Road (01 location), Bharwari (01 location), Hathras (01 location), Sirathu (01 location), Naini (02 location), Dadri (01 location), Sonbhadrav (01 location), Khaga (01 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 29.02.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-CATG-24-03

Catering units at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Hathras (01 location), Dadri (02 location), Barwari (01 location), Jalesar Road (03 location), Sirathu (02 location), Dankaur (01 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 01.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-CATG-24-04

Catering units at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Barwana (03 location), Kanpur Anwarganj (01 location), Achhalda (03 location), Bharwari (02 location), Jalesar Road (01 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 04.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-CATG-24-05

Catering units at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Dadri (01 location), Khaga (01 location), Meja Road (01 location), Bharwana (02 location), Kharja (02 location), Achhalda (02 location), Sonbhadrav (01 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 05.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-CATG-24-06

Catering units at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Dadri (02 location), Chola (02 location), Jalesar Road (01 location), Mainpuri (01 location), Sonbhadrav (01 location), Kharja (01 location), Vindhya Chai (01 location), Shakargarh (01 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 06.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-MSS-WVM-26

Water Vending Machines at Kanpur Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Kanpur (09 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 27.02.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-MSS-WVM-24

Water Vending Machines at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Manikpur (02 location), Tundla (05 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 04.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PCOI-MSS-WVM-25

Water Vending Machines at various Railway stations for the period of 05 years: Prayagraj Chheoki (03 location).

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 05.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

Parking Stand

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-PCOI-MX-24

Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers at location at Prayagraj Chheoki Railway Station in Division PRAYAGRAJ. For 6 months.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 05.03.2024 at 12.00 hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No.: PRYJ-ALJN-MX

Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers at location at Aligarh Railway Station in Division PRAYAGRAJ. For 5 Years.

E-Auction Start Date & Time: 07.03.2024 at 11.00 hrs.

Interested bidders may please visit official website for e-auctioning i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for further details and participating in e-auction.

Important note - (1) Bidders, who wish to participate in the e-auction module should have valid Digital Signing Certificate (DSC) and same may be procured form any of certifying authority of controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA) Government of India, details of same may be obtained from www.cca.gov.in. (2) Prospective bidder will be required to get themselves registered online at IREPS (Commercial Auction Module). (3) One time registration fee of Rs. 10,000.00 and applicable GST (non-refundable) will be required to be paid online by the entity before participating in any commercial auction. (4) For more information, requirement and various aspects regarding this e-Auction Interested bidders are advised to visit <http://www.ireps.gov.in/epis/jsp/common/learningCenter.jsp>. (5) Earning Money Deposit (EMD): 5% of the total contractual bid value to be deposited online during the auction. EMD of the successful bidder will be retained as Security Deposit. (6) Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute right to these contracts any point of time (or for taking any decision) depending upon the circumstances if any. (7) Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute right to short terminate these contracts any point of time (or for taking any decision) depending upon the continuation/discontinuation of the train or commencement of new train services. (para pertains to Leasing of SLRs/VP). (8) The successful bidder will also have to pay applicable GST as imposed by Govt. of India from time to time are applicable. Rail administration will not be responsible for this.

29/24 (A)

Jharkhand: Upset over portfolio allocation, 8 Cong MLAs leave for Delhi

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 17

A DAY after eight MLAs were sworn in as Cabinet Ministers in Jharkhand, discontent is brewing in the Congress camp of the ruling alliance.

At least eight Congress legislators have raised objections to four party MLAs chosen as ministers and are demanding new faces in the Cabinet. Sources said they left for New Delhi on Saturday night to take up the matter with the party leadership.

Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee president Rajesh Thakur, who had multiple rounds of discussions with the party MLAs, told The Sunday Express that he too is in the national capital and the talks will happen in his presence. "I am in New Delhi to convey their demands to the top leaders. They still want to come here and talk. We will sit together and resolve the issue."

The Jharkhand ruling alliance with 47 MLAs — 29 from Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), 17 from the Congress, one from Rashtriya Janata Dal in the 81-member Assembly — weathered a political storm recently following the arrest of former CM Hemant Soren on January 31. After 26 hours of uncertainty, Governor C P Radhakrishnan invited JMM's Champai Soren to form the government.

As per sources, the eight MLAs who are flying to Delhi are: Irfan Ansari, Bhushan Bada, Kumar Jaimangal, Rajesh Kacchap, Amba Prasad, Dipika Pandey, Sonaram Sinku and Umashankar Akela.

Party wants local body elections to be held separately



Congress MLAs before leaving for Delhi, in Ranchi, Saturday. ANI

Jamtara MLA Irfan Ansari said, "We had told the state leadership that we don't want the same old ministers. We had demanded that the incumbents (from the Congress) need to be removed since their performance is not that great and the top leadership has no information about it."

Ansari said they were informed that since the JMM is not adding any new ministers, the Congress too won't make any changes. "But this was not the case. JMM added two new ministers. We were very angry and told the PCC about it... We are pained by the disrespect shown to us; we will not participate in the budget session of the Assembly if our demand for removing four Congress ministers are not fulfilled."

Sources in the Congress, however, said removing the four ministers in an election year may cause a backlash. Assembly polls in Jharkhand are scheduled to be held this year-end.

A source said: "If the four Congress

ministers are removed and new faces are added, it will cause too many problems in an election year and nothing much will change on the ground as far as public perception is concerned. We may face a double whammy. Therefore, it is not in the interest of the party to take any action two months before the general elections."

Congress Bermo legislator Kumar Jaimangal, alias Anup Singh, told the PTI that 12 party MLAs want the removal of the four ministers. "We are travelling to Delhi. Rest (remaining four) will reach tomorrow... We will hold discussions with Congress leadership there. We want replacement of all the four... the 12 MLAs are together, barring the four ministers and MLA Pradeep Yadav," he said. On Saturday night, Cabinet Minister Basant Soren, younger brother of ex-CM Hemant Soren, met the dissenting Congress MLAs and held a detailed discussion.

Jaimangal said: "He has assured us that all MLAs will be respected."

Party wants local body elections to be held separately

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

THE JD(U) on Saturday submitted a memorandum supporting the idea of one nation, one election to the high-level committee, headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind.

The party, which recently entered into an alliance with the BJP in Bihar, said simultaneous polls for Lok Sabha and state Assemblies will save cost, provide policy continuity, help train focus on governance, increase voter turnout, reduce disruptions of daily life, streamline electoral process, provide level playing field to parties, reduce electoral violence and aide political stability.

It, however, underlined that the local body polls should not be held alongside elections to the Lok Sabha and the state Assemblies. All local body polls — municipalities and panchayats — should be held together but separately, the party said.

The memorandum has been signed by JD(U) general secretary Sanjay Kumar Jha and the party's Parliamentary Party leader, Rajiv Ranjan Singh. The two leaders led a delegation that met Kovind, the chairman of the committee, on Saturday.

Notably in September 2023, Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar had cast doubts over the intention

behind the government's move on one nation, one election. Nitish had then told the media, "(Simultaneous elections) used to happen earlier. If they really wanted to do this, why didn't they start with the Census? It used to happen every 10 years, but they didn't do it. When this proposal comes in the House we will discuss. What is happening? ... I have had my doubts since the beginning that they want to hold early elections. Because they see the Opposition coming together and they are feeling they are in danger."

In the memorandum handed over to Kovind on Saturday, the party has quoted recommendations of the Law Commission in 1999 and 2018, and the 2015 report of committee led by E M Sudarshan Natchiappan on feasibility of simultaneous elections to highlight advantages of one nation, one election.

The memorandum has also underlined that coordinating elections on a national scale would lead to a more efficient and streamlined electoral process and could create a more level playing field among political parties, as they would all have the same time frame for campaigning and presenting their agenda.

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 17

THE VISHWA Hindu Parishad (VHP) moved the Circuit Bench of the Calcutta High Court in Jalpaiguri district against a lions named after Goddess Sita and a lion named after Mughal emperor Akbar at the North Bengal Wild Animals Park in Siliguri.

According to reports, the two big cats were brought to the Siliguri zoo from Tripura's Sepahijala Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary along with eight other animals, as part of an animal exchange programme, on February 12.

The West Bengal forest department has denied naming the lion and lioness as 'Sita' and 'Akbar', respectively. However, Tripura zoo officials maintained that the big cats' names are 'Ram' and 'Sita' as per official records.

EXPRESS NETWORK

Pregnant wife
of rape accused
gang raped, set
on fire in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MORENA, FEBRUARY 17

A 34-YEAR-OLD pregnant woman was allegedly raped by three men and set on fire in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district, and is battling for her life in a hospital, police said on Saturday.

The victim, who sustained 80 per cent burns, is undergoing treatment in Gwalior, an official said.

The incident occurred in Chand Ka Pura village, around 3 km from Ambah town, on Friday, he said.

The victim went to the village to work out a compromise with a woman who had accused her husband of rape, inspector Alok Parihar of Ambah police station told PTI.

The victim was, however, allegedly raped by three men who were present in the woman's house. Later, the trio and the accused woman poured fuel on her and set her ablaze, the official said.

A video has been shared with the police in which the victim, being rushed to a hospital in a vehicle, is heard saying that she was first gang raped, and then the accused woman and the men had set her ablaze, he said.

The victim's husband, who is out on bail in the rape case, has handed the video to the police, Parihar said.

While the victim has recorded her statement with the magistrate, the police were yet to record her statement, he said, adding that the investigations are underway.

**Gadgets seized
from Assam jail
cell housing
Amritpal, aides**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 17

ASMRTHPHONE, pen drives and several other electronic devices were seized from the cell of National Security Act (NSA) detainees in Assam's Dibrugarh Central Jail on Saturday.

Pro-Khalistani outfit Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh and his associates have been lodged in the same cell since March last year, following their arrests under the NSA from various parts of Punjab during a crackdown on the outfit.

Assam DGP G P Singh said additional CCTV cameras were installed in the public area of the NSA cell where Amritpal and his associates are housed following leads that unauthorised activists were being carried out there.

Based on inputs, the jail staff searched the premises Saturday morning and recovered a smartphone with a SIM card, a keypad phone, a TV remote with a keypad, a spy-cam pen, pen drives, bluetooth headphones, speakers and a smart watch, said the officer. He, however, did not specify that the gadgets were recovered from the Waris Punjab De members lodged in the cell. "The source of these unauthorised articles and the mode of induction are being ascertained," he said.

10 die in TN cracker unit blast, official points to 'human error'

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 17

AN EXPLOSION at a firecracker manufacturing unit in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district on Saturday claimed the lives of at least 10, including five women, and left several others injured. The tragedy struck the factory located in Ramuthavanpatti near Sattur, a region notorious for such accidents.

Virudhunagar, along with Sivakasi, is a hub for firecracker production, catering to almost 90% of India's demand with over 1,000 factories operational. The explosion underscores the ongoing risks faced by workers in an industry plagued by negligence and human error.

The accident occurred around noon when employees were engaged in mixing chemicals for fancy crackers, a process known for its high risk of ignition.

According to a senior official from the Virudhunagar district administration, the explosion was triggered by a "man-made



Near the firecracker factory in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar, Saturday. PTI

error" in the chemical mixing room, suggesting a breach of safety protocols that stipulate a maximum of two persons in the area during such operations.

Initial investigations reveal that more individuals were present, either inside or just outside the mixing room, likely contributing to the high casualty rate. The factory had around 150 workers. We are searching for the

owner and manager of the unit, who have gone into hiding, and a detailed magisterial probe has been ordered to investigate the incident further," the official said.

In response to the tragedy, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin extended his condolences to the families of victims, announcing financial assistance to alleviate their immediate suffering. Each family of the deceased

will receive a solatium of ₹3 lakh from the Chief Minister's relief fund, with an additional ₹1 lakh earmarked for those seriously injured. Stalin has deputed Revenue Minister K K S R Ramachandran and Labour Minister C V Ganesh to oversee rescue and relief operations, ensuring that the injured receive prompt medical attention and support during this critical time.

SECTION 144 IMPOSED

Deaths in elephant attacks: Protests in Wayanad, CM orders meeting on Feb 20

Rahul Gandhi rushes to his constituency from Varanasi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
FEBRUARY 17

A DAY after a wild elephant trampled a member of the forest protection committee to death in Kerala's Wayanad, the third over the last three weeks, thousands of people protested for hours with the body at Pulpally in the district, following which CrPC Section 144 was clamped in the area by the district authorities.

With tension escalating, Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi, who was in Varanasi for Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, rushed to his constituency. "Rahul Gandhi's presence is required urgently in Wayanad. He is leaving this evening from Varanasi at 5 pm. The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will resume at 3 pm tomorrow, February 18, at Prayagraj," senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said on X.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan convened a high-level meeting in the state capital Saturday over the situation in Wayanad where he directed the ministers of Forest, Revenue, and local self-government departments to convene a meeting in Wayanad on February 20. At the meeting, a decision was taken to install 250 additional cameras in inhabited areas to detect the movement of wild animals.

The body of Velachalil Paul, 49, was taken from the Government Medical College Hospital in Kozhikode to a bus stand at Pulpally, where protests were held. With all political fronts calling for a dawn-to-dusk strike in Wayanad, the protests intensified with people bringing



Protesters block traffic in Kerala's Wayanad, Saturday. PTI

the carcass of a cow, killed in a suspected tiger attack, to the protest venue.

Angry mob stopped a forest department vehicle and put the cow carcass on the jeep bonnet. When protesters refused to disperse, police resorted to lathi-charge.

State Forest Minister A K Saseendran, in charge of Wayanad district, was in nearby Kozhikode but did not visit the spot. Also, the lone ruling party legislator from the district O R Kelu of CPI(M) stayed away. Protesters raised slogans against Congress MLAs T Siddique and I C Balakrishnan, both from Wayanad district.

Agitators demanded Rs 50 lakh as compensation for the victim's family and a permanent job for his widow. They also demanded the government bear the educational expenses of their daughter and write off the family's debts. The body was

taken to his home only after the district administration agreed to pay Rs 10 lakh as compensation. The demand for Rs 40 lakh would be recommended for government's consideration. The forest department would give a temporary job to the widow and bear the daughter's education expenses.

Siddique told mediapersons that Wayanad needs a permanent solution to the menace. "The protests are natural. When the government has become inactive, people would protest. The forest minister has not met the families of the victims. The district collector is staying away from the spot. The government is pushing people onto the streets for agitation," he said.

Paul was on duty near Kuruvadweep, also known as Kuruva Island, a prominent eco-tourism destination in Wayanad, when he was attacked and killed by the wild tusker.

Filmmaker gets 2-yr jail term each in 11 cases for not repaying loans

GOPAL KATESHIYA
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 17

BOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR and producer Rajkumar Santoshi was Saturday sentenced to two years in jail in 11 cases each and ordered to pay ₹2.2 crore in all to a businessman after a court in Jamnagar found him guilty under the Negotiable Instruments Act for not honouring 11 cheques.

The accused were attempting to leak the question paper for the examination. Similarly, by the team of STF Lucknow Deputy SP Vimal Kumar Singh, six people were arrested from Prayagraj for indulging in fraudulent activities.

The DGP added that several methods were adopted by the police to ensure that the examinations were free of cheating. Methods such as face recognition, biometric verification, Aadhaar authentication and usage of jammers to block usage of any phones, Bluetooth devices and Internet were used, he said.

Out of the 122 arrests, 22 were made by UP police's Special Task Force (STF). The STF's team in Lucknow under Additional Superintendent of Police, STF,

Amit Kumar Naagar made four arrests from Kanpur.

The accused were attempting to leak the question paper for the examination. Similarly, by the team of STF Lucknow Deputy SP Vimal Kumar Singh, six people were arrested from Prayagraj for indulging in fraudulent activities.

The DGP added that several methods were adopted by the police to ensure that the examinations were free of cheating. Methods such as face recognition, biometric verification, Aadhaar authentication and usage of jammers to block usage of any phones, Bluetooth devices and Internet were used, he said.

A team of STF's field unit Gorakhpur arrested two persons, who were solving the examination for a candidate. A team of STF's field unit in Gautam Buddha Nagar arrested three people from Hathras district in western Uttar Pradesh.

CBI moves court to stop airing of Indrani Mukerjea Netflix docu-series

Mumbai: The CBI Saturday moved an application before a special court in Mumbai seeking a stay on a documentary series on Indrani Mukerjea, the prime accused in the Sheena Bora murder case.

The docu-series, titled 'The Indrani Mukerjea Story: The Buried Truth' delves into the disappearance of 25-year-old Bora and is scheduled to premiere on streaming platform Netflix on February 23.

In its application filed through public prosecutor C J Nandode, the CBI asked the court "to issue direction to accused and other concerned for staying/stopping the featuring of the accused persons and the persons connected with the case in the documentary by Netflix and its broadcasting on any platform till the conclusion of the ongoing trial".

CBI Special Judge SP Naik-Nimbalkar issued notices to Netflix Entertainment Services India and others for their response on the application. The hearing has been fixed for February 20. PTI

122 arrested in 3 days for 'fraud' linked to UP police constable recruitment exam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 17

A TOTAL of 122 people have been arrested over the past three days by the UP police for indulging in "fraudulent activities" in connection with the state police constable recruitment examination held Saturday.

The exam will be held on Sunday too, with a total of 48 lakh candidates appearing for it, through which 60,244 police constable positions will be filled. A total of 2,378 examination centres in Lucknow are set up in 75 districts of the state.

The highest number of arrests were reported from Etah district, where 15 people were

arrested. The second highest arrests were reported from Prayagraj, where nine people were arrested, followed by Ghazipur, where a total of eight people were held.

Director General of Police Prashant Kumar in a statement said that the examinations were held in an "efficient manner" on Saturday. "Senior officers in the districts were instructed in advance to do rounds of the examination centres. All the centres for the examination had CCTVs to keep vigil," said Kumar, who also went for rounds at examination centres in Lucknow on Saturday.

On February 12, Kumar gave detailed instructions in a video conference to all senior police officers in zones, ranges and districts. "The officers were told to hold the examination by ensuring that no unfair means are used," said Kumar.

The DGP added that several methods were adopted by the police to ensure that the examinations were free of cheating. Methods such as face recognition, biometric verification, Aadhaar authentication and usage of jammers to block usage of any phones, Bluetooth devices and Internet were used, he said.

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Amit Kumar Naagar made four arrests from Kanpur.

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A team of STF's field unit Gorakhpur arrested two persons, who were solving the examination for a candidate. A team of STF's field unit in Gautam Buddha Nagar arrested three people from Hathras district in western Uttar Pradesh.

As per the Unification Ministry, most refugees since 1998 from North Korea have been women. More women defectors has also meant physical and sexual violence. "On our first day in China, my older sister was kidnapped on the street and sexually abused in a car. We did not speak about the incident for more than 20 years," Kim says.

According to her, most refugees from North Korea these days are youths.

"For young refugees, it is less about hunger, and more about freedom and desperation for a better life. They are driven by fear for their future and small frustrations like not being allowed to wear hot pants, dye their hair or have a different haircut," says Kim.

An example of this lack of freedom, she says, is North Korea's stringent monitoring of electronic devices since 2004 to repress the consumption of foreign pop culture content smuggled through its borders with China and Russia. Kim says, "This crackdown is becoming more in-

tense there because South Korean dramas and pop culture are causing the youth to question North Korea's propaganda."

In 2021, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dubbed Korean pop or K-pop music as a "vicious cancer". In January 2023, the nation's legislative body adopted the Pyongyang Cultural Language Protection Act, which stipulates "public executions" for North Koreans who use or spread South Korean-style language.

A March 2023 report by South Korea's Unification Ministry stated that "executions are widely carried out (in North Korea) for acts that do not justify the death penalty, including drug crimes, distribution of South Korean videos, and religious and superstitious activities". This was in line with UN investigations and NGO reports based on over 500 testimonies by North Korean refugees collected from 2017 to 2022. "People in North Korea don't have freedom, but are familiar with the concept due to South Korea's

N Korean defector's walk to freedom: 'Had no food... In South Korea, I'm spoilt for choice'

NEHA BANKA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

"I ESCAPED from North Korea in 2002 to China for food, but came to South Korea in 2006 for freedom," says Kim Eunju, 38, a defector who now lives in Seoul, during an exclusive video interview with *The Indian Express*.

Her life as a refugee gains significance against the backdrop of Madeleine Gavin's Beyond Utopia, based on experiences of North Korean defectors, bagging an Oscar nomination in the best documentary feature category.

"My friend is a part of the documentary," says Kim, a known human rights activist whose 2012 book, *A Thousand Miles to Freedom: My Escape from North Korea*, written under a pen name, captures the traumatic experiences she faced while trying to escape from her motherland with her family.

With the East Asian nation maintaining an iron grip over flow

of information in and out of country, researchers and journalists have always relied on testimonies of defectors like Kim to understand more about daily life there.

Scheduled to travel to India in January to create awareness about "human rights violations" faced by North Korean refugees, Kim had to cancel her trip due to "unforeseen circumstances".

"I wanted to share my experience with India and the world," says Kim, who works for Freedom Speakers International, an organisation that helps North Korean defectors settle in South Korea. According to South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, as of the beginning of 2024, nearly 30,000 North Korean refugees lived in South Korea.

The reason behind her awareness drive was an October 2023 incident – Beijing, which refers to undocumented North Koreans as illegal "economic migrants", forced nearly 600 refugees to go back as per a 1986 bilateral

protocol. The incident led to UN experts remarking that China should "respect the principle of non-refoulement (not forcing refugees to return to a country where they are at risk) guaranteed under international law".

Kim says she escaped from North Korea twice. The first time was in 1999, when she crossed into China but was sent back soon. She was successful in escaping in 2002 and ended up settling in South Korea in 2006. She adds, "We are economic migrants, but our situation is much more complex. The penalty for being deported to North Korea is terrible for refugees."

A resident of North Korea's Eundoek town, Kim was just 10 years old when a devastating famine struck the nation in the mid-1990s. International aid organisations suspect that nearly 1 million North Koreans died due to severe food shortages. The crisis was severe enough for the government to acknowledge the famine as the "Arduous March".

It was also severe enough for the then preteen Kim – who was "certain that she would not survive the hunger and cold" – to "draft a last will and testament". Though she escaped from North Korea, it was easier said than done. "I can say now that it was much easier when my family fled North Korea in 1999. The Tumen River border (the natural bound-

ary between China and North Korea) was physically manned by soldiers and it was easier to evade them by timing their movements. Now, border guards have CCTVs and sophisticated technology. Traffickers who smuggle defectors into China charge a lot more now than they did in the 1990s. Still, North Koreans are desperate to flee," she says.

As per the Unification Ministry, most refugees since 1998 from North Korea have been women. More women defectors has also meant physical and sexual violence. "On our first day in China, my older sister was kidnapped on the street and sexually abused in a car. We did not speak about the incident for more than 20 years," Kim says.

According to her, most refugees from North Korea these days are youths. "For young refugees, it is less about hunger, and more about freedom and desperation for a better life. They are driven by fear for their future and small frustrations like not being allowed to wear hot pants, dye their hair or have



राष्ट्रीय पवन ऊर्जा संस्थान
 (नवीन और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत संस्थान एवं विभास संस्था, भारत सरकार)
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WIND ENERGY
 (An Autonomous R&D Institution Under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy,
 Government of India)
 देशभरी - तामिक्स प्रमुख मार्ग, पाल्कराण्ड, वैल्न-600 100, तामिक्स नारू, मार्क
 Velachery - Tambaram High Road, Pallikaranai, Chennai - 600 100,
 Tamil Nadu, INDIA. Phone No.: 044 - 22463982/83/84
Invitation of Expression Of Interest (EOI)

The National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE), Chennai is an autonomous Research and Development Institution of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India.

NIWE successfully effectuates "VAYUMITRA Skill Development Programme (VSDP) - Phase-I" sanctioned by MNRE for conducting Training of Participants (ToP) programme for the three Qualification Packs approved by MSDE, namely, SGJ/Q1502 - O&M Mechanical Technician-Wind Power Plant; SGJ/Q1503 - O&M Electrical and Instrumentation Technician - Wind Power Plant and SGJ/Q1202 - Wind Resource Assessor & Site Surveyor - Wind Power Plant.

To select the 22 Training Partners from 9 wind states namely Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala for conducting ToP programme under VSDP (Phase-I) for FY2024-25, an Expression of Interest is invited from the institutions / wind energy industries.

The detailed information is made available in NIWE website, <https://niwe.res.in> and Vayumitra Website, <https://vsdp.niwe.res.in>. The last date for submission of EoIs: 21 days from the date of advertisement.

Additional Director (F&A)

SEARCH FOR MISSING

Upender Bhagat
 General public is hereby informed that a male namely Upender Bhagat, S/o Lt. Jagdish, R/o Village Dhamgarh Post Kukran, P.S. Dhampura, Bihar has been reporting missing since 09.02.2024 at about 05:30 PM from Bank Colony Stand, Nand Nagri, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 59 A, dated 13.02.2024 has been lodged at Police Station Nand Nagri, Delhi. The description of missing male is as under:

Name: Upender Bhagat, Age: 50 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Medium, Wearing: Blue Colour Dharidhar Shirt, Blue Colour Pant and Black Colour Plastic Chappal in Feet.

If anyone has any information about this missing male please inform P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi.

**Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
 Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639**

**SHO
 Police Station Nand Nagri, Delhi
 DP/1908/NE/2024**

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department e-Procurement Notice

The Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, HPPWD, Dalhousie on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for the following work under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD WORK) in the District Chamba for one number of package with estimated cost totaling to **Rs. 722.85 Lakh** including maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with HPPWD and HP Jal Shakti Vibhag (Contractors of HP Jal Shakti Vibhag are eligible to participate for the works having amount put to tender above Rs. 100.00 Lakh). Non registered contractors may submit the bids; however successful bidder has to register himself in appropriate class before signing the contract with appropriate authority in HPPWD.

Division	RIDF	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (Rs Lacs)	Construction	Maintenance	Total Cost (Rs Lacs)	Period of Completion (Months)	Bid Security (Rs Lacs)
1 Bharmour	2 XIX	Construction of Lahal to Bagru road km 0/0 to 4/0 in District Chamba (HP) under RIDF-XXIX (NABARD).	691.55	31.30	722.85	24 Months	14.46	

Other details can be seen in the bidding document. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Last Date/ Time and place for receipt of bids through e-procurement:-
 Bids can be submitted online from Date 19 Month 02 Year 2024 to Date 01 Month 03 Year 2024 upto 1100 Hours and will be opened on Date 01 Month 03 Year 2024 at 1130 Hours in the office of Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, HPPWD, Dalhousie.

For further details please log on to <https://htptenders.gov.in>

The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons thereof.

**Superintending Engineer,
 7th Circle, HPPWD, Dalhousie-176304.
 Fax: 01899-242177 Tel: 01899-240606.**

6027/HP

BRIDGE

Dealer: South Vulnerable: None

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ K7643	♠ AJ1052
♥ 53	♥ K984
♦ K875	♦ 2
♣ Q8	♣ A10

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

1S
 2S 4S pass pass

West leads the queen of diamonds. South expects to make 4S but making 2S would be nice. How should South play?

South has to do one good thing at trick one. South is sure East has the ace of diamonds (Why in the world would West lead the queen of diamonds if he had the AQJx?) and plays low. West switches to a trump, which is nice in a way it means that the trumps are breaking. South takes East's queen with his ace.

South can draw trump and still be able to ruff three hearts in dummy. Because West is expected to have five hearts South knows he can't set up a heart trick to discard a club from dummy. But South knows something else. He thinks that even if he can't set up the hearts to discard a club from dummy, he does expect that he can discard a club from his hand.

After winning the ace of spades South draws the last trump, ending in dummy. Next he ruffs a diamond. He leads the kings, losing to West's ace, and West has a tempting jack of diamonds. What do you do with this morsel?

What do you play low and when the ace comes up on your right you ruff. After ruffing some hearts in dummy you will use the king of diamonds to discard your club loser.

The West hand: S-8 H-AJ1072 D-QJ1093 C-K9
 The East hand: S-09 H-6 D-A64 C-J765432

A simple hand actually, as long as you do not make the reflex action of covering the queen of diamonds.

Dealer: South Vulnerable: None

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ A8	♠ K3
♥ A42	♥ 865
♦ 653	♦ AJ1098
♣ J9743	♣ AK2

West North East South
 1NT
 2C 3NT pass pass

North bid 3NT and West led the queen of spades. Can you find nine tricks?

JUMBLED WORDS

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

Lists have always implied _____. - David Viscott (6,5)

CGAER

CRYILS

DONOR

ALTYCD

Answer: Lists have always implied **SECRET**. - David Viscott

Now, Tikait announces dharnas in UP: This fight is to save *fasal* and *nasl*

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NOIDA, FEBRUARY 17

BHARATIYA KISAN Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait Saturday announced dharnas in all districts of Uttar Pradesh on February 21 to support the farmers from Punjab and Haryana who are marching to Delhi to press for their demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price for all crops.

"Ye ladai fasal aur nasl bachane ki hai (this fight is for saving agriculture and our future)," said Tikait.

Speaking to reporters after attending a mahapanchayat at Sisai in Muzaffarnagar, Tikait said a resolution was passed asking the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) to launch a tractor march to Delhi in the last week of February if the government does not accept farmers' demands.

The mahapanchayat was held as farmers' 'Dilli Chalo' march, called by the SKM (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, entered the fifth day.

"On February 21, there will be no work at the district headquarters. We will march with tractors.

"When the government attacks, it also attacks the villages. If we want to survive, we will have to agitate," he said.

tors. After that we plan to hold a two-day protest on February 26 and 27. We will give our tractors to SKM. They tractors will be lined up from Haridwar to Ghaziabad border. People of every district and tehsil will stand on the road with their tractors," said Tikait.

He, however, added that so far his organisation has no plans to go to Delhi. BKU is part of the SKM, which is not part of the 'Dilli Chalo' march call, but has extended its support. The farmers from Punjab who began their march to Delhi on Tuesday, were stopped by security forces at the Shambhu and Khanaura points of state's border with Haryana. They have stayed put at the two border points since then.

"Haryana ka mukhyamantri kehta hai ki tractor nahi chalega. Ye tumhari chhati par tractor hi chalega. Apne tractor ko mazboot rakhega. (The Haryana chief minister says he will not allow tractors. The tractor will run on your (government's) chest)," Tikait said a day before Union ministers Arjun Munda, Piyush Goyal and Nitayanand Rai will meet the farmer leaders on Sunday for the fourth round of talks.

"When the government attacks, it also attacks the villages. If we want to survive, we will have to agitate," he said.

"When the government attacks, it also attacks the villages. If we want to survive, we will have to agitate," he said.

FARMERS' PROTEST: FOURTHROUND OF TALKS TODAY

Punjab CM in new role: How Mann has risen as unlikely mediator in Govt-farmers talks

KANCHAN VASDEV

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 17

IN THE standoff between agitating farmer organisations and the Central government, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, has emerged as an unlikely mediator.

The farmer unions brought in CM Mann as a mediator in their talks with the BJP-ruled Centre over their various demands that include a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) for crops and farm debt waiver.

As a senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, CM Mann is seen by farm protesters as being in confrontation with the Centre just like them, especially given that he has been taking on the Narendra Modi government and Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit over the Centre's alleged withholding Rs 8,000 crore of funds from the state. But he is now also being seen as a moderating force.

On Thursday, during the third round of the meeting between the farmer leaders and Union ministers, Mann stood by the farmers, while also nudging them to the negotiating table by asking them to believe in the power of dialogue. He also por-



Farmers protest outside BJP leader and former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's residence in Patiala on Saturday. Express

trayed himself as the custodian of three crore people of the state, who was concerned that they get regular supplies of fuel, milk and other items.

Mann is himself at loggerheads with the Centre, and especially with Union minister Piyush Goyal, who is in charge of the Ministry of Food that has allegedly declined to pay Punjab its share of Rural Development Funds (RDF).

The RDF is a statutory fund, levied by the state on the Centre, as the suspension of internet across three districts that, according to Mann, was harassing students appearing for board exams. He also criticised the lobbing of teargas shells and other ammunition by security forces from the Haryana side at the agitating farmers. "They (Haryana Police) lob shells, which land up in our territory (Punjab). That is why I asked the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Patiala (Showkat Ahmed Parry) to write a letter to the Ambala DC. Why should they do that?" the CM told the media.

Mann also had a word for caution for the farmers, requesting them to maintain peace.

Sandeshkhali:
 Key accused arrested; TMC says govt upheld 'raj dharma'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 17

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS (TMC) leader and North 24 Parganas Zilla Parishad member Shiba Prasad Hazra, against whom a section of women in violence-hit Sandeshkhali village had lodged a complaint of sexual harassment, was arrested on Saturday, police said.

Police said they have added IPC sections 376 D (gangrape) and 307 (attempt to murder) against Hazra and former TMC leader Uttam Sardar, who was arrested last week. The gangrape section was added based on a complaint by a woman who recorded her statement before a magistrate.

Basirhat SP Hossain Mehedi Rehman said, "Shiba Prasad Hazra has been arrested from the Nazat police station area in Sandeshkhali. He will be produced before a court tomorrow (Sunday)."

Sandeshkhali has been on the edge since last week after local residents went on a rampage demanding the arrest of Sheikh, Hazra and Sardar. While Sardar was arrested earlier in February, Sheikh has been on the run since January 5 after a mob of his supporters allegedly attacked a team of Enforcement Directorate officials who had gone there to search his house in alleged connection with the ration distribution scam. TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "Shibu (Shiba Prasad) Hazra has been arrested. The Mamata Banerjee government has performed raj dharma. However, the arrest does not prove that all such allegations against him are true."

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2465

QUICK CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Acts to make a pistol fire (5,3,7)
- 9. Accompanying another (6)
- 10. Big posh American car (8)
- 11. Authentic (8)
- 14. An stimulating drink (6)
- 17. Unable to be recovered (13)
- 20. Food and lodging (13)
- 23. Living room (US) (6)
- 25. Irrigating (8)
- 28. The Karate sticks (?) (8)
- 29. Major river flowing through India (6)
- 30. The 17th century? (7,8)

DOWN

- 2. Conclusion (6)
- 3. Drug used to treat Parkinson's disease (1-4)
- 4. All together, musically? (5)
- 5. A master of ceremonies (5)
- 6. Capable of being reduced (7)
- 7. Hood-shaped anatomical part (5)
- 8. Repeated (9)
- 12. Opportunity for debate (5)
- 13. Same again (5)
- 15. Havana native (5)
- 16. Ceremonial harness (9)
- 17. Bring on oneself (5)
- 18. Ex-Mrs. Trump (5)
- 19. To express (5)
- 21. "Am great" anagram for a city in England (7)
- 22. Trapped (6)
- 24. Lawful (5)
- 25. Evelyn ___: English novelist (5)
- 26. Memento (5)
- 27. Wanderer (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Rolling stones and moss again appear in Milton's work (6,9)
- 9. Get on a bit frenetically (6)
- 10. How might plane attack a low place with an old car? (4-4)
- 11. Supports and awaits instructions (6,2)
- 14. Didn't act like a breadwinner! (6)
- 17. Delicate growth in a warm atmosphere (8,5)
- 20. Where workers perform as menials, less by contract (8,5)

Across THE AISLE



P CHIDAMBARAM

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SOMETIMES THERE is a method in the madness. A government presenting its last Budget on the eve of general elections would present an Interim budget accompanied by a Vote on Account for the period April to July of the next year. The speech of the finance minister would be an important occasion to look back on the record of the government and lay down a path for the future. Ms Sitharaman did a bit of both. However, her Budget was spoilt by the Black paper released by the Congress and the White paper released by the government on February 8, 2024.

One would have expected that a White paper at the end of BJP's 10-year rule would be on its tenure but, surprisingly, it was on the UPA's tenure between 2004 and 2014. The White paper's purpose was to paint those 10 years in a single colour — black — but it brought into the discussion the achievements of the UPA as well...

THE BIG DIFFERENCE

The one number that came into focus was the average GDP growth rate in constant prices. The UPA scored big on this metric. As per the old base year 2004-05, the average GDP growth rate over 10 years was **7.5 per cent**. In 2015, the BJP government changed the base year to 2011-12 in order to dim the UPA's numbers; yet the average growth rate

was **6.7 per cent**. By comparison, the NDA's average growth rate over 10 years was **5.9 per cent**. The difference is not insignificant. A difference of 1.6 percentage (or 0.8 percentage) per year over a period of 10 years makes a huge difference to the size of the GDP, the per capita income, the volume of goods and services, the volume/value of exports, the fiscal and revenue deficits, and a host of other metrics. One thing led to another and the comparison game began. Please see the Table.

On many metrics, the NDA came out worse. In my view, the most damaging data that exposed the wrong policies and the mismanagement of the economy by the NDA were the Total National Debt; the decline in household savings; the jump in bank loans written off; the expenditure on health and education; and the fall in the number of central government employees. There are, of course, some metrics on which the performance of the NDA was better.

WHITE LIES

The government's White paper was too white. It blacked out the many achievements of the UPA government and white-washed the monumental failures of the NDA government (including demonetisation and the destruction of the micro and small sector). The White paper earned the moniker *white-lie paper*. Notably, the White paper failed to acknowledge that the idea and the origin of *Jan Dhan* (earlier the 'no frills account'), the *Aadhaar* and the *Mobile* revolution can be traced back to the UPA.

	UPA	NDA
GDP growth rate	7.48% (old series) 6.7% (new series)	5.9%
Fiscal Deficit (in terminal year)	4.5%	5.8%
National Debt (in terminal year)	Rs.58.6 lakh crore	Rs.173.3 lakh crore
Debt to GDP	52%	58%
Households saving (% of GDP)	23%	19%
Farm wages growth	4.1%	1.3%
Gross NPAs of PSBs	Rs.8 lakh crore (2004-05 to 2013-14)	Rs.55.5 lakh crore (2014-15 to 2022-23)
Bank Loans written off	Rs.2.2 lakh crore	Rs.14.56 lakh crore
END OF TENURE		
Expenditure as % of total expenditure		
On Health	1.7%	1.7%
On Education	4.60%	2.9%

The period of alleged mismanagement by the UPA (as seen from the tables and graphs in the White paper) was mainly 2008-2012. In mid-September 2008, the international financial markets collapsed causing a financial tsunami that devastated every country. Inflation soared because of the huge borrowing and spending as part of the policy of "quantitative easing" that was followed by all large economies. Pranab Mukherjee was the finance minister during January 2009 to July 2012 — the peak period of inflation and fiscal deficit. In Mukherjee's defence, I would say that he followed the prevailing wisdom and supported **growth and jobs** but paid the price in **fiscal deficit and inflation**.

POLEMICS IS POLITICS

The Black paper by the Congress was one-sided too. Naturally, it included sec-

tions on the acute distress in the agricultural sector, persisting high inflation, unprecedented rate of unemployment, and cronyism. Other sections were on the weaponisation of investigative agencies, the subversion of institutions, the Chinese intrusion into Indian territory, and the Manipur tragedy. It was true to its title, a black paper on the NDA.

The object of the two papers was more political than economic, though the economic truth was quite clear. The issues raised in the two papers should have been discussed in the two Houses of Parliament over the last 10 years, but they were not because the government would not allow a debate on substantive issues. The two papers have set the stage for a debate in the election arena. Only time will tell whether there will be such a debate or whether money, religion, hate speech and the misuse of power will determine the outcome of the elections.



Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter: @tavleen_singh

Listen to the farmers

WHEN WE see farmers protesting once more on the edge of Delhi, how many of us remember that there is an India away from the razzmatazz of city life where nothing much has changed. My earliest memories are of a farm in Haryana. My father's family were refugees who were allotted this farm as compensation for what they lost when Pakistan was made. It is perhaps because of those early memories of the harshness of rural life that I have a deep sympathy for farmers.

India may be the fastest growing major economy but in rural India there are few signs of change. It is true that there are now cellphones, online shopping, and banking, and colour TV. But most farmers still live in squalor and deprivation, haunted by the constant fear that one crop failure could ruin them. Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation says that between 2013 and 2019, farmers' incomes rose by 30 per cent while their debts went up by 58 per cent. Life for a farmer even in supposedly prosperous Punjab is so hard that the big dream of young men is to somehow get to Canada or the United States. So many have already fled that there are villages in which the only people left are the elderly, women, and children. It is because of these things that farmers are once more back on the borders of Delhi trying to get their voices heard.

Instead of trying to listen to these voices the response of the powers that be has been the same as it was last time. BJP chief ministers in states bordering Delhi have ripped up roads and driven iron spikes into them so that motorized traffic cannot pass and to keep farmers on foot out, there are concrete barricades topped with coils of razor wire. This time, drones have been used to drop teargas shells on the protesters.

Like they did last time, supporters of Narendra Modi can be heard spewing venom on social media. These are not real farmers, they say, but Khalistani terrorists. Many point out that only a small handful of farmers are demanding MSP (minimum support price) for their crops. This is true. But it is this handful that supply government granaries and feed our cities. Nearly eighty per cent of farmers produce only enough for their families and local markets.

This makes it even more important that the government pay attention to what those farmers who can afford the luxury of protest say. The Prime Minister never tires of telling us in nearly every speech he makes that there is a special place in his heart for farmers. But the last time they sat in protest on the borders of Delhi he did not bother to meet them to express sympathy and understanding.

Instead, he let the protests go on for more than a year and then suddenly withdrew the farm laws that caused the protest. After this, almost nothing was done to try and solve the problems that farmers face which is why they are back again. This time with demands that are outrageous and unreasonable but the response from senior ministers should not be to malign them. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting supplied news channels last week with a video of a Sikh farmer saying that the protests this time were an attempt to damage Modi's popularity. The BJP's virulent and hyperactive social media warriors are churning out charges of similar kind. How does this help? What is even the point of all this?

There is no question that things must change in agriculture. No question that giving farmers free electricity and water may no longer be necessary. No question that the huge investment in subsidies should be diverted instead towards building proper infrastructure to enable farmers to earn more from their produce through access to wider markets. When this begins to happen, the old system of selling farm produce will change.

Meanwhile, it is important for all politicians to behave more responsibly and stop making reckless promises in the hope of getting more farmers' votes in the coming general election. These days all we hear are BJP politicians accusing Congress politicians of not having done enough when they were in power and Congress politicians saying that all rural distress is the fault of Modi. Taking potshots at each other in this way gets us nowhere.

May I add that it would be a good idea for future members of the Lok Sabha to spend more time in rural parts of their constituencies to see just how grim and brutal rural realities are. Much has changed in urban India since Modi became prime minister which is why all polls indicate that he will win a third term. Almost nothing has changed in the villages. If Modi wins that third term, he would do well to spend time improving the lot of those Indians who live in unsanitary villages where there is no access to basic necessities.

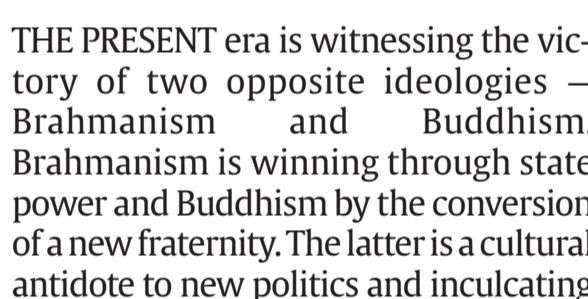
When he next tries to bring agricultural reforms, it would make a real difference if he allowed farmers to join the discussion, instead of relying on the opinions of experts who never spent a single night on a farm. My childhood memories of farm life are of flies, filth and long, hot nights spent battling swarms of mosquitoes. Rural life remains almost unchanged even today.

Why Rahul Gandhi's politics is that of the BSP

Dalitality

SURAJ YENGDE

Twitter: @Surajyengde



THE PRESENT era is witnessing the victory of two opposite ideologies — Brahmanism and Buddhism. Brahmanism is winning through state power and Buddhism by the conversion of a new fraternity. The latter is a cultural antidote to new politics and inculcating epochal habits for generations.

Currently, there are two national-level Dalit political parties in India — BSP and Congress. Their juxtaposition was unheard of historically, but they appear similar in clothing. Though each suspects the other and their wars are against similar issues, they differ in their methods.

Both have resorted to electoral participation to bring change. With these adjustments has come the impossibility of winning without alliances. The BSP has kept away from INDIA alliance thus far as it is not ready to work under the leadership of a volatile coalition. Besides, Mayawati is a senior leader with credentials unmatched by the other partners.

Both parties have Dalits in a position of leadership, but organisational portfolios of party structures are vastly different when it comes to Dalits in a position of power. This does not alter the quantity of representation in the Houses. The reserved seat formula applies across the board.

Indian politics, like social dynamics, were always rooted in caste affinities. So not until the Mandal Commission report did parties revolve their agenda around social justice. But BSP was the only one that successfully made caste a currency of organising.

Columnists still ask how Kanshi Ram or the BSP could work for anti-caste politics by doing caste-centric politics? They are blinded by intellectual resources at their disposal and misplace caste as an identity with the superstructure. Politics of identity does more harm than good. But those doing politics otherwise are working with categories that benefit their cabal. If not caste, they deploy class, edu-

history HEADLINE

HARISH DAMODARAN



IN LATE January 1959, a 13-member Ford Foundation-sponsored Agricultural Production Team from the US spent over two months in India, travelling to different states meeting people on the ground and "officers at all levels from Gram Sevak to Chief Minister". Their mission: To study India's food production problems.

The team — mainly comprising US Department of Agriculture officials and scientists from Cornell and the land-grant state universities of Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas and Maryland — submitted a report of its findings and proposals to Union Agriculture Minister Ajit Prasad Jain, in early-April.

That report, titled 'India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It', contained the germ of a policy idea much in the news now: Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops. The report listed three "specific assurances" to be given to cultivators:

(1) A guaranteed minimum price publicized in advance of the planting season. (2) A market that is ready to accept his crops at the floor price at the time he wants to sell. (3) Availability of this market within bullock-cart hauling distance.

Thankfully, Congress has found suitable lifesavers despite an impending ideological drought. These are the savant Dalit leaders currently at the helm of the new Congress.

Rahul Gandhi's mind has been shaped in recent years in the company of these few Dalit minds. Barring Kharge, the rest of them do not have a public face yet but they are shaping the party's direction, making it an Ambedkarite impulse with Buddhist ethics. Rahul's politics is BSP and his thoughts are Bahujan-waad. He may adorn the attire of the majority, but his sensibility is approachable. He is playing a historical role of riding on the moral victory.

Kharge still appears early years Republican in his gestures, when throwing audacious challenges to the government. The older cogs, who are in any way a burden to the new, refined, socially accountable India, cannot be useful to Congress. That is why the Congress has followed Kanshi Ram's steps in their recent take on caste census, demanding representation to SC, ST, and OBCs, and bringing caste onto their important political platforms. They have discarded the gods who are hitherto responsible for their current status.

Suraj Yengde, author of *Caste Matters*, curates *Dalitality*, and is currently at Oxford University

The report saw the guaranteed MSP as an "important incentive" for farmers to increase production: "The cultivator should be assured of a price which will enable him to invest in fertilizer, seed and new equipment knowing that, with average crop conditions, he can repay any debts with the added income that results from adoption of improved practices".

The report suggested the establishment of a "permanent agency" responsible for determining the guaranteed price. The latter would protect farmers against "the tendency for prices to be low immediately after harvest, which is the time when he must sell to meet his obligations". The floor price "should be announced to cultivators before sowing time and remain in effect for one full year". While the marketing of foodgrains may generally be left to private traders or cooperatives, "the Government should stand ready to buy at the minimum price any quantity offered for sale".

The team's report gathered dust. None of its key recommendations were acted upon till Chidambaram Subramanian took charge as Food and Agriculture Minister, on June 9, 1964, along with the PM Lal Bahadur Shastri. On August 1, 1964, Subramanian appointed a Foodgrains Prices Committee under L K Jha, Secretary to the PM, to determine the "producers' price" for paddy and wheat in the 1964-65 crop year. This price was understood as "a minimum price or a support price at which Government should undertake the responsibility for purchasing any quantities that may be offered at approved assembling points". In other words, the MSP; it was first announced for paddy on October 13, after the committee gave its report on September 24.

The Jha panel also submitted its views, separately on December 24, regarding constitution of an Agricultural Prices Commission (APC) in line with what the

The 'foreign hand' behind MSP for crops



M S Swaminathan (left) with C Subramaniam. Archive

Ford Foundation team envisaged. The APC, set up on January 1, 1965, was entrusted with the job to provide advice on price policy, "on a continuing basis", for not just paddy and wheat, but also coarse cereals, pulses, oilsseeds, sugarcane, cotton and jute.

The other major institution Subramanian helped create was the Food Corporation of India (FCI), through a law enacted on December 10, 1964. FCI, set up on January 14, 1965, was mandated to "undertake the purchase, storage, movement, transport, distribution and sale of foodgrains and other foodstuffs", while ensuring payment of MSP to farmers.

With MSP, APC, FCI and APMCs in place, the stage was set for the Green Revolution. The seeds for it came from another American "foreign hand", the Rockefeller Foundation. Norman Borlaug, who was with the foundation's Mexican Agriculture Program, had bred high-yielding semi-dwarf wheat varieties field-tested by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) during the 1963-64 rabi season. Encouraging trial results led M S Swaminathan, then head of IARI's Botany Division, to push for import of 18,250 tonnes of seeds of the Mexican wheat strains.

It was Subramanian who took the call to import. There was no choice really, with foodgrain production collapsing to 72.4 mt in 1965-66 and 74.2 mt in 1966-67 on the back of successive droughts. But MSPs, APC, FCI, APMCs — and high-yielding varieties — delivered. By 1970-71, India's foodgrain output had crossed 108.4 mt.

Subramanian fittingly was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1998, before Swaminathan finally in 2024. In 2020-21, Punjab and Haryana farmers agitated against the Centre's alleged undermining of APMCs. This time, they're on the streets demanding a "legal guarantee" for MSP.

Meanwhile, it is important for all politicians to behave more responsibly and stop making reckless promises in the hope of getting more farmers' votes in the coming general election. These days all we hear are BJP politicians accusing Congress politicians of not having done enough when they were in power and Congress politicians saying that all rural distress is the fault of Modi. Taking potshots at each other in this way gets us nowhere.

May I add that it would be a good idea for future members of the Lok Sabha to spend more time in rural parts of their constituencies to see just how grim and brutal rural realities are. Much has changed in urban India since Modi became prime minister which is why all polls indicate that he will win a third term. Almost nothing has changed in the villages. If Modi wins that third term, he would do well to spend time improving the lot of those Indians who live in unsanitary villages where there is no access to basic necessities.

When he next tries to bring agricultural reforms, it would make a real difference if he allowed farmers to join the discussion, instead of relying on the opinions of experts who never spent a single night on a farm. My childhood memories of farm life are of flies, filth and long, hot nights spent battling swarms of mosquitoes. Rural life remains almost unchanged even today.

A 'tacky' golden rose and a Valentine at 36

She SAID

DEEPIKA SINGH



AROUND 10 days ago, I got a notification on my phone announcing "Rose Day".

I opened the quick-commerce app to see if I could send flowers to my significant other 800 kms away.

"We have run out of fresh flowers," the app told me.

It gave me the option of a golden, artificial rose. I sought a second opinion from a friend.

"Is it tacky?"

"Yeah. Tacky but cute."

"Like me Works," I said and proceeded to send it over to my unsuspecting partner.

Teenagers, right? Except, we are not. I

am 36, he is 35

'Self serving for those with capital wanting to get AI regulated before startups have a say'

PERPLEXITY AI'S founder and CEO ARAVIND SRINIVAS, a rising star in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) startup ecosystem, believes that calls made by some of his contemporaries such as OpenAI's Sam Altman for AI regulation is fraught with problems—he calls it is "hypocritical" for a company flush with venture and corporate money calling the shots on regulation as it could run smaller start-ups like him out of the conversation. In an interview with SOUMYARENDRA BARIK and ANIL SASI, Srinivas also spoke about what may hamstring AI growth in India, the relationship between news publishers and AI companies going forward, and China's influence in the space, among other things. Edited excerpts:

How does Perplexity differentiate itself from competitors like OpenAI and Google Bard, and what do you think is the future of generative AI?

Fastest, most accurate and user friendly product. How we have achieved that is by crawling the web, pulling the relevant sources, only using the content from those sources to answer the question, and always telling the user where the answer came from through citations or references. The way we achieved the speed was through a lot of work on product and backend engineering as well as building our own custom inference infrastructure for LLM (large language model) models in partnership with Nvidia, who is an investment in us, and also crawling the web ourselves and building the search layer and infrastructure ourselves.

About the future of generative AI, you have to think about what are the current experiences that are already possible, and are going to become a lot more reliable.



We already have good copywriting tools, question answering tools, image generation tools, code generation tools, and all of these things are going to become a lot more reliable... In terms of what is not possible today, there are some clear examples – video generation for example.

We are not able to reliably generate a 10 second clip for a text description but I think that will definitely change this year. (*Days after the interview, OpenAI launched its Sora model which can generate minute long videos based on textual prompts.*)

We also do not have agents—which is basically AI that doesn't just answer questions for you, but actually goes out there and does tasks for you – filling up your forms, taxes, booking reservations etc.

A number of search engines tried to unsuccessfully challenge Google's dominance in Internet search by



WITH
ARAVIND
SRINIVAS
FOUNDER & CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
PERPLEXITY AI

essentially replicating the Google search model and failing as a result. Do you think with generative AI, where OpenAI has taken the lead, product differentiation is a possibility?

Google is a very interesting example, because they grew by paying for themselves to grow. They figured out this Adwords business model, which enabled them to revenue-share with a lot of people.

But this current scenario is different because it actually disrupts the old system, you do not need to look at the links anymore, for instance.

It is also very capital intensive, to train and serve these models at such high costs. You're creating a model where people are paying for the service and subscriptions are generally a lower margin and lower growth business than advertising... That is where I think all the AI companies, including OpenAI and us, are yet to figure

out a more profitable path to growth...

Web 2.0 companies like Google and Facebook were built on safe harbour protections. But with generative AI, do you think that immunity makes sense? In India we had an issue where Bard refused to summarise an article from a conservative outlet, but Google said it was not their viewpoint...

In the US, it is understood that those protections do not apply to AI generated content. So, you can actually sue Google or Facebook, if an AI that they own is saying anything incorrect, about any individual or any, any organisation, or hurts any section of the population.

In terms of the specific incident you mentioned, what do you expect from Google? They try to be very politically diplomatic, and try to lean on not hurting people at the cost of not giving the right information, even if there is an alternative viewpoint... An ideal AI would give you all kinds of viewpoints and it is up to a user to go read all of them. That, or the model can say that it does not want to answer a certain question. But it is not supposed to say that it's not a good thing to ask about certain things.

What are the advantages of a wrapper model versus those who are doing work on foundational training models? Are there concerns for you regarding potential business risk?

As a startup, your only job is to basically build a product and get some kind of user base. What the product market fit is can be argued, whether it's in terms of how many users you have, what is the revenue, or if you have a moat that nobody else can offer. If you build

a product that is being used by millions of people, you don't have much else to worry about. You don't have to build a model, or do the indexing, because even if you did but had no users, then what is the value of your model? This is something I've taken a lot of inspiration from Jeff Bezos here, which is, there was a point where people kept asking him about Amazon's moat given that they were using existing systems... As for Perplexity, whether we are a wrapper or we serve our own model, no user really cares. What they want is if it gets them good answers really fast and accurately.

News publishers are clearly unhappy about AI bots scraping their archives. Questions around intellectual property have been raised, and the New York Times has already sued OpenAI and Microsoft over it. Do you think the relationship between publishers and AI companies will get more adversarial from here, or is there scope for collaboration?

For us, it's not adversarial at all. We do not take the content from any publisher and train models on that data. We only build on top of existing models and APIs and try to offer a service where we are providing more high bandwidth access to the information on your medium to the end user.

But we also make them aware that the information is coming from you through citations to sources, so that the user is fully aware of where they are actually reading.

If there is a part of the answer that came from the *Indian Express*, they clearly are shown the logo and a link at the top, and they can click on it and just get there. We believe it's an even more efficient way to let the end user know what

you are writing on your site, versus just having it randomly ordered in a bunch of links, and having you worry about SEO targeting and AdWords.

But since mediums like Perplexity already show an upfront summary for a search query, don't you think that the click-through rates for news websites are going to fall down significantly?

Definitely, it's going to drop and I would be lying if I said otherwise. But what I am trying to say is that the click through on a platform like Perplexity where users already see a summary, is going to be a lot more higher intent. It should not be seen in the same way as click through on Google, because users have already seen a summary of what they want but despite that if they click through, it means they are impressed by your content. The value of that referral traffic is even higher.

On AI regulation, people like Sam Altman have called for a global consensus. But on the other hand, you have individuals like Meredith Whittaker (from Signal Foundation) who believe these calls are a facade to stall conversations around regulation. How do you view that dichotomy?

It is very premature to think of AI regulation today. It is very self serving for people with a lot of capital and compute infrastructure wanting to get AI regulated before startups that might want to have a say on how it should be regulated are able to get a seat at the table. It is sort of anti democratic, I would even say that, because you're not able to get everybody's voices heard.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

Banks to conduct periodic review of DRT advocates based on performance to fast-track cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

BANKS WILL conduct periodical review of the performance of empanelled advocates at debt recovery tribunals (DRTs) and rationalise the cases assigned to them based on performance, the finance ministry said on Saturday.

This is part of the issues discussed at a conference of Chairpersons of Debt Recovery Appellate Tribunals (DRATs) and Presiding Officers of Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs) chaired by Department of Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi. The meeting was also attended by senior officers from the public and private sectors banks; chief executive officer (CEO),

The meeting discussed that banks and financial institutions would reconcile cases which are pending in DRTs but have already been settled

Indian Bank Association (IBA); and senior officers from the Ministry of Finance and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

The conference also discussed that DRTs and DRATs would take all possible steps to reduce dependency at various stages through strict monitoring. Several suggestions regarding changes and

amendments in Debts Recovery Tribunal Regulations, SARFAESI Act and RDB Act discussed to make the process of recovery more efficient.

"Banks to conduct periodical review of the performance of empanelled advocates and rationalise the assignment of cases to the empanelled advocates taking into account their performance," a finance ministry statement said.

The meeting also discussed that banks and financial institutions would reconcile cases which are pending in DRTs and DRATs but have already been settled.

It was also discussed that banks would ensure presence of their officers at all the hearings of their respective cases before judicial forums, the statement added.

The projected 3.8 per cent growth is despite a 50 per cent slide in tech spending and 6 per cent decline in tech contracts in 2023 globally

Tech industry revenue to touch \$254 bn this fiscal'

The growth in the domestic revenue was primarily driven by government and enterprise spending, as per Nasscom report



The hiring moving towards jobs in AI, data, clouds, cyber security

The Engineering Research & Development (ERD) sector alone contributed 48 per cent to the total export revenue addition in FY24

Globally, nearly 6,50,000 employees are being trained on generative AI skills

INFY24

3.8%: Estimated growth of domestic tech industry in FY24

60,000: More jobs during the period

\$199 bn: Expected revenue excluding hardware

5.9%: Domestic revenue growth in FY24

\$244.6 bn: Tech industry revenue in FY23

"It was a growth year despite all the headwinds, the surprise here was that while export slowed down a bit we definitely saw a significant increase into domestic market including the business for tech services"

DEBJANI GHOSH

Nasscom President

Source: Nasscom/PTI

BRIEFLY

Pernod Ricard sales rise 4% in H1FY24

New Delhi: French spirit maker Pernod Ricard has reported a 4 per cent growth in sales in the Indian market during the first half of the current financial year. The company, which follows July to June fiscal year, has witnessed a "strong market demand for spirits" in India, according to the latest earnings statement from Pernod Ricard. PTI

Bandhan Bank authorised to collect revenues of West Bengal

New Delhi: Bandhan Bank on Saturday said that it has been authorised by the West Bengal government to collect tax and non-tax receipts on its behalf. The mandate will enable the bank to collect revenues through the Government Receipt Portal System (GRIPS). PTI

RBI's new FAQs: No top-up or transfer of money to Paytm Payments Bank after Mar 15

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 17

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI), while extending the deadline for restriction imposed on Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) till March 15, 2024, issued a detailed list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Friday for customers of the bank. While the RBI said customers can't transfer or deposit money into the PPBL accounts after March 15, they can use the money lying in PPBL accounts till it is exhausted.

Last month, the RBI had barred Paytm Payments Bank from accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer account, prepay instruments, wallets, FASTags and NCMC card after February 29, 2024 in the wake of persistent non-compliances and material.

Paytm Payments Bank Wallet
RBI clarified that said after March 15, 2024, wallet users of Paytm Payments Bank will not be able to top-up or transfer money into the wallet or receive any credits, other than cashbacks, or refunds into the wallet.

The refunds and cashbacks

Payments Bank

Customers having FastTag issued by PPBL will be able to continue to use the FASTag to pay toll upto the available balance. However, no further funding or top ups will be allowed in the FASTags issued by the bank after March 15.

Customers using FASTag issued by the bank will not be able to top-up and recharge the balance post March 15, 2024. They will have to procure a new FASTag issued by another bank before March 15, 2024 to avoid any inconvenience. The RBI said since the credit balance transfer feature is not available in the FASTag product, customers will have to close their old FASTag issued by the bank and request the bank for a refund.

Bank accounts with Paytm Payments Bank

Customers who are having savings or current account with PPBL, can continue to use, withdraw or transfer their funds from their account upto the available

balance in account after March 15. Similarly, they can use their debit card to withdraw or transfer funds upto the available balance in their account.

The bank's savings bank or current account customers will not be able to deposit money into their account with PPBL after March 15. "No credits or deposits other than interest, cashbacks, sweep-in from partner banks or refunds are allowed to be credited," the RBI said. The central bank said that refunds, cashbacks, sweep-in from partner banks or interest are permitted credits into your account even after March 15.

The existing deposits of PPBL customers maintained with partner banks can be brought back (sweep-in) to the accounts with PPBL, subject to the ceiling on balance prescribed for a payments bank, which is Rs 2 lakh per individual customer at the end of day.

Such sweep-ins for the purpose of making available the balances for use or withdrawal by the customer will continue to be allowed.

However, no fresh deposits with partner banks through PPBL will be allowed after March 15, the RBI said.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

India has great growth potential, will find another opportunity: Sony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

WITH THE proposed merger of its Indian arm with Zee terminated, Sony will seek various options, including finding another opportunity to replace the plan and organic growth opportunities in India, which has great potential in the long term, according to a top company official.

In an earnings call, Hiroki Totoki, president, COO & CFO of Sony said India is a very appealing market where it would continue to invest.

"India on a long term basis has a great growth potential. It's a very appealing market. Therefore, we will try to seek various opportunities and if we can find another opportunity that would replace this type of plan," Totoki said when asked about the company's strategy in India after the termination of the proposed merger.

On the investment which Sony had committed as part of the deal, he said: "Well, that investment is not going to change a capital allocation or it will not change our behaviour in our investment. So at the moment, we do not have any

CRUDE WATCH

OIL SETTLES UP

Oil prices settled higher on Friday as geopolitical tensions in the Middle East more than offset a forecast from the International Energy Agency for slowing demand. REUTERS

Dr Reddy's may join race to acquire Novartis' India arm

menced the strategic review that will include an assessment of its 70.68 per cent shareholding in Novartis India Limited, no decision has yet been taken regarding the eventual outcome."

According to the Swiss pharma giant, the exercise will have 'no impact' on Novartis Healthcare Private Limited, which is an entity separate from Novartis India.

The former conducts clinical trials at more than 300 sites in the country, and includes a corporate centre, a commercial organisation, and research and development (R&D) teams.

Last month, Novartis India vice-chairman and managing director Sanjay Murdeshwar announced his resignation with effect from April 2, 2024. In the three months ended December 31, 2023, Novartis India said, it posted a Rs 26-crore profit, compared to Rs 7.6 crore in the corresponding period last year. Total income stood at Rs 106 crore in the quarter under review, compared to Rs 88 crore last year, in the same period. FE

Once topseller, Alto no more in top 10

VIKRAM CHAUDHARY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

MARUTI'S ALTO, which was the largest selling car for 17 years, and the best-selling till 2019, had dropped from the top 10 best-selling cars list.

In 2023, Alto's sales dropped 21.77 per cent—from 162,548 units to 127,169 units (35,379 less Alto cars sold in 2023), and ranked 12th. The top 10 cars of the year were Maruti Suzuki Swift (203,469 units), Wagon R (201,301), Baleno (193,989), Brezza (170,588), Tata Nexus (170,311), Maruti Suzuki Dzire (157,522), Hyundai Creta (157,311), Tata Punch (150,182), Maruti Suzuki Eeco (136,010) and Etiga (129,968).

According to analysts, entry-level SUVs—whose sales grew from 758,762 units in FY22 to 1,002,864 in FY23—have eaten into sales of entry-level hatchbacks like the Alto. "With a spate of sub-4 metre

takes procurement of foodgrains at a minimum support price (MSP) to protect the interest of farmers

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Surekha, w/o Army No. 15679934A, Hav Venkataramana Uppatholla, Add-Vill & Post-Veerabhadrapuram, Dist-Prakasham State-Andhra-Pradesh-523336, changed my name to Surekha Uppatholla (DOB-22-Nov-1991) for all future purposes. 0040715010-4

I, Sumesh Singla S/o Arun Kumar Singla R/o A-218/219, Ground floor, Sector-16A, Rohini, Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Samar Singla. 0040715032-4

I, SWATI D/O KAMLESH PALIWAL, R/o, H-1002, SAVIOUR GREENARCH, TECHZONE-4, GREATER-NOIDA WEST, GAUTAMBUDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201318, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SWATI PALIWAL, FOR ALL PURPOSE 0040715031-5

I, SAHIBA SINGH, W/O GURPREET SINGH SACHDEVA, residing at 35/5, ASHOK-NAGAR TILAK-NAGAR, DELHI-110018, have changed my name to SAHIBA SINGH SACHDEVA, for all future purpose. 0040715069-1

I, SAEEDUR REHMAN, S/O ATU AR REHMAN, R/o-4933, GALI DARZIAN, BARA-HINDU RAO, DELHI-110006, Have changed my name to SAEED UR REHMAN, for all future purposes. 0040714975-4

I, Raj Rani W/o-Prakash Chander Gilotra R/o-2131, Outram Lines, GTB Nagar, Delhi-110009, have changed my name to Raj Rani Gilotra permanently. 0040714975-2

I, Mirza Sardaar Beg S/o Hanif Beg R/o D-263, Gali No-04, Noor Elahi, Delhi-110053, have changed my name to SARDAR BEG. Permanently. 0040715010-2

I, Rahul Ray, S/O Shri Jagdish Ray, R/o-1247A, Gali No.6, Laxman-Vihar, Phase-1, Near-Hanuman-Mandir, Gurugram, Haryana-122001, have changed the name of my minor son Reyanash Ray aged about 5-years and he shall hereafter be known as Riyaarth Rai. 0040714975-6

I, RAKHI SHARMA, W/O RAJ KUMAR SHARMA, R/o, B-6/131-132, FF, SECTOR-7, ROHINI, DELHI-85, after marriage have changed my name to RAKHI WAHI SHARMA, for all future purposes. 0040714975-3

I, Prabhakar Khosla, S/o, Rajendra Nath Khosla, R/o-A-701, Stellar Mi-City Homes, Sector-Omicron-III, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.-201310, inform that Prabhakar Bhushan Khosla and Prabhakar Khosla, both are same and one person i.e. Prabhakar Khosla. 0040715032-2

I, Parmita Sharma, mother of Avinash Sharma, presently residing at Village-Gajay Singh Pur, Nagbani, Jammu State-Jammu and Kashmir, Pin-181206, have changed my name from Parmita Sharma to Pritama Sharma, vide-Affidavit, dated at New-Delhi. 0040715031-10

I, Narendra, S/o Ram Niwas, R/o-H.No-43, Ward-No.-29, Near Shiv Mandir Silokhna, Gurgaon (Haryana)-122001, have changed my name to Narendra Sharma. 0040715031-7

I, Mukesh Ranjan S/o Sushil Prakash R/o HN.136-D, AG-1, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Mukesh Shrivastav. 0040715010-1

I, MOHAMMED TARIQ KHAN, S/o AAMIN KHAN, R/o-B-1st/558, MANDANGIR, NEW DELHI-110062, have changed my name to MODH. ARIF KHAN, for all purposes. 0040714975-9

I, Keshwa Nand, S/o Shri Brij Mohan, R/o-House No.102, Mohalla Jogi, Chandhat, Chant, Palwal, Haryana-121102, have changed my name from Vijay Ram to Keshwa Nand for all purposes. 0040715032-1

I, Harvinder Singh, S/o Surinder Pal Singh Bhullar, R/o-163, Pocket-9, Sector-21, Rohini, Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Harvinder Singh Bhullar. 0040715031-4

I, Baljinder Kaur, W/o Surinder Pal Singh Bhullar, R/o-163, Pocket-9, Sector-21, Rohini, Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Baljinder Kaur Bhullar. 0040715031-3

I, BENHUR RAYMOND, S/o SAMPHOR RAYMOND, R/o, FLAT-N-1019, TOWER VERONA, MAHAGUN MANSION-1 INDIRAPURAM, GHAZIABAD, UP-201014, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO BENHUR SAMPHOR RAYMOND, FOR ALL, FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040715010-5

I, JUNED KHAN S/o SHRI ELIYAS KHAN R/o E-12/104, HAUZ KALAN-SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110017, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME JUNED TO JUNED KHAN FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040714858-2

I, Anushta W/o Shubhankar Singh R/o-142, 3rd-Floor Chanderlok, Enclave Pitampura, Delhi-110034, have changed my name to Anushta Singh. 0040715010-6

I, Abdul Rashid, S/o Mohammad Habib, Resident of Vill-Gangev, PO-Jaisinghpur, Tehsil-Jaisinghpur, District-Sultapur (UP), have changed my name from Abdul Rashid to Abdul Rashid Sheikh, S/o Late, Mohammad Habib Sheikh, for all future purposes. 0040714975-8

I, TANKIM SHARMA, S/o PRAMODKUMAR SHARMA, R/o, FLAT-23138, 23TH FLOOR, TOVER-10, MAHAGUN MYWOODS, SECTOR-16C, GREATER NOIDA WEST, GAUTAMBUDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201318 changed my name to ANKIM PRAMODKUMAR SHARMA. 0040715031-6

I, Surinder Pal Singh, S/o Amar Singh, R/o-163, Pocket-9, Sector-21, Rohini, Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Surinder Pal Singh Bhullar. 0040715031-1

I, Sushma Kumari, wife of, Surinder Kumar, R/o-2441, Hudson Lane, Kingsway Camp, Delhi 110009, have changed my name from Sushma Kumari to Sushma Kumar, for all purposes. 0040714975-5

I, hitherto known as DEEPU KUMAR, S/o DAULAT RAM, R/o-27, Sardar Patel-marg, Chanakya-puri, NDML south-west, delhi-110021, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as DEEPAK DEV Singh. 0040714975-7

I, It is for general information that I, Mitali Tyagi, D/o, Rajendra Prasad Tyagi, R/o-Flat No.703, GH-27, Celestial Comfort Condominium, Sect.4, Vaishali Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, U.P. 201010, declare that the name of my father and my mother has been wrongly-written as Rajinder Tyagi and Sudesh in my Birth-Certificate No. 190537. The actual name of my father and my mother are Rajendra Prasad Tyagi and Sudesh Tyagi respectively, which may be amended accordingly. 0040715031-8

I, Usha Sharma w/o Anand Bhardwaj r/o B-94, Rajendra Park, Gurgaon-122001 have changed my name to Usha Bhardwaj. 0040714961-2

I, Prakash Chander S/o Sohan Lal R/o-2131, Outram Lines, GTB Nagar, Delhi-110009, have changed my name to Prakash Chander Gilotra permanently. 0040714975-1

I, Abhishek Chhetri S/o Anand Kumar Chhetri R/o Pabitra Nagar Colony Raod, Champasari, Champasari, Darjeeling, Champasari, West Bengal-734003, have changed my name to Om Chhetri. 0070889481-1

I, Aditi Paranjape W/o Shri Prateek Sinha R/o 1055, Sector-46, Gurugram, Haryana-122003, Have changed my name to Aditi Sinha for all future purposes. 0070889783-1

I, Durga Prasad S/o Pali Ram, R/o- B-257 Chattarpur Enclave, Phase 2 New Delhi 110074 have changed my name to Durga Prasad Sharma. 0070889722-1

I, Anand Sharma s/o Babu Lal Sharma r/o B-94, Rajendra Park, Gurgaon-122001 have changed my name to Anand Bhardwaj. 0040714961-1

I, Deepak Dwivedi S/o Ram Pyare Dwivedi R/o B- 409, Dwarika Greens, Opp. Civil Hospital, Roopkee, Haridwar, Uttarakhand-247667, have changed my minor daughter's name from Kalash aged 12 years to Disha Dwivedi forever. 0070889785-1

I, Usha Sharma w/o Anand Bhardwaj r/o B-94, Rajendra Park, Gurgaon-122001 have changed my minor daughter's name from Kalash aged 12 years to Disha Dwivedi forever. 0070889785-1

I, Sarita D/o Monga Singh and W/o Subhash Nalewal R/o D-5, DLF Phase-1, Sikandarpur Ghosi, Gurgaon, Haryana-122002, have changed my name to Murti Devi. 0070889788-1

I, Shiva Dutt Saravagi S/o B.L. Saravagi R/o Flat No.1105, Tower-J, Ajnara Le Garden, Sector-16B, Greater Noida West, UP-201318 have changed my name to SHIV DATT SARAVAGI for all future purposes. 0070889769-1

I, Sheetal Solanki w/o Gaurav Solanki R/o Flat No-1456 Magnolia Tower, Gauri Saundaryam Techzone-4 Greater Noida West, G.B.Nagar, UP-201306, has changed my name from Sheetal Solanki to AARTI SOLANKI for all future purposes. 0070889770-1

I, Shalini Makkar alias Shalini Girdhar D/o Sudesh Kumar Girdhar W/o Dinesh Kumar R/o Flat No-213, The Nuovo Engineers India CGHS, Plot No-25, Sec-10 Dwarka, Delhi-110075, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Shalini Girdhar. 0070889194-2

I, Satinder Kaur, W/o Harvinder Singh Bhullar, R/o-163, Pocket-9, Sector-21, Rohini Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Satinder Kaur Bhullar. 0040715031-3

I, S Mandeep Singh S/o Balbir Singh R/o D-307, Rampuraha Colony, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011, have changed my name to Mandeep Singh. 0050236083-1

I, Nishi Sharma D/o Shri Om Prakash Sharma R/o M-34, Street No.1, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052, have changed my name to Afrah Noor for all purposes. 0040714998-1

I, Sowmia Vohra Alias Sonia Vohra D/o Baldev Raj Vohra and W/o Vijay Kumar Jaggi R/o A-283, New Friends Colony, Okhla, Delhi-110025, have changed my name to Sonia Jaggi. 0070889724-1

I, JUNED KHAN S/o SHRI ELIYAS KHAN R/o E-12/104, HAUZ KALAN-SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110017, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME JUNED TO JUNED KHAN FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0040714858-2

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Sd/- Secretary, APSCER : Itanagar

ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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Tel : 0360-2297642, Fax : 0360-2291643,

E-mail : apserc-arm@gov.in, website : www.apserc.nic.in

No. APSCER/RA/14/I/2023-24/546

Dated Itanagar, the 16th February 2024

Arunachal Pradesh State Electricity Regulatory Commission (APSCER) intends to appoint Consultants on contract basis. Candidates interested in applying for the post(s) are requested to refer to the detailed advertisement available on the website of APSCER : www.apserc.nic.in. The last date of receipt of applications is 08/03/ 2024



एच.पी.स्टेट इलेक्ट्रिसिटी रेजिलरी कॉमीटी शिमला-171009 (दिवाल प्रदेश सरकार का एक उपकरण) पंजीकृत कार्यालय द्वारा दिवाली शिमला-171009

(एच.पी.स्टेट इलेक्ट्रिसिटी रेजिलरी कॉमीटी शिमला-171009)

एच.पी.स्टेट इलेक्ट्रिसिटी रेजिलरी कॉमीटी शिमला-171009 में रिपोर्ट पांचवाहन कार्यालय के लिए ई.ची.डी.पी.इ. थैलों की खाली है तथा 2024-25 के लिए ई-निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। विस्तृत निविदा सुचना तथा सम्पूर्ण निविदा दस्तावेज वाले ई-प्राविष्ठ उन निविदाओं के लिए जारी हैं। अब तक उन सम्पूर्ण उपस्थिति रहना चाहते हैं। अब उक्त तिथि को किन्हीं कारणों से सार्वजनिक अवकाश घोषित हो जाता है, तो अगले कार्य दिवस में उक्त समय-सारांशों अनुसार निविदाएँ खोली जाएंगी।

प्रबन्ध निदेशक

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Kapil @ Jatin S/o Nahar Singh R/o D-393, Raghbir Nagar, PS Khayala, Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 40/2021 Dated 29.07.2021 U/s 379/411/34 IPC & 147/179 IR Act, PS New Delhi Railway Station and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Kapil @ Jatin can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Kapil @ Jatin has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Kapil @ Jatin of FIR No. 40/2021 Dated 29.07.2021 U/s 379/411/34 IPC & 147/179 IR Act, PS New Delhi Railway Station is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 18.03.2024.

By Order

Sh. Anuj Kumar Singh

Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate-02

Room No. 296A, 2nd Floor,

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

केंद्रीय विद्यालय सी. सु. बल बांदीपुर, जम्मू एवं कश्मीर Kendriya Vidyalaya B.S.F. Bandipur Phone & Fax: 01957-225540-41

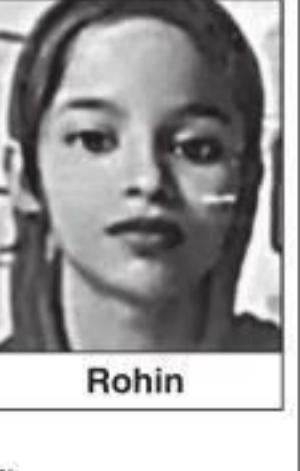
सत्र-2024-25 तेजु अनुबंध पर निवार अध्ययन विभाग पर तात्पुरता आवाहन करने के लिए जारी है। अब तक उन निविदाओं के पैनल तैयार करने के लिए जारी है। इन निविदाओं के पैनल तैयार करने के लिए जारी है।

विस्तृत निविदा सुचना तथा सम्पूर्ण निविदा दस्तावेज वाले ई-प्राविष्ठ उन निविदाओं के पैनल तैयार करने के लिए जारी है।

प्रबन्ध निदेशक

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Rohin, D/o Satar Ali, R/o F-327, Gali no. 4, near Gumbad, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi, is missing since 25.01.2024 at 08:30 PM from her house. In this regard a missing vide FIR No. 121, dated 26.01.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Anand Parbat, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far.



Rohin

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Bazball crashes and burns

From a position from where they could dictate terms, Stokes' men try to go too hard, resulting in potentially series-deciding collapse

SIRRAM VEERA
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 17

IT'S ADMIRABLE that Bazball hasn't had more days like the third day in Rajkot. When they go overboard with their intent, dim their game awareness, and waste a great opportunity to seize an unshakable grip on the match. Joe Root reverse-lapped Jasprit Bumrah to slip, while Ben Stokes slog-swept to long-on and handed the initiative back to a Ashwin-less India. Instead of a handy lead, they were shot out for 319 in their first innings to trail by 126 before India extended the lead to 322 by stumps.

During the chase in Vizag, too, England had overcooked, with Root falling for an unadulterated slog and Ollie Pope more than keen to listen to his attacking urges - but the English camp can offer understandable rationale for it.

The ball was turning on a bruised pitch, and they might have felt all-out attack was the way to go. Here, though, if they had played a session at their regular pace - which is already frenetic enough - they could have had India pulling out their hair without Ashwin to turn to.

Since these implosions haven't happened frequently and their success rate is stellar, not much hand-wringing will occur, understandably. It will be left to Geoffrey Boycotts of the world to sigh and rant, but the rest of the English cricket ecosystem, their fans in particular, clearly love the new approach too much to sigh at odd slips-ups. However, this Saturday afternoon can cost them the series, if India step up with their bowling in the chase.

Root's record against Bumrah isn't flash (dismissed eight times before the game), and the Day 3 track was perfect for a crackling return to form. But he opted for the reverse-lap on a pitch that didn't have much bounce and had begun to play slow and keep a touch low on occasions. It still needed sharp reflexes to grab the chance and Yashasvi Jaiswal did so on second attempt at second slip.

Root's wicket brought on another almost immediately as Jonny Bairstow continued his barren run this series, unable to bring his bat remotely close to the line of a rippling leg-break from Kuldeep Yadav that trapped him in front to leave England at 225 for 4.

The big blow came at 260 when Ben Duckett reached out to a wide long hop outside off from Yadav to carve it to a delighted Gill at cover. Yadav was cock-a-hoop and would go on to finish his pre-lunch spell that read 12-1-35-2.

England recovered to reach 299 with five wickets intact with a 39-run partnership brewing between Stokes and Ben Foakes, but Ravindra Jadeja intervened with a bit of help from England's captain.

Bumrah was stationed half-way to the boundary at long-on and Jadeja was on from round the stumps. Cleverly, though, he kept changing his angles and lengths, and though Stokes thought the slog-sweep to wide long-on was on, Jadeja had slid that ball further outside off. And so Stokes found himself with too much to do to drag the ball back from that angle, and ended up slicing it to Bumrah.

Learning from the opposition

Root not only had Stokes-like fields on occasions but also guided his bowlers. Mohammed Siraj wasn't on song in the first session, and Rohit had a lengthy chat with him and posted a specific field for him - two short midwickets and a square-leg. It seemed to give Siraj direction and purpose and he began to use the shiny side of the seam to start tailing the ball in.

SCORECARD

INDIA vs ENGLAND

NIRANJAN SHAH STADIUM, RAJKOT

Toss: India, chose to bat

INDIA 1ST INNINGS: 445

ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS (O/N) 207-2

B Duckett c Gill b Kuldeep 153 (151b, 23x4, 2x6)

J Root c Jaiswal b Bumrah 18 (31b, 2x4)

J Bairstow lbw b Kuldeep 0 (4b)

B Stokes c Bumrah b Jadeja 41 (89b, 6x4)

B Foakes c Sharma b Siraj 13 (37b, 2x4)

R Ahmed c Siraj 6 (13b, 1x4)

T Hartley st Jadeja b Jadeja 9 (17b, 2x4)

M Wood not out 4 (3b, 1x4)

J Anderson c Siraj 1 (3b)

■ Extras (b, lb, 4, pen 5) 20

■ Total (71.1 overs) 319

■ FoW: 3-224 (Joe Root, 39.5ov), 4-225 (Jonny Bairstow, 40.4ov), 5-260 (Ben Duckett, 50.1ov), 6-299 (Ben Stokes, 64.6ov), 7-299 (Ben Foakes, 65.1ov), 8-314 (Rehan Ahmed, 69.5ov), 9-314 (Tom Hartley, 70.2ov), 10-319 (James Anderson, 71.1ov)

■ Bowling

Jasprit Bumrah 15-1-54-1, Mohammed Siraj 21.1-2-84-4, Kuldeep Yadav 18-2-77-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 7-0-37-1, Ravindra Jadeja 10-0-51-2

INDIA 2ND INNINGS

Y Jaiswal (retired hurt) 104 (133b, 9x4, 5x6)

R Sharma lbw b Root 19 (24b, 3x4)

S Gill batting 65 (120b, 6x4, 2x6)

R Patidar c Ahmed b Hartley 0 (10b)

K Yadav batting 3 (15b)

■ Extras (lb 5) 5

■ Total (51 overs) 196-2

■ FoW: 1-30 (Rohit Sharma, 11.3ov), 1-185* (Yashasvi Jaiswal, retired hurt), 2-191 (Rajat Patidar, 47.4ov)

■ Bowling: James Anderson 6-1-32-0, Joe Root 14-2-48-1, Tom Hartley 15-2-42-1, Mark Wood 8-0-38-0, Rehan Ahmed 8-0-31-0

Post lunch, he struck gold, taking out Foakes with a ball that shaped in and perhaps stopped a touch on the batsman, who check-pushed it to mid-on. Siraj then produced a yorker to nail the off-stump of Rehan Ahmed before finishing the innings by bowling James Anderson.

Though India lost Rohit Sharma relatively early, failing to connect with a sweep and trapped LBW by Root, Jaiswal, who had started slowly, erupted midway in the final session to swell India's lead. Giving him company, sedately for the most part, was Shubman Gill. The pressure on him is known. The pressure isn't just due to lack of runs

as his fans can point to his hundred at Vizag, but the manner of his dismissals - the iffy and slow weight transfer forward - have pointed to an uncorrected flaw. He let Jaiswal lead the way, followed his initial defensive approach and with the track offering slow turn, wasn't tested as much.

There were moments against Anderson and Mark Wood, with the ball tailing in with the shiny side, when Gill looked a touch out of his comfort zone, but nothing startling to fuss about as he showed near the end of the day, pulling and driving Wood for a six and a four.

There was a moment of concern though as Rajat Patidar found yet another bizarre way to get out, again checking his shot and this time, dragging a short ball from Tom Hartley to midwicket. He stood there dazed, perhaps at the realisation that his international career is alarmingly going pear-shaped through a combination of soft and bizarre dismissals.

India won't fuss too much about the state of the game, but as they would have learned from England, one bad session can open the door for the opposition.



Indian players celebrate the crucial wicket of England skipper Ben Stokes (right) in Rajkot on Saturday. Sportzpics/BCCI

Root's troubles against Bumrah, Cummins show he can't be 'great'

SIRRAM VEERA
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 17

AGAINST TWO of the best fast bowlers of his era, Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins, Joe Root has been poor. Cummins has seen him off 11 times for an average of 26, Bumrah 9 times for 28.2, and it raises the question - can Root be considered a great in the true sense of the word? One of the best among his contemporaries, certainly, but greatness requires something more than that.

This isn't just about his dismissals in the Vizag chase and in Rajkot but over and beyond that. He did throw his wicket on the third morning, opening the door for Ashwin-less India by reverse-lapping Bumrah to second slip where Yashasvi Jaiswal hung on to a sharp chance. For a batsman and former captain with game awareness, it wasn't ideal. In the chase at Vizag, he had turned almost manic, scything and swishing and fell to a slog off Ashwin. That turned the game, along with Ben Stokes's brain fade of a run out. Now potentially, this dismissal can do the same in Rajkot. And Kuldeep Yadav gatecrashed in to take out Jonny Bairstow with a ripper to trap him lbw and England were on the wobble.

Root had once spoken about how there is an inner battle inside him between the dogged Yorkshireman and the captain's voice in his ears to 'go be a superstar'. He has been going over the boil here trying to be superstar. The course-correction is perhaps not so difficult to do, but greater questions persist over his entry into the all-time-great club.

It's not these two dismissals in the series that has encouraged the fastidious bouncers of that greatness club to stop him at the gate, but his struggles against Cummins and Bumrah.

Cummins has repeatedly targeted him around the off stump, and harassed him by getting the ball to straighten to take out the off stump & the outside edge or cut in to trap him lbw. Couple of times, he has surprised him with bouncers that have been jabbed to the slip or pulled weakly to square-leg.

One can suss out that Cummins makes Root, the batsman who uses the crease gener-



Joe Root's troubles against Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins has been a continuing affair. PTI

ROOT'S WOES

vs Bumrah

506 balls, 254 runs, 9 dismissals, 28.2 average

vs Cummins

536 balls, 286 runs, 11 dismissals, 26.0 average

Bumrah did the early Cummins trick of the nip-backer and Root stumbled across a touch as he tried to work it to the on side and missed. Trapped lbw. In the first innings of the second Test, Bumrah worked him over the off stump line, making him worry about the nip-backer, and getting him with a straightener outside off.

Watching it unfold was former England captain Alastair Cook. "At Hyderabad, he was playing across the line and got LBW. Early on he saw an in-swinger and played a beautiful straight bat, so he's trying to do it. But what he does do, you're looking to play the ball all the time," he told TNT Sports.

"Bumrah has realised that and dragged him wider. So you're trying to cover that but it brings another dismissal into play, so he's got him out both ways now. Now Root's in that horrible position that the bowler has got the wood over you, so how are you going to counter it?"

He has seemingly tried to counter it by pulling out the reverse lap and has succumbed.

But it's not this shot that would stop him at the gates of greatness, but all those previous dismissals against Bumrah and Cummins. This lap-shot dismissal though has opened up the third Test and put England on the backfoot.

Virat Kohli has had troubles against James Anderson but he recovered from the depths of the 2014 series. Kane Williamson too has been taken out by Anderson 9 times. But Root's troubles against two best bowlers of his time has been a continuing affair and especially the mode of dismissals where he begins to look like an imposter is at another level. And worrying. The gates of the greatness club are closing shut as of now.

YARRAJI REWRITES OWN NR

Tehran: Rising Indian sprinter Jyothi Yarraji marginally bettered her own national record by clocking 8.12s in the women's 60m hurdles to win gold medal at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships, here Saturday. PTI

Jaiswal shows he can be a dour opener, but also tear an attack

SIRRAM VEERA
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 17

THERE ARE two Yashasvi Jaiswals cohabiting harmoniously in the young Indian opener. Until that moment when he decided he had enough of poking around and exploded against James Anderson, Jaiswal - the classical Test batsman - was on show. Of all the youngsters in the Indian team, he has the most compact defensive routine.

And yet, when the mood seizes him, Jaiswal can transform into a T20 beast. But what he has impressively done is mix the two. Even as he defends compactly, his bat-flow is worth watching when he attacks the ball. He goes all-in. The third day's play saw the two Jaiswals inhabiting separate phases.

Something snapped in Jaiswal around the time Anderson twirled around to scream off an LBW appeal against a tentative Shubman Gill. Anderson had started to move the ball. Gill was caught on the crease, trying to nudge the ball, but replays showed the ball was just missing leg-stump.

Stokes moved in for the kill next ball to Jaiswal. A short straight mid-off, a short straight mid-on, a short mid-on, a short midwicket straighter than usual and a regular short midwicket swooped in, plus a square-leg. Just one wicket slip.

From round the stumps, Anderson tried to surprise Jaiswal with a short ball; it was thrown back from beyond the square-leg boundary. A short-of-length ball on the stumps arrived and Jaiswal went for an almighty heave and the top edge sailed to the third man boundary. More chatter from the fielders ensued but the next ball, another shortish one, was pulled for a four.

Next over, Jaiswal hit a full toss from Tom Hartley over long-on and rushed down the track to repeat the punishment next ball. In a Rajkot minute, Jaiswal had begun to pile on Bazzball against England.

When Rehan Ahmed came to bowl, Jaiswal pounced to ping stands behind long-on, and targeted the square boundary with a reverse-pull and a reverse-sweep. When Joe Root erred in length, Jaiswal took it on the full and smashed it for a six.

Suddenly, after that manic phase, he was into his 90s when the only period where there seemed to be a battle between his intent and execution arrived. Mark Wood went with a bumper barrage and Jaiswal first tried to sell him a dummy by acting as if he was moving to leg but sliding back to position. Wood kept his poise and fired it at his throat and Jaiswal hopped to keep it down. Two more bouncers were kept out before he backed away for real outside leg and weakly cut to point.

But he seemed to settle a touch next over, defending Root, before slapping a shortish ball from Wood to the cover point boundary. He leapt as he reached the other end.

On 103, his back began to seize up and he slowly sank at the non-striker's end after calling for medical attention. As he lay on his tummy, the physio worked vigorously on the lower back and stretched his left leg. Next over, he seemed to settle a touch next over, and the course-correction was evident.

But there was time for one final charming moment: Stokes would intervene and high-five Jaiswal, a better compliment to his knock can't be thought of.



Yashasvi Jaiswal hit 5 sixes and 9 boundaries en route his 133-ball 104.

QUALITY BREAK

Post family time and home-cooked meals, Kishan's comeback is on

PRATYUSH RAJ
FEBRUARY 17

IN THE company of his loved ones, Ishan Kishan is eyeing a comeback to competitive cricket after a gap of two months. For the past six weeks, the wicketkeeper-batsman has been training in Vadodara at the Reliance Cricket Stadium alongside Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya.

His non-selection in the recent Afghanistan series and the five-match Test against England had raised eyebrows but those close to the player feel that the break allowed him to spend time with his family and has helped him to get over mental fatigue that came with the constant travel and ICC ODI World Cup heartbreak.

The Indian Express understands that apart from training and working on his batting technique - the reason given to him by the team management for picking KL Rahul ahead of him in the Test series in South Africa - the 25-year-old is also living with



Ishan Kishan with his mother Suchitra Singh and nephew, Viraj.

any questions. He tried to push his body and brain but mental fatigue caught up with him and it was only then that he requested a break."

Missing Ranji Trophy

Ishan Kishan's absence from the Ranji Trophy has seen questions arise on the cricketer prioritising the Indian Premier League (IPL) over domestic matches. As reported by this newspaper on Saturday, BCCI secretary Jay Shah has warned top cricketers that domestic cricket remains a "critical yardstick for selection" to the national team and non-participation in it will have "severe implications".

However, those close to the player feel the secretary's warning is not directed towards Ishan. "Ishan has always given priority to the Ranji

BADMINTON ASIA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

The land of rising daughters

Indian youngsters rally after Sindhu's defeat to produce a fabulous semifinal victory against Japan

SHIVANI NAIK
FEBRUARY 17

Inevitably, Japan knows first that the sun has risen. It shot up on the horizon for World No 6 Chiharu Shida and Nami Matsuyama, in the form of Treesa Jolly leaping high as if for a smash and sending a glowing soft drop instead, to set up India's 3-2 win for a historic maiden entry into the Badminton Asian Team Championships final. She rose from behind a resolute Gayatri Gopichand who was running rings around the top Japanese pair with her stellar placement of the shuttle from the front.

Then, former World champion Nozomi Okuhara was left shielding her eyes when the bright spark of Ashmita Chaliha and clean rays of her left-handed smashes dispersed on either flanks of the court, in Shah Alam, Malaysia.

India's original star PV Sindhu might have had a rough day losing the opening singles. But in Anmol Kharb, ranked No 478, the Indian team challenge had a blazing comet's tail that swept past World No 29 Natsuki Nidaira in the fifth rubber. You'd have to be quite foolish to declare a sunset on Sindhu's career, but the Japanese team will be the first to aver that India's brilliantly chaotic badminton system is on the verge of lighting up a sky full of exploding shooting stars.

The semifinals day had started with dread. On Friday against the Japanese men, Srikanth Kidambi was left with ghostly pallor after former great Kenton Momota resurrected a decider set from 12-19 down to win 22-20, and India were pipped 3-2. Then early morning, Sindhu just didn't get started against Aya Ohori whom she's beaten 13 successive times. By the time the Indian talisman shrugged off her listlessness and found her range with 9 straight points going from 10-19 to 20-20, it was wretchedly late to bag her 14th. India were 0-1 down.

Japan were in Malaysia with two doubles pairs in the world's top 11, making Sindhu's match crucial to eke out that one point. In a move that raised eyebrows, Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly were promoted to play first singles against Matsuyama-Shida, ahead of Ashwini Ponnappa-Tanisha Crasto. Sindhu was to play doubles in a tactical ploy.

It was a tricky faceoff even without the persistent refrain that the young Indian partnership should be torn up, and Treesa paired up with Tanisha. The comments section on the YouTube stream for the match was full of it, even post their 21-17, 16-21, 22-20 stunning win. Because allegedly, Gayatri's smashes lack the sting. A Japanese women's doubles pairing is a perfect specimen to explain that international women's doubles is seldom-to-never about slam bang smashing. Rallies go on forever, defenses are gobsmackingly patient and world-class on the circuit. Hardest smashes simply get retrieved, ask Ashwini Ponnappa who once held the record.

And as Treesa proved at 21-20, a soft drop to the empty front court after getting opponents scuttled and on same side, works far better to clinch winners, than the seven prior whacks she fiercely sent down. You need a partner to dupe opponents into bunching up on the same side using every inch of the court with smart placements, and create those gaps - a thankless job. It's where Gayatri's excellent net interception and puppeteer skills come into



Gayatri Gopichand (left) and Treesa Jolly got the better of World No. 6 Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida 21-17, 16-21, 22-20.

Badminton Asia

play. The undimming star however was Treesa, perhaps the day's best performer. The Japanese attacked her relentlessly hoping to draw out blood-rush mistakes out of her, but she just never ceased to mix it up, lacing her attack with the clever lifts and drops. The Indians led 19-13, then both logged in errors into the net. Then both recovered to play the decisive points like pros. In the final rally of 33 shots, Gayatri sent one flat and so close to the net that Matsuyama couldn't evade without flinging out.

Chaliha played the biggest name from the Japanese side. But she was so confident in exploring the expanse of the court and exploiting Okuhara's limited reach on either side that the former world champion stood no chance. Chaliha ran her ragged, driving in the knife with low retrieves to the flanks. Her cross smashes hit the ground like thunder as she won 21-17, 21-14. Chaliha doesn't have a particularly proficient net game, but her back-court deep hitting proved enough.

Ashwini-Sindhu playing second doubles, couldn't make a dent, though not from want of trying. Then it was on 17 year old Kharb's shoulders to show India the dream of an upset against Nidaira. Kharb made the Japanese scurry to all four corners as she won 21-14, 21-18. Two junctures stood out in her un hurried, meticulous gathering of points, 11-9 and 17-15 in the second. The youngster struck Nidaira along the two forehand corners, like a harp, and suddenly snapped it to the opposite back-hand corner. Next she pinned her to the back, and lulled her into a pattern before 'aw-snap!' -ing her to the front.

It was a calm accumulation of points, using variations and mostly consistency without trying anything fancy. After the power-bulldozing of Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu, Anmol Kharb comes along with a merry chirpy unfussed temperament and reasonably reliable strokes. There's nothing particularly dazzling, but just the reassurance that the sun will rise everyday. It's what Indian badminton needed.

The Japanese didn't know what hit them, just that the Indian sun was up. And there were smiles and cheerful chants all around.

Best I have seen Ashmita play, Anmol a livewire talent: Gopichand

SHIVANI NAIK
FEBRUARY 17

INDIAN WOMEN defied all expectations - or lack thereof - to shock Japan 3-2 and make the finals of the Badminton Asia Team Championships. National coach **Pullela Gopichand** (in pic) couldn't help grinning and grinning away when the result finally tilted India's way. He reckons Thailand won't have it easy against the Indians in the final.

EXCERPTS:

What do you make of the Treesa-Gayatri win?

The Japanese were higher ranked, and these two Indians had lost to them earlier, so it was a big match to win. They could've closed it out at 21-15, 21-16 in the third set. But the nature of the event is there's always little nerves. I'm glad they recomposed themselves and got the win.

Were you wary of the backlash after putting Treesa-Gayatri ahead of Tanisha-Ashwini for first doubles?

No, Tanisha was injured. In hindsight it seems like it was the better way. We wanted to put our best foot forward. Momentum is important in team events, and our best available pairing in Tanisha's absence had to play within the first three matches. If Tanisha is ready to play against Thailand, both doubles pairs will play on Sunday.

What do you make of Sindhu's performance? Also how tough was it on Ashwini?

After their doubles match, my only complaint was that they didn't have fun on

Was there additional pressure at 0-1 down?

Look, each of our players, be it Sindhu, Prannoy, Srikanth, Lakshya, Satwik-Chirag are all trying to do their best. And irrespective of the eventual result, everyone is focussed on winning their match. It's good to keep a simple, personal goal of winning your match. That applied to Treesa-Gayatri. What's important was there was good energy in the team for both men and women. It's good to know everyone is rooting for you.

How do you rate Ashmita's win against Okuhara?

I haven't seen Ashmita play this well since forever. You realize why everyone tells you there's immense potential. It was the first time when I was sitting for her back-to-back matches, and I've figured out her psyche. You just need to sit there with a stick all the time in her case and keep telling her to not get carried away. And that you don't need to be fantastic and brilliant all the time, even if you have the strokes. She just needs to be disciplined. And stick around, and she'll be brilliant. She tends to be very patchy. But I was on her case all the time, and very happy to see her perform.

What do you make of Sindhu's performance? Also how tough was it on Ashwini?

After their doubles match, my only complaint was that they didn't have fun on

court. They were both trying a lot. But we weren't exactly expecting them to pull out a miracle. Women's doubles has become very specific and specialised, and it would be wrong to expect a scratch pair to beat a top Japanese combine. I only wish they had fun. It was more like, if there's a chance, then go in. Both will do well in the final I'm sure. Not too fussed about the loss.

Your first impressions of Anmol?

Oh, she was fantastic. I was hoping someone would lose, so we could watch her play a toughie against China. She's just a breath of fresh air, so innocent and fearless and naturally clever on the court. She would just turn around and ask which serve to use next - high toss or straight. Then she would start the rally and it was so good how she played freely to the corners. She has a natural reading of the game which refreshingly surprised me. The shuttle was flying, A/C was on, drift was present, and she's confidently pushing the shuttle back. Happily taking instructions. If she got a fine call right, she would be so happy with herself. A livewire talent.

What are the challenges ahead for her?

People will obviously read her, find a few gaps, watch how she delivers under pressure. All that will happen. But there's a natural sense of how she reads the game and smoothness on court that's inherent. Her physicality will get better though she has enough strokes and punch already. But when you watch her play, it's a reminder to the world that Indians can be really good at badminton. There's enormous talent and it just needs some hand-holding.

RANJI ROUND-UP

Pujara scores ton as Saurashtra take big lead

Seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara struck his 63rd first-class century while Prerak Mankad and Arpit Vasavada also registered hundreds to give Saurashtra a 387-run first innings lead against Manipur here on Saturday. In reply, Manipur, who were bowled out for 142 in their first essay on Friday, were reeling at 55 for 3 at stumps on second day, still trailing by 332 runs.

Resuming the day at 153/3, Saurashtra's stand-in skipper Vasavada (148) and all-rounder Mankad (173) took the Manipur bowling attack to the cleaners, while sharing a 152-run stand for the fourth wicket.

Brief scores: Manipur 142 and 55/3 in 28 overs (Ronald Longjam 32 batting; Dharmendrasinh Jadeja 1/12, Yuvraj Singh Dodiya 1/15) trail Saurashtra 529/6 dec in 104.1 overs (Prerak Mankad 173, Arpit Vasavada 148, Cheteshwar Pujara 108; Lambam Singh 3/157) by 332 runs

Mumbai thrash Assam by innings and 80 runs

All-rounder Shardul Thakur's match haul of 10 wickets was complemented by Shivam Dube's counter-attacking century as Mumbai finished their group B Ranji Trophy league engagements with a resounding innings and 80 run win against Assam inside two days.

Brief scores: Assam 84 and 108; 33 overs (Sumit Ghadigaonkar 30 not out; Shardul Thakur 4/31, Mohit Avasthi 2/10, Tushar Deshpande 2/37) lost to Mumbai 272; 64.4 overs (Shivam Dube 121 not out; Dibakar Johri 5/74) by an innings and 80 runs

Abhimanyu slams unbeaten double century

India A regular Abhimanyu Easwaran struck 200 not out to put Bengal's in driver's seat in their match against Bihar at Eden Gardens. Easwaran hit 23 boundaries in his unbeaten knock of 200 (291 balls) as Bengal declared on 411/5 with a big first innings lead of 316. Bihar were 32/1, trailing Bengal by 284 at close on day two. But this performance is little too late for Bengal who are already out of the quarters reckoning having endured two losses.

Brief scores: Bihar 95 and 32/1; 14 overs (Sumit Ghadigaonkar 30 not out; Shardul Thakur 4/31, Mohit Avasthi 2/10, Tushar Deshpande 2/37) lost to Mumbai 272; 64.4 overs (Shivam Dube 121 not out; Dibakar Johri 5/74) by an innings and 80 runs

Tamil Nadu pack off Punjab top order after posting 435

Tamil Nadu took firm control of their Ranji Trophy Group C match by packing off the Punjab top-order after big hundreds by Baba Indrajith and Vijay Shankar powered the hosts to 435 in their first innings here on Saturday. Punjab were 141/4 at stumps on the second day, trailing by 294 runs. Batting on 88 overnight, Shankar duly reached his century with the help of 12 fours and a six, while Indrajith went on to make 187 in 295 deliveries after resuming the day on 122. Indrajith found the fence 10 times and cleared it once.

Brief scores: Tamil Nadu 1st innings 435 all out in 134.1 overs (Baba Indrajith 187, Vijay Shankar 130; Sukhwinder Singh 4/99) vs Karnataka 1st innings 141/4 in 46 overs (Anmolpreet Singh 41, Nehal Wadhra 43; Ajith Ram 2/34) ahead by 294 runs.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Hardik, more than just central to nation's hopes

MIHIR VASAVDA
BHUBANESWAR, FEBRUARY 17

HARDIK SINGH'S first touch was uneventful and harmless: a simple trap and pass in the centre of the midfield. It didn't take long for the borer to turn into breathless.

Minutes later, he was on the left of the defence near the byline, presenting his cornered teammate a passing option. He then popped up inside the opponent's striking circle to aid an attack and instantly sprinted back to fill the gap on the right of the back-line. When captain Harmanpreet Singh ventured slightly forward, Hardik swiftly dropped deep and became the sweepster back.

Friday's Pro League match between India and Ireland was only 20 minutes old but Hardik had played in five different positions. Sprinting, scheming and splitting defence. "He is our dynamo," says India coach Craig Fulton. "He makes things tick."

Ireland wasn't an exception. All through the week, Hardik was elegantly running the game against Australia, the Netherlands and Spain. Showing his wide range of skills, running into empty spaces and holding the ball, to see passes others can just dream and controlling the tempo. A player so skilled and diligent, he makes others around him better.

Unlike football, hockey isn't a sport obsessed with stats. If it was, 2023's world player of the year would perhaps have the most touches of the ball and most dribbles while his heatmap would resemble a giant omelette spread on a pan.

Hardik's importance to the team hit home



Hardik embodies a refreshing change of mindset that was key to India returning to the Olympic podium.

not during one of his many tireless performances. But it was when an injury cruelly ruled him out in the middle of the World Cup last year. Think of the ankle injury Hardik Pandya suffered during the cricket World Cup last year and the buzz around it before the all-rounder was eventually ruled out. The hockey universe isn't as big as cricket but inside the relatively small bubble, the hysteria around Hardik's injury was no less than his namesake.

While the cricket team did not feel Pandya's absence at the cricket version, Hardik's omission

following a hamstring injury spelt immediate doom for the Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists, who got prematurely booted out of the home World Cup.

The realisation sunk in then that in a team of stars, his star was on the rise. It did occur to Hardik immediately back then and his return was full of self-doubts and insecurities that long injury lay-offs often trigger.

Hardik says he was a 'little depressed' and was too hard on himself but a timely intervention by sports psychologist Paddy Upton, who was with the team for the Asian Games, had a profound impact.

"I was a little depressed. I was taking myself, my game too seriously. If I lost the ball, if there was a turnover because of me - even in training - I was taking it too seriously and being too hard on myself," Hardik tells *The Indian Express*.

"I spoke to Paddy about this. At some level, talking about mental health is considered taboo here as we think our minds can't be weak. We overcame that mindset when he joined our team. The thinking was, if such a world-renowned coach was spending time with us, we must utilise his services."

The sessions with Paddy were very helpful. And one thing he said that stayed with me was, 'You can never fail to try.' It's a mantra that I will follow for the rest of my life," Hardik says.

If Upton - who shot to fame in India after being a key member of Gary Kirsten's coaching staff that helped the Men in Blue win the 2011 World Cup - made Hardik a mentality monster, it's Kobe Bryant that the 25-year-old's mind-set.

Currently by Hardik's bedside is the NBA star's autobiography and he finds ideas and

inspiration in every page he turns. "It touches upon a lot of things like the mindset of a champion, the outlook to have towards all things and also sends out a message that sometimes you have to sacrifice for the team. You have to be prepared to do the dirty work. *Himmat chahiye, bas* (You need courage, that's all)," he says.

"My motto is simple: If I have to sacrifice myself to help my teammate, then I am happy to do that," Hardik adds. "Our ultimate goal is to win. So if it means that if my teammate is having a very good day in the central midfield and I have to play in the back five because of that, I am okay with it."

In a team where players in the past were often seen guilty of putting their interests ahead of the team's, Hardik embodies a refreshing change of mindset that was key to India returning to the Olympic podium.

For Fulton, it's a boon but with a big asterisk. "He is a competitor. He wants to win. So if it means, 'Give me the ball and I'll do something' then guys know it. And sometimes, he just plays the holding role to let someone else do it," the coach says. "At the same time, we can't rely on him all the time. He is also a human." And to his credit, at present, Hardik is operating on super-human levels. After 55 minutes of play, Ireland made a dangerous circular entry from the left and played a ball across the face of the goal. An attacker was lining up a shot but out of nowhere appeared Hardik, picking up the ball and clearing the mess left by an open defence.

The next second, he was sprinting forward to join the attack. Just Hardik doing Hardik things.

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
FEBRUARY 17

JUST THE mention of India 1-0 Australia is enough for hockey fans to have warm memories. When the women's team stunned the mighty Hockeyroos at the Tokyo Olympics quarterfinals before heartbreakingly finishing fourth, they were the toast of the Indian sporting community. That day also came up a lot recently, in more wistful fashion, as Savita Punia and Co missed their flight to Paris for the 202

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Mourning

Author Manjiri Indurkar's short story speaks about the abbreviated pauses between grieving and living again

BOOKS, PAGE 3

- Interview with 2023 Booker winner Paul Lynch
- Review of Chandan Gowda's *Another India: Events, Memory, People*
- Interview with historian Upinder Singh



Four authors write about awakenings and living in the in-between



GETTY IMAGES

A NEW HOUSE IN YANGON

It certainly was a fresh start, in the house among the wild bamboos and the mango tree and the sky smudged with rain

Tejaswini Apte-Rahm

2013. It was a large house. Outside the kitchen window stood rows of bamboo. A wall enclosed the house, small garden and parking area. On the other side of the wall was a canal and a shack attached to an untidy piece of land, a mixture of wild bushes and vegetable patches, banana and coconut trees, and a couple of buckets lying amid plastic litter.

"Yes! Farmland in the middle of the city!" she confirmed in one of her phone calls home. That was where the cockroaches, mos-

quitoes and ants came from, the housekeeper assured her. She was pleased that a luxuriant mango tree rose over the wall, clusters of large green mangoes dangling from its widely spreading branches. It was one thing to live near the bounty of nature, but another matter that the nature that invaded your space was invariably not of the pleasant variety. It was always things that crept. Why did not small birds with pretty wings fly in and out of the kitchen? She would have welcomed it.

On the first morning, while the baby slept, she went round the spacious living room, drawing back the thin white curtains, throw-

ing open all eight or nine large windows so that yellow sunlight fell inside. She even left the front door open for a while to let out the stifling night air and let in the cool part of the morning.

He had told her that Yangon was safe, that before she and the baby arrived, he had simply left the house key with the guard. When he was out, the house remained unlocked. While they slept at night, the guard could theoretically enter if he wanted – of course, he would never do so, the Burmese were friendly, reliable people. But this won't do, she said. I cannot sleep while the keys of the house are with a stranger standing outside

my home. He shrugged and took the key back from the guard.

As she swept open the last curtain in the living room, she stepped back quickly. There was a swarm of black ants on the floor behind the curtain, busily carrying away a withered grasshopper. The doll's house had been placed right next to this window. She checked to see if it had been invaded by anything, but it was safe. In the kitchen, behind another curtain, another swarm of ants was halfway up the wall, and was struggling with the carcass of a large black spider, as wide as her palm. As she watched, the spider dropped down to the floor with a soft plop,

ants still clinging on to it, others scurrying around in confusion. She left the platoon to get on with its work, feeling sorry that the ants would have to carry the spider all the way back up the wall.

They went on a drive through the city. People wore *lungis* or *longyi*, chewed paan with stained teeth. There were myriad small lanes that ran through a maze of apartment blocks, the facades hoary with hanging clothes, the sagging butts of air-conditioning units fuzzy with black fur, rusty iron grills, faces peering out, glimpses of moving bodies behind flapping curtains. On the road were market stalls with coconut offerings for

Buddhist shrines: each green coconut encircled by five or six upright green bananas, making it look like a muscular green lotus. They passed an open meat and fish market where she saw a monitor lizard, whole, skinned, still standing stiffly on its four legs, its blood-red flesh teeming with black flies. She looked away but wished fervently that her camera had been ready for the shot. Oh God, she said to her husband, I've just seen the most horrendous thing, I wish I hadn't seen that. But she continued looking eagerly out of the window for something else to shiver over.

> CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Prettier than Gold

Come snake, come, she had said inside her mind, and now there was a snake in the water tank

Smriti Ravindra

was quietly warm at nine and the water not frozen with chill.

Deepu started to cry. Just last evening, after she had heard from Mother herself that snakes were stupid creatures who could not resist the charm of a whistle heard after dark, Deepu had sat with her friend upon the terrace and whistled into the air. Surely, somewhere in the fields grass had rustled and whisked from side to side, but Deepu had not stopped whistling. She had grown ready with anticipation instead. Come snake, come, she had said inside her mind, and now there was a snake in the water tank.

"Stop your crying, Deepali PEGU," Mother said in exasperation. "God knows what keeps going in your head."

But Deepu could not stop crying.

She was late for school but Mother would not let her get off the bed. "Do you know what happened once?" Mother said. "I was pulling out a little jungle of marigold shrubs by our main gate and out came who knows how many snakes from the clearing, and without even a nod at me they walked away into the fields. I could not even scream, so scared I was. They just went past as though I was some bush too. You never know how many you are dealing with. And what if one decides to stroll into the house?"

It was only after an hour, after Mother had checked every corner of the house, that Deepu was allowed to climb down. She ran straight into the kitchen then, and rubbing the moist



GETTY IMAGES

HISS STORY

After basking in the sun for a while, the snake swam back, a golden chain in a silver lake – and the water swerved and whirled in response, rippling and glittering.

ness off the glass, stood before the window to stare at the creature. There it was, sitting by the tank's dry edge, shining brilliantly in the sun. It was yellow and brown, rolled out like a grass. "His Majesty," said Mother, in way of an introduction.

Together, they watched the snake's expertise. After basking in the sun for a while it slipped back into the water. It swam – a

golden chain in a silver lake – and the water swerved and whirled in response, rippling and glittering.

"Who left the tank's lid off?" Mother said. "All that water will have to be thrown out, bucketful after bucketful. Such a disaster. We will have to go down into the tank and clean the walls with SurfExcel. All that Surf we will waste for nothing. All that water," she said. Again Deepu started to cry and Mother slapped her on the head. "Stop your wailing!" she scolded.

All afternoon the snake swam. Every now and then it came up and coiled upon the steel ladder built at the tank's edge and bathed in the sun. Then it slid back and circled the water, curling like a single wave, convoluting and looping, its yellow body bright as a sunflower. Mother took a mug full of water from a bucket in the kitchen and poured it over a bunch of spinach and grew suddenly still. "I got this water from the tank earlier. Do you think the snake had already taken a swim then? Maybe it had just gone somewhere for a while?" She stared at her wet hands. "Do you think this water is poisoned too?"

Deepu was afraid then. Mother could lick her hands accidentally and die. Deepu imagined Mother's lips growing blue and her hands becoming stiff. Even if Mother did not lick her hands, the water upon her fingers could seep into her skin and kill her. Deepu forced herself to calm down and to think. There was some water in her school bottle and Mother would have to wash her hands with that. Deepu went to the bedroom and brought out the water bottle from her school bag. She held this bottle, light blue and translucent, over Mother and washed death off her hands.

Finally, when the sun was not warm enough and perhaps the water beginning to freeze, the snake came to the edge of the tank. It spiralled and knotted upon the ladder, ex-

tending and stretching like a thick rubberband and it was out, leaving the water behind it tinged with poison. "And where will we throw the water? Do you think the poison will kill the grass and everything?" asked Mother.

Deepu and Mother went from one window to the next, tracking the bright yellow ribbon as it journeyed along the foot of the boundary wall. When it stopped briefly at the marigold bushes that had grown once again at the precise spot Mother had cleared away, Mother frowned. "Let's phone your father and tell him to be careful when he comes home," she said. "This snake is just roaming around like a magistrate." But the snake moved on and Mother and Deepu watched it leave their compound, go somewhere else, into the fields, and they were suddenly free to leave the house.

"How will we know if the snake comes back?" Mother asked and they stared at the doors that were still clogged with sacks. "We should still call your father," she said and called Father's office but Father was not in and she had to tell the peon about the snake and the peon went into hysterics.

"Are you all right, madam? Should I come and kill the devil? What a nuisance, madam!"

Mother lost her patience. "Please, just tell that sir of yours to look around when he comes home. No need to walk like a blind man, tell him."

And eventually Mother pulled out the sacks and opened the front door.

"Life has to be lived," she said and stepped out into the verandah. "Come, Deepu," she called and Deepu came running out.

"Wasn't it pretty?" Deepu asked, thinking about the gilded snake glinting under the sun.

"Prettier than gold," said Mother shaking her head.

Smriti Ravindra is the author of *The Woman Who Climbed Trees*

Ahmedabad

A New House in Yangon

» FROM PAGE 1

HOWEVER, THE rest of it was simply all kinds of cuts of meat, fish and offal, nothing that could beat a skinned, red-fleshed monitor lizard. Well, she said in an off-hand way to her husband, they eat them in India, too. Really, he said. Yes, she said, I once met someone back home who told me he used to catch them with his friends by the river and roast them.

She moved a desk into a small upstairs room so that she could look out at the mango tree while writing her book. The windows were perfect. Many years ago, in Delhi, there'd been a flat in Defence Colony with polished dark wood window frames, each pane divided like a piece of Cadbury's chocolate into six elegant rectangles. The apartment was spacious, her footsteps echoing over the empty floors. She imagined throwing informal parties there though she knew not a soul in the city. They'd rented another flat in the end. Now her study in Yangon finally had the kind of windows she'd wanted.

The rain in Yangon was thundering, magnificent. It went on, unending, for days at a time. She'd never witnessed anything like it. It made even the ferocious monsoon of the Western Ghats appear rather indifferent and drab. The roof shuddered under the weight of the crashing rain, so loud that they had to have shouted conversations to make themselves heard. Speaking on the phone was out of the question. The trunks and branches of the mango and coconut trees, and the bamboo and banana trees, waved about wild and fierce, their leaves doing a sudden, shivering dance. One evening, they sat watching the rain pelting down and eating enormous yellow-orange mangoes. She dared not say that they were better than Indian ones, even to herself. Blasphemous thought. To her husband, she only managed to say, they are almost as good as the Indian ones.

Sweety, let's go for a lovely long drive through the town, she said to her small daughter one Monday morning, the driver is going to drive us, and we can look for interesting things out the window. Off they went, the point of the outing having been established — "looking-looking only, like tourist, good idea madame" — and she sat, one arm around her daughter, the other clutching at her phone poised to take photos. Obama Come Back, said a rare piece of graffiti, almost as soon as they left home, and excitedly she clicked it. But a lamp post came in the way, so her photo only showed Obama Come, which made it appear simply as an enthusiastic welcome rather than a further cry for help. She didn't see any other graffiti, but looked with interest at the increasingly crowded lanes as they went downtown, all the way to the Yangon River with its gigantic shipping containers towering high, the respectable colonial-era Strand Hotel, the



OUT AND ABOUT

Sweety, let's go for a lovely long drive through the town, she said to her small daughter one Monday morning

river-front headquarters of *The New Light of Myanmar* with the day's edition pinned out in front for the people to read.

A battered white taxi pulled up beside them at a traffic light. Its driver was a strapping young man in thin-framed spectacles, rather good-looking despite paan stains outlining his teeth. He was nodding and trying to get the attention of her own driver, who rolled down the window and began exchanging pleasantries. She felt rather sorry that this young man, in his prime, was stuck in a decrepit taxi with a ceiling too low for his tall and wide frame. Both cars moved on.

"That man government informer," the driver told her smugly.

"Oh really," she said, "he was in the government and now he is driving a taxi?" She felt even more sorry for him.

— "No, no. No taxi. He army intelligence. He go looking in downtown."

— "I see," she said, light dawning. "But why is he going in a taxi?"

— "No, that is no taxi. If he go in government car, can have problem. He go in taxi, no problem. He have gun in car."

— "But what is he looking for," she asked, fascinated, rather taken aback and thrilled at coming across a clandestine informer in her first week in Myanmar.

— "He go downtown. He looking, looking."

— "But what is he looking for? There are already police downtown, aren't there?"

— "He no police. In Burma, three kinds of people." He began unfolding one finger at a time from the palm of his hand. "At the top is army. Then police. Then ordinary people. He army. He my neighbour."

So that strapping young man had done rather well for himself after all, she told her husband that night. Though I have no idea what he could possibly find driving around like that, she said.

Maybe he stops at tea shops or something to listen to the local gossip, he suggested, picking up the book he was reading.

It seemed incredible that she had just come across a spy, so casually. Would he write a little report for his boss that evening, saying that his neighbour was driving a foreigner around? The government was sending men out to spy on its own people. Rather like undercover police work, except that it wasn't the police doing it. Her own role in all this, she felt, was a bit like a leaf dangling from a tree, looking down at proceedings from a dense bit of greenery up on high.

She needed to read up on things to understand it all. It certainly was a new beginning, in the house among the wild bamboos and the mango tree and the sky smudged with rain.

Tejaswini Apte-Rahm's is a writer. Her novel, *The Secret Of More*, won the 2023 Tata Literature Live! Book of the Year Award — Fiction

Confessions in Swahili

Mrs Kapur's African grey parrot enjoyed looking up at the sky and screaming insults at the other birds, but this time he had picked up a love language

Ranjit Lal

"WE'LL TAKE Swahili up to the terrace this evening for his airing," Sudha said, as we biked back from school as usual that evening.

"Uh-huh!" I grunted, eyeing her and looking away. Why had it become so difficult to look at her without staring? Perched on her bicycle, her back straight, neck slender as a lily and jaunty ponytail swishing at the top of her head...

She'd made no mention of the heady kiss I had planted on her last evening — had she already forgotten it? Typical. I'd laid bare my heart and she hadn't even seemed to have noticed it.

Swahili's 'airing' was really an excuse for us to 'debrief' Mrs Kapur's gorgeous African grey parrot of all the bad language he had picked up since his last debriefing, from Ramu and the other staff who worked at Mrs Kapur's Animal Shelter, where we had been helping out for years. Also, he enjoyed looking up at the sky and screaming insults at the other birds.

"Ok Swahili, now tell us what you learned this week!" Sudha demanded, as I glared at her. She didn't mention the kiss all evening, it was as if it had never happened.

"What's wrong with you?" Sudha asked. "You hardly said a word all evening. Just grunted."

"Uh-huh!" It got worse, because I stopped talking to her and we stopped going up to the terrace until one evening, Mrs Kapur rang me.

"Lalit, I think Swahili is missing you and Sudha! He keeps calling out for you in his lovelorn voice and then swearing like a pirate! Could you take him up this evening?"

"Sure aunty... umm, have you called Sudha?"

"Yes, she's coming in about an hour..."

"Then I'll come over right now! I have Algebra tuition after an hour!"

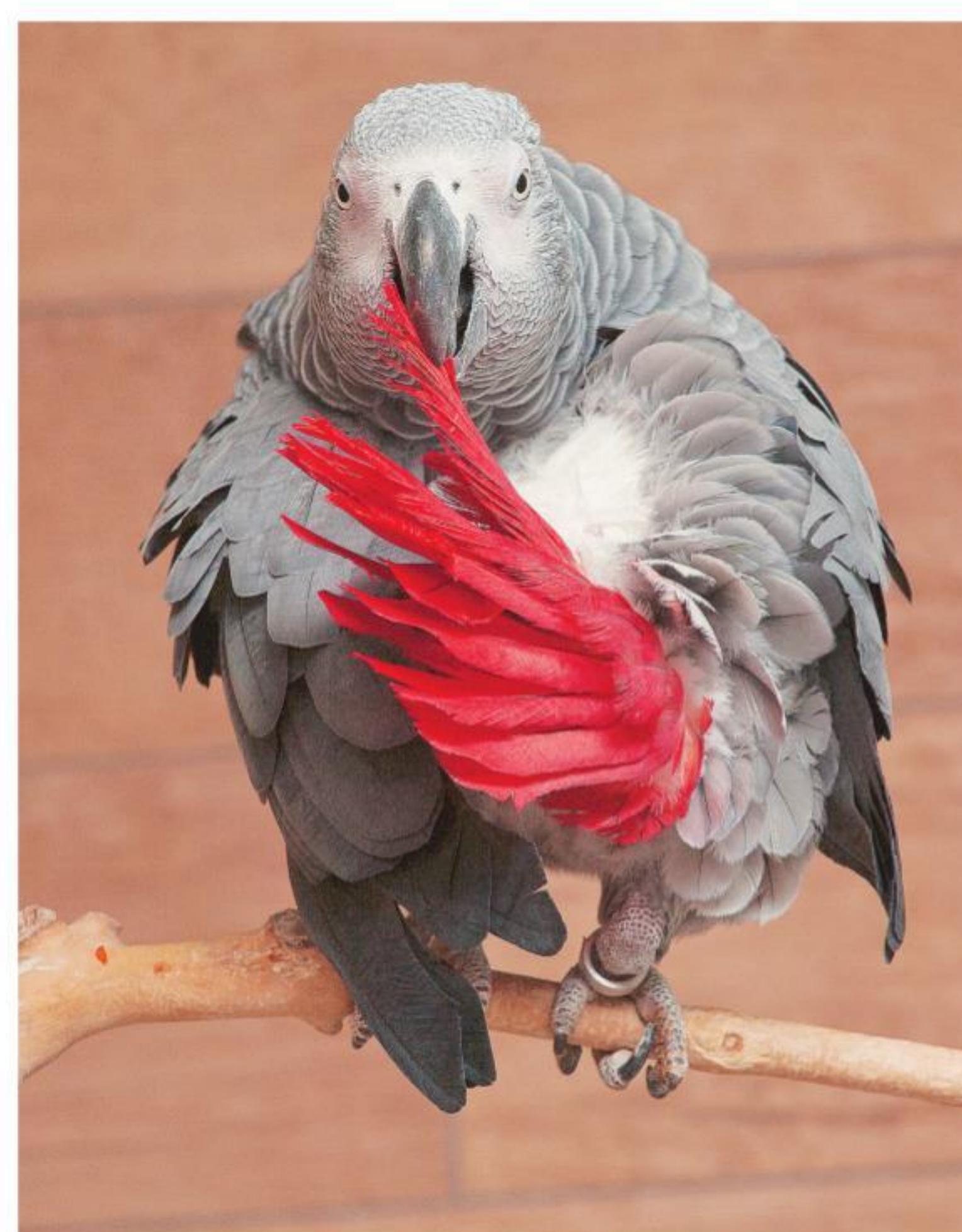
No way that I was going to be on the terrace with Sudha! She sucked!

I took Swahili up on the terrace, looking around morosely. Sudha and I had had such fun (and more) here... I glared at the parrot.

"Actually you're so lucky, you know!" I blurted. "You live in a spacious aviary downstairs, you learn bad words, you eat, you sleep; you have no problems. Not like me!"

"Waark!" the parrot agreed wisely.

"Oh yes," I told Swahili, thumping my chest gorilla style, "you see... that stupid Sudha! Like me Tarzan, Sudha Jane, only she don't know it! Oh yes, Sudha is still tomboy, but such a



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PARROTING

Behind Mrs Kapur's desk, Swahili regarded us from his big brass cage

beautiful one. Not very big boobies and bottom, but so beautiful ones...like...like spheres of heaven!"

"Boobies and bottom, spheres of heaven!" Swahili agreed.

"All this time she was just a fun girl and we had a good time. Then suddenly, she has boobies and bottom...she like nymph, sylph,

pixie, elf, fairy, mermaid, angel. She's curvaceous, slim, comely, shapely, sexy, frisky and all that!" I had spent an afternoon scanning the Thesaurus. "She is funny, crazy, dotty and I'm just nuts about her!"

"Waark...nuts about her," Swahili agreed.

I stomped off downstairs after an hour. On the way down I met Sudha who had just ar-

rived and wordlessly handed her the cage. I glanced back at her to find her sticking out her tongue at me.

Next day, Mrs Kapur rang again and said she'd like to talk to me and Sudha.

"There's something I have to tell you both," she said.

So, we found ourselves sitting next to one another in Mrs Kapur's office, pointedly ignoring each other. Behind Mrs Kapur's desk, Swahili regarded us from his big brass cage.

"Well dears, let me tell you what this is about... You know we have at last got some money — more than enough of it actually. So from henceforth, I'm going to give you both a stipend of five thousand rupees a month for all your help. You've both been invaluable and helped me for so many years!"

"Five thousand rupees?" We whispered together, and then looked in different directions. "Thank you aunty!"

"Waark!" Swahili said as if on cue. And then produced a sound of a gorilla thumping his chest. "Me Tarzan, Sudha Jane, only she don't know it!" he went on mimicking me so well that Sudha stared at him open-mouthed. "Waark! She like nymph, sylph, elf, curvy, boobies and bottom, boobies and bottom, spheres of heaven!" the wretched bird went on. Mrs Kapur got a sudden fit of coughing.

"Waark — he's not handsome-handsome, but gorilla-handsome!" Swahili suddenly averred in Sudha's tearful voice, staring at her. He fixed his pale grey eyes on me.

"Like nymph, like sylph, like elf, like pixie, like frisky, nuts about her..." Then in Sudha's voice: "Such a cute wiggly he has, wiggles and waggles like anything! I love it, I love it, I love it! Waarrk!"

At this point, Mrs Kapur got to her feet. Her shoulders were shaking and she was making funny snuffling sounds into her handkerchief.

"My allergies," she gasped. "I think I'll leave you kids to think about it."

Sudha and I looked at each other.

"He's a liar! He's making it all up! I never said that at all!" we both exclaimed together. "Swahili, shut up!"

"Boobies and bottom eh? Spheres of heaven?" Sudha repeated slowly getting to her feet and taking a peek at her bum.

"Gorilla-handsome? Gorilla-handsome?" I stood up.

A piercing wolf whistle speared through the room as Mrs Kapur popped her head around the door, smiled and quietly withdrew.

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Mourning

The abbreviated pauses between grieving and living again

Manjiri Indurkar

IT IS early and yet again I have woken up before the alarm. It's dark outside. The next-door neighbour has begun her daily chores as she does every day at 4 am. I am in bed thinking of how I should be sleeping. I will have a long day ahead where I won't be able to squeeze in the rest. But I can't. I look at the slow movement of the fan and fiddle under my quilt. I count its rotations, but it's my mind that can't keep still. People talk about counting sheep to fall asleep. I haven't been able to figure out the meaning of that. How does one count sheep? Do I visualise a field full of sheep and count them or are they in my room, standing next to my bed? Are these sheep running, chewing on grass or stationary? Are they looking at me as I count them? Are they standing in rows, waiting for their number to be called? My mind moves in circles.

I think of putting on some calming music on my phone that will help me sleep. It's the loop that this music creates that the mind slips into with ease. There are no peaks and crests, there's a quiet lulling the notes offer, so serene you wouldn't be able to tell one from another. But I can't today. The slightest change in chords makes me aware of their existence. It's a failed attempt.

I think of the phone call I had yesterday and I think of its implications for my life. What defines loss, and how does one mourn it? Aai would say it is different for different people. When Baba died, she had no time for mourning. She had to take care of me. When Baba died, I had no time to mourn, either. I had to take care of Aai. I had to write exams, excel in them, get a job and make sure Aai didn't go the way Baba did. In some ways, saving Aai's life became an act of mourning. I am unsure.

It's now almost five. My neighbour has finished cleaning the porch, she must have washed and hung clothes to dry. If I step out of my house, I will smell the scent of freshly ground coffee wafting through the morning air from her kitchen. In a city where most people are tea drinkers, the aroma of coffee stands out. But I am not out yet. I am still lying in bed, next to my husband, who's surrendered to

or just pretending to lie still. I am unsure if he knows about the loss he has suffered and unsure what this loss means to him and unsure if this is why he has given up on speech and movement and maybe, life. My husband who should have been out on his morning walks, should have been taking the sick neighbour to the doctor despite government-issued health warnings, should have been watering his plants and talking to them like they were his children; he hasn't said a word in 23 hours.

Buddhist teachings talk about suffering.

"Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering."

What though is the nature of his suffering?

He lost a friend, the loss has come at a cost. What would alleviate his suffering?

Would he feel better if he were able to attend the funeral?

Kavi Grace writes of longing, of loss, of alienation:

Bhaya itthe sampat nahi, maj tuhi athavan yete,

Mi sandhyakali gato, tu mala shikval geet

My fears are endless, and I can't stop remembering you, he says. In this evening of loneliness and isolation, I am singing the songs that you taught me. Arun once had come home from work and read to me

this poem that Anthony had introduced him to. Is that what Arun is doing? Singing the songs Anthony taught him and not sharing the music with me?

Or is Arun, like Barthes, wondering, "Does being able to live without someone you loved mean you loved her less than you thought?" I am unsure.

It's now almost five. My neighbour has finished cleaning the porch, she must have washed and hung clothes to dry. If I step out of my house, I will smell the scent of freshly ground coffee wafting through the morning air from her kitchen. In a city where most people are tea drinkers, the aroma of coffee stands out. But I am not out yet. I am still lying in bed, next to my husband, who's surrendered to



WHO'S MAD?

Is the man who has gone silent on the world but perhaps is in conversation with those who matter to him mad or is the one who chooses to continue with the daily chores of life as if nothing has changed, mad?

This morning of that unknown child was

grief. And I am figuring out my role in it.

There have been seasons of silence in our house. But none like this. When I found out about Anthony's death, something told me Arun already knew. In our marriage of 36 years, we have experienced many devastations. We have lost parents. We have lost pets. We even lost a child. A stillborn who was alive inside my womb but stopped breathing the second he was pushed out of the land we called home.

The mourning of that unknown child was hard. We donated the clothes I had knit. We repainted the walls of our house. We filled our lives with more books and art. We started watching more films and began walking to unfamiliar corners of the city. Arun took up gardening, I brought home stray cats. We both became nurturing, the kind of nurturing our stillborn never got to experience. We decided to not fill the void with another child.

We decided to keep living. Are we still mourning that loss? I don't know. But Anthony's loss is new.

I never quite understood Arun's relationship with Anthony. They became friends in college. They worked in the same office. They talked about raising their kids together to be best friends. But when Arun got left behind, Anthony gave up on that dream. There were plans to build a home together where both families could retire. But Seema, Anthony's wife, wasn't too keen. She was living more and more away from Anthony. She would often be with her sisters in Mangalore.

When I asked her why, she'd say she liked living by the sea. She wanted Anthony to move

too, but Anthony said he'd be bored there. His skin allergies act up in humid environments. He isn't a fan of seafood and despises the fishy smell that haunts the air. He doesn't have friends there. He built this house so he could live here and die here, why would he move? There were always reasons. Seema said he wouldn't leave Arun, that's all there is to this marriage. And

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

'Technology is divorcing us from the best part of our minds'

Irish writer Paul Lynch on his 2023 Booker-winning *Prophet Song*, why he didn't want to write a political book and the dangers of modern-day technology

Udbhav Seth

PROPHET SONG, about Eilish, a mother of four whose activist husband has been abducted by their shadowy government, begins with an epigram by German playwright Bertolt Brecht: "In the dark times / will there also be singing? / Yes, there will also be singing. / About the dark times." At the Jaipur Literature Festival 2024, meeting its 2023 Booker-winning author Paul Lynch, however, brings to mind another Brecht poem, *To Posterity*, due to the author's indifference to political critiques of his book: "I ate my food between massacres. / The shadow of murder lay upon my sleep. / And when I loved, I loved with indifference." In this interview, Lynch, 46, speaks of why he favoured the personal to the political in his novel, and the images he seeks to tell universal stories. Edited excerpts:

Much has been made of the book's lack of paragraph breaks. Is that how you wrote them on a daily basis? Or did they start out more traditionally?

No, I wrote them like that. When you write your fiction, you have to find the form of the book that helps determine the story. And the novel did not want to be written in paragraphs, it's very simple. Eilish is completely imprisoned within her reality. She is caught up in this flow of events that seem to

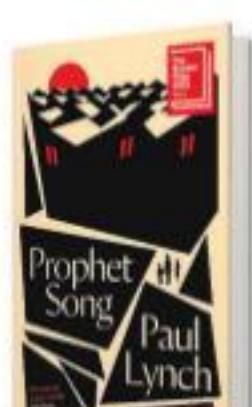
have an unstoppable energy. So there should be no white space, there should be no room to turn. The reader should feel the same claustrophobia as her.

The writing dictum is that when you write something very specific, you access the universal. Critics have talked about the lack of specific names of contemporary politics in *Prophet Song*. Was that a conscious decision?

I think it's idiotic to find a problem with the book because it doesn't identify the nature of the political threat. That's profoundly missing the point. If I identified the political nature, then the book will be about it. What it's actually doing is (capturing) a particular sense of alienation. The book is about the foreground, not the background. *The Iliad* foregrounds the political and heroics. If you turn it inside out, you're left with people in the background, how Troy affects them. Nobody's done that. Nobody's interested in foregrounding the ordinary, personal cost to events.

Your sentences are often long and winding. Today, fiction writers are told to aim for accessibility before embroidery. How do you situate yourself in that contrast?

Embroidery is the work of a lesser writer. You can write long, winding sentences that are still completely granitic in meaning. I believe in the principle of sufficient reason when writing, that every word should be in the right



PROPHET SONG
BY PAUL LYNCH
OneWorld
320 pages
₹599

place for the right reason. If you can take that word out, then that sentence no longer means the same thing, or in the same way.

I suspect that a long sentence is definitely back in serious fiction, and that may be an unconscious revolt by serious writers against the tyranny of social media, against the atomization of our consciousness. Fiction is fighting to create a space that's uniquely literary and serious, that says, "This is a space for consciousness. This is a space for thought that's not going to be mediated by distraction."

You've set books in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as more contemporary settings. How does research factor into the writing process?

I'm less interested in research as I write now. Primarily because what I'm chasing are images that are symbolic. Research is needed to truly understand the world I'm creating, but I forget about it when I'm writing.

A lot of writers use research to convey information, and I'm looking for knowledge and wisdom. When I wrote my first three novels, which were historical, I was trying to find an imaginative space where I could chase and ask questions about human nature. That was easy to do within historical settings because the present moment is so chaotic to find your way through.

But when I started writing *Beyond the Sea*, I realised that I was finding a way to approximate the mythic within the contemporary. To ask the same kind of questions. I, then, knew

how to do the same thing in *Prophet Song*.

You've spoken about publishing being in danger because people aren't reading as much or only reading novels that are easily filmable. Are there any other dangers?

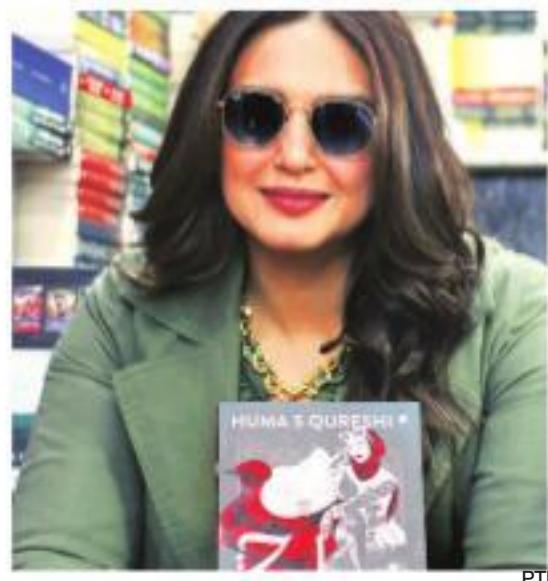
The fundamental threat of our epoch is that consciousness has been atomised by technology. We have unleashed something without truly understanding what it's doing to us. The consequences are becoming evident in politics around the world. We have solved with technology an answer to a problem that cannot be answered within society.

There's a particular dissatisfaction all of us have with life. We've looked to various ideologies to solve this problem for us, like capitalism, communism, consumerism and fascism. They've all failed. Now we're looking at information technology to be the salve to our internal wound. But it's never going to do that. Because the problem lies outside society. It's a problem with the self and the spirit.

And I'm not a religious person. But these are questions that we have to take very seriously. Technology is divorcing us from our own selves and our ability to communicate with the best part of our minds. People are getting increasingly lost, and when they're lost, what do they do? They look to strong leaders... Underneath all the problems of the modern world, a lot of them economic – like late capitalism – is that we don't know who we are anymore.

SHELF LIFE

Caped Crusader

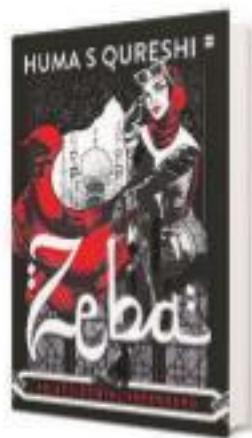


A NEW AVATAR

Actor Huma Qureshi

IN SUPERHERO universes, there are self-righteous, noble heroes who take themselves too seriously (Captain America, Batman) and ones who stumble into the gig not so gracefully (Spider-Man, Deadpool, Iron Man). *Zeba, An Accidental Superhero*, actor Huma S Qureshi's debut novel, is an audacious addition to that universe. It's about a 20-something hijab-wearing woman living in New York City who travels back home for a family wedding but is burdened with saving a country.

Zeba is a weed-smoking, too-cool-for-school billionaire. She is a rebel without a cause. She is curious, defiant, has a tragic backstory, and superpowers. She's also a threat to the cruel, patriarchal



ZEBA, AN ACCIDENTAL SUPERHERO
BY HUMA S QUERESHI
HarperCollins
208 pages
₹499

monarch, the Great Khan, in her (fictional) birth country, Khudir. Under all the glitz and glamour, the message is clear: Be yourself, and take up space – unapologetically.

Qureshi captures the magic of female solidarity well. The story draws a clear contrast between the male and female gaze – by changing narrators with each chapter, from Zeba to her mother to even Great Khan. The harem in his palace is an elusive, salacious, restricting space for women – until Zeba is initiated into it by Sultana, the harem head. From her perspective, readers are introduced to this space for what it is – a refuge for all women in the palace, across classes. Right under the Khan's nose, these women save other young women from his wrath, running a guerrilla army and placement programmes to get girls to safety.

As affirming as it is for young readers to have a hero like Zeba, especially in today's political climate, the book doesn't unpack nuance. The old good Muslimbad Muslim trope is apparent. There's some well-intentioned, ill-explained mention of third-gender persons. The Great Khan is defeated but the monarchy stays. Now Girlboss Zeba runs it.

Zeba's inner monologue often reads like a Boomer's impersonation of a New York Gen-Z kid. Qureshi also cops out of the Big Battle climax, which is thoroughly underwhelming. But ultimately, *Zeba* is a captivating read and delivers on its promise – girl power. In a country trying to figure out if young girls can wear hijabs in educational institutes, using one as a superhero cape is as bold a statement as can be.

SUKHMAMI MALIK

'Migration has always been an important part of India's history'

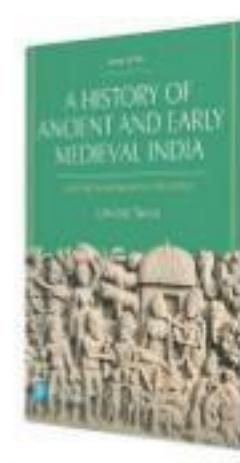
The historian on a new edition of her study of ancient and early medieval India and why young historians should ask questions fearlessly

Adrija Roychowdhury

ALMOST 15 years after Upinder Singh published her comprehensive study of ancient and early medieval India, she has come out with a second edition. *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India* was written for history students and general readers, and is celebrated for introducing budding historians to primary sources, historical methodologies and concepts in a thoroughly detailed and comprehensible manner. In this interview, she discusses her reasons for revising the text, and how students should approach the discipline today. Edited excerpts:

What have you done differently in this edition?

Over the years, my perspectives and interests have expanded. I have become interested in the history of ideas, the interactions between the state and forest people, the connections between art and history, and the subcontinent's connections with other parts of the world. Archaeology has contributed a great deal to the understanding of trade in-



A HISTORY OF ANCIENT AND EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA
BY UPINDER SINGH
Pearson
704 pages
₹899

history of science and mathematics. I have included more material on Kashmir and Northeast India. This is actually a book on the early history of South Asia, so there is more on areas beyond modern India's boundaries.

You say that the ancient Indian subcontinent was part of an intricate network of interaction with other parts of the world. Could you elaborate?

These interactions included war, trade, diplomacy, religious networks, and the circulation of ideas. Archaeology has contributed a great deal to the understanding of trade in-

teractions, especially across the Indian Ocean. Take, for example, the discovery of hundreds of inscriptions and drawings on The Hoq Cave in Socotra, a small island off the coast of Yemen. A shipwreck found off the coast of Godawaya in southern Sri Lanka is the oldest shipwreck known in South Asia. Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions have been found at the ports of Berenike and Quseir-Qadim on the Red Sea coast. Whether or not Pattanam is the ancient Muziris of Graeco-Roman accounts, this site in Kerala gives exciting evidence of flourishing trade with the Mediterranean, north Afghanistan, west Asia, and China.

There are lots of tantalising pieces in the puzzle. For instance, the ivory statuette representing the goddess Lakshmi or a yakshi found in Pompeii in Italy, the Buddha statue found at Berenike in Egypt, and the bronze statuette of Poseidon found at Brahmapuri in Maharashtra.

Migration has always been an important part of the history of the Indian subcontinent. Quanzhou in China yielded over 300 Hindu images and artefacts and a bilingual Tamil-Chinese inscription. This suggests the presence of a colony of Tamil merchants, per-



OPENING MINDS

Historian Upinder Singh

haps members of a guild, in the 13th- or 14th-centuries. There are references to Brahmin physicians and astrologers in Chinese courts. The spread of Sanskrit texts and Vedic rituals to Southeast Asia also presumes Brahmin migrations.

There was also rivalry, conflict and war. In the 11th century, the Cholas and Srivijayans sent diplomatic missions to the Song court in

China. In a masterstroke of diplomacy, the Srivijayans seem to have convinced the Chinese that the Cholas were the Srivijayans' subordinates. The subsequent Chola expedition to Srivijaya shows the connections between trade interests and war. It is a unique instance when an ancient Indian political power launched a trans-oceanic military operation.

The evolving religious networks are evident in the spread of Buddhism across Asia and the spread of Hinduism to Southeast Asia. I see India as part of a wider world we need to learn more about, as a centre of both influence and confluence.

You've included a section on new scientific techniques used in archaeology. How have these new techniques enhanced our understanding of ancient India?

The amount of data produced by archaeology is likely to grow faster than that of other sources. Archaeological methods, including scientific dating methods, are extremely important. Remote sensing techniques make it possible to study sites without invasive and expensive excavations. Genome analysis is now an important part of the debate on Indo-European and Indo-Aryans. The genome study of a woman's skeleton found at Rakhigarhi is important, but we need a much

larger sampling and many more studies of ancient DNA. I am sure that genome analysis will add substantially to our understanding of the migrations and mixtures of populations across different parts of the world.

In the polarised world of today, how would you want budding historians to study ancient Indian history?

Balance is very important. I would like young students to understand that history is an exciting discipline based on a rigorous analysis and interpretation of sources and logical and creative reasoning.

I am aware that these days a lot of stuff claiming to be history is circulating on the internet; a great deal of it is not sound history. Readers of books and consumers of internet material need to be able to distinguish between history and pseudo-history and propaganda. They should beware of simple stories of heroes and villains. History is complex and our past consists of many different strands.

I strongly believe that students should resist following any particular 'line'. They should resist becoming camp followers of whichever group happens to be powerful or influential at a particular time. They should critique existing views independently and fearlessly, ask new questions, find their own answers, and strike their own path.

World within Worlds

Chandan Gowda uses Karnataka's iconography to highlight the many contradictory and forgotten histories of India

Biswadeep Ghosh

CHANDAN GOWDA'S *Another India: Events, Memory, People* is a collage of writings with a deeper purpose. The book, which mostly draws from previously published articles by the author, describes and reflects on the coexistence of worlds within a world that is India.

Gowda explains, "My writings, which took various forms – interpretative essays, narrations of little remembered historical episodes, retellings of mythic and folk tales, sketches of personalities, among others – sought to celebrate the living moral and aesthetic imaginations occluded in modern society." The state of Karnataka, with its epics, people, film industry, deities and much more, is the focus of most of the book. Not all of the author's protagonists are famous Indians, but the choices reveal his desire to depict the true character of India. The mythic and folk tales serve as a reminder that we, as a people, have nurtured these stories since time immemorial.

The past cannot be delinked from the present. The faint shadow of social memory exists, whether or not we sense its presence in our day-to-day lives. One of the writings revolves around *Rama Dhanya Charite*, a poem by the 16th-century saint Kanakadasa. In it, rice views ragi as an inferior grain. Eventually, Lord Rama puts rice and ragi in prison for a "test of endurance".

Rice goes stale, but ragi remains fresh after six months. The dispute symbolises the social tensions between "the privileged" and "the non-privileged" castes. Centuries after Kanakadasa wrote the poem, casteism is undeniably present in our society. This resonates in an essay on the barber or the *hajjam*, which refers to a story narrated by the jester Tenali Rama, who shows that it is impossible to make the high and the low change places in society.

The collection is the outcome of Gowda's interest in a vast range of subjects, among them popular cinema. One of the essays is on the Kannada superstar Dr Rajkumar, which celebrates his presence in the lives of Kannadigas and explains what the films of the genre-hopping matinee idol stand for in the broad cultural context. He notes that the star remains a "deeply familiar point of reference, a point of entry into a world of belonging."

The author aspires for precision. Many of his writings are short. When he embarks on longer excursions that capture his subjects in some detail, he retains the essence of his style with a fair degree of success. Even when he discusses a relatively minor topic, such as the translation of William Shakespeare's plays into Kannada, an initiative of the Palace Theatre Company founded by the Maharaja of Mysore in 1881, he keeps the reader interested.

Gowda frequently surprises with his preference for the unusual and the less known in his attempt to show what makes India what it is: a vibrant place where the past lives on amidst change. He also finds space for the familiar, such as when he talks about Rabindranath Tagore's *Srimiketan* or discusses Dr Ram Manohar Lohia's thoughts and his time in the United States.

He explores the connotations of the word *mela* and discusses a remarkable work such as *In Search of Dignity and Justice: The Untold Story of Conservancy*, a book of photographs by the Mumbai-based photographer Sudhakar Olwe that captures the plight of sanitation workers. He also writes about the influential Kannada writer Kuvempu, who urged people to opt for the simple Mantra Mangala weddings, which, among other things, prohibits dowry, keeps wedding expenses to a minimum and allows marriages across religions and castes.

Variety is the highlight of this short book, which is of the kind that can have equally enlightening sequels in future.

Ghosh is a freelance journalist and author

'A minute of exercise on the hour is all you need'

Meet Narendra Yadav, the first civil servant to be Fit India ambassador

Anonna Dutt

HIS LIFE can easily be hash-tagged as #restart. Narendra Yadav wanted to be a sportsman, a professional cricketer no less, but pursued academics to not let his father down. He scored 46 per cent in his Class XII board examinations but managed to crack the Union Public Services Commission (UPSC) examinations at 24 and become an IRS officer. A Hindi medium student, he loved mathematics but took up arts to score big in competitive exams. But the one thing this 39-year-old civil servant didn't trade was his workout routine that has made him the first non-athlete ambassador for the government's Fit India Movement.

An avid YouTuber, who makes daily fitness goals seem easily achievable, Yadav says that he made workouts his second life the day he watched cricketer Virat Kohli take to the field. "It was 2009 and his tauntiness, agility and sculpted body inspired me," he says, completing a round of calisthenics. For the last 12 years, he has been sleeping between 10 and 10.30 pm, waking up at 4.30 am and hitting the gym for an hour or so at least six days a week. He's also roped in his wife, Rachna Tanwar, into his fitness regime, which she believes is the best couple therapy there is.

SOME QUICK AND EASY MANTRAS

Yadav doesn't do anything revolutionary. Although his job as additional director, GST, can get demanding, he keeps to a smart formula. He eats clean, growing his own vegetables as we catch him at his official residence in Faridabad, tending to spinach, guava, lemons, Bengal currant and bananas, all rich in vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients. He has no tea, coffee or carbonated drinks. He always keeps the protein balance in each meal. "For example, I will have

LIFE
POSITIVE



FITNESS IS POSSIBLE EVEN WITH A FULL-TIME JOB

Yadav takes out 10 minutes every weekend to make a small video documenting his experiences. "I started a YouTube channel and put up short videos on Instagram to share my knowledge, hoping to motivate at least one person to change their lifestyle that's increasing the burden of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and obesity among Indians," says Yadav. "It is not impossible to maintain good health even while working a full-time job. Everyone needs to set aside some time for physical activities each day, which become more and more important as one ages. And, it shouldn't be difficult – even if one takes out one minute for every hour of the day, the 24 minutes can save 240 hours of ill health," he adds.

While his online presence was the key in his selection as Fit India ambassador, he thinks social media has also driven youngsters to adopt short-cuts. "Everyone wants to look good and wear fitted clothes for social media posts but this appearance-conscious-

Polar Opposites: A Journey Through The Arctic and Antarctica

Exploring the Mysteries of Our Planet's Most Elusive Lands

tally conscious operations, provided a safe and insightful passage into one of the world's most extraordinary places.

Preparing for an expedition to Antarctica was an adventure in itself, marked by a mix of excitement and apprehension for all three of us: my parents and me. As the departure date approached, the reality of venturing into one of the Earth's most remote and extreme environments set in, fuelling a sense of adventure and a deep respect for the journey ahead. Boarding the ship was a moment of awe and also a realisation that this ship was nowhere close to the luxury cruises that we have come to expect in the calmer waters of the Bahamas or the Mediterranean Sea. The ship, robust and equipped for the icy waters of the Antarctic, offered comfort and safety amidst the wilderness. Days were filled with briefings, morning and evening zodiac boat excursions, wildlife watching from the deck, and mingling with fellow adventurers, creating a vibrant atmosphere of exploring the elusive Antarctic continent together.

Crossing the Drake Passage, notorious for its turbulent seas, was a rite of passage, showcasing the raw power of nature and had me running for my sea sickness medicines. But all that is forgotten with the first sighting of Antarctica's icebergs and snow-capped mountains, which are just breathtaking. Wildlife encounters, from spotting a pod of killer whales to seals lounging on ice floes, these were moments of pure magic. The penguins of the South Shetland Islands, with their charming waddles and curious nature, offer a delightful glimpse into the heart of Antarctic wildlife. These resilient birds, hundreds of them thriving in the harsh climate, embody the spirit of the southernmost ecosystems, captivating visitors with their playful antics and communal living.

For me, the Polar Plunge stands out as a highlight, a testament to the spirit of adventure that defines the Antarctic experience. Standing on the ship's edge, clad only in swimwear against the stark, icy backdrop, was a moment of exhilarating vulnerability. The plunge into the freezing waters was a shock, a rush of adrenaline, and an indescrib-



TASHITOBGYAL

HOME TRUTHS

Even while staying up nights preparing for UPSC, Yadav used to work out in the neighbourhood park in the evening. Discipline is all about meeting daily quotas

ness drives youngsters to adopt quick ways of gaining muscle like steroid use, which might harm your body in the long run," he says.

STARTING OUT YOUNG

Growing up in Allahabad, Yadav was a fairly active child and inculcated the idea of living healthy rather early in life. "I remember going to the park in the morning with my father. While he would walk, I would run two rounds of about 6 km," he says.

When Yadav came to Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar to study for UPSC, he pulled all-nighters for about one-and-a-half years. "Even while preparing for UPSC, I used to work out in the neighbourhood park in the evenings," he says. In winters, he ran long distance, a habit that has made him a top performer in four half marathons.

THE TURNING POINT

During his first posting as a revenue offi-



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Fact of the matter

DIET: Include protein in every meal, have leafy greens, fruits and vegetables. No tea, coffee or carbonated drinks. Snack on dry fruits, seeds, fox nuts

EXERCISE: Alternate routines with cardio, strength training and flexibility exercises. For variety, go for a run to burn calories. Use cans and bottled water as weights.

cer in Visakhapatnam, Yadav binged on his favourite biryani quite often. Suddenly, he put on a lot of weight. "My normal weight is around 87 kg but it had sneakily risen to 107 kg back then. When I went to a doctor with complaints of knee pain, he told me I needed to correct my lifestyle or risk diseases. That was the motivation I needed to get back on track," says Yadav.

As a person who does nothing half-way, he not only started training in the gym, he focussed on running as a form of cardio, learnt gymnastics to maintain flexibility and worked towards a black belt in Jeet Kune Do for strength. He also studied nutrition to ensure that he could fight the flab in a scientific manner. These days, he alternates between different workouts through the week to avoid boredom. "I do not wait for marathons. Some days, when the weather is nice, I step out for a 21-km run," he says.

However, Yadav's greatest achievement is being a positive influence on people around him. Rachna says since he wakes up early, she and the kids do not need an alarm clock. And they engage in activities together that sets them up in a good mood for the day.

When one of his junior officers developed breathing issues because of obesity, frequently requiring inhalers, Yadav inspired him to take up running. After five years, he lost weight, had a flat stomach and didn't need inhalers anymore. "Life is like balancing an equation, the answer lies within you," says Yadav, as he gets his kids to do some stretches with him. The whole family can now do full splits.

ADVERTORIAL

diversity, including polar bears, walruses, and Arctic foxes, alongside indigenous human communities.

The experience onboard varies significantly between the two expeditions. Ships destined for Antarctica are often ice-strengthened vessels equipped to navigate through ice-packed waters, emphasizing environmental sustainability and research facilities. Arctic cruises might utilize similar vessels but also include icebreakers to reach the North Pole, offering more varied routes that include coastal towns and indigenous communities, providing a richer cultural experience. Both expeditions offer unique activities like kayaking and wildlife watching, but the Arctic adds the dimension of cultural encounters and the possibility of witnessing the Northern Lights.

From my personal perspective, having experienced Antarctica's awe-inspiring solitude and raw beauty, I anticipate the highlights of an Arctic expedition would contrast significantly, particularly through interactions with local cultures and the diverse wildlife. The Arctic's variable landscape and seasonal changes would offer a more dynamic experience, while Antarctica's otherworldly tranquility and monumental ice landscapes offer a profound sense of remoteness and conservation urgency. Both expeditions promise unparalleled adventures, yet each leaves an indelible mark on the soul, highlighting the beauty and fragility of our planet's polar frontiers. These expeditions not only forge unforgettable memories but also instill a profound appreciation for our planet's fragile beauty. What's your pick then - the Arctic or Antarctica? I would love to know what you would prefer ticking off first. So drop me a line at neil@veenaworld.com. Until the next time, keep Celebrating Life!



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able connection to the raw beauty of Antarctica. Emerging from the water, the sense of achievement and aliveness was unparalleled. Two seconds in those icy cold waters is all that I could really manage.

For my parents, a highlight was sending a postcard from the southernmost post office in the world, located at Port Lockroy in Antarctica. As you pen your message amidst the backdrop of glaciers and penguins, you're not just sharing your adventure but also leaving a mark from one of the most remote corners of the planet. This rare opportunity connects you across vast distances, turning a simple postcard into a

cultural heritage and natural beauty, navigating routes that stretch from the majestic fjords of Norway to the ice-covered expanses of Svalbard, and some even reaching the North Pole for those truly adventurous spirits. What sets the Arctic Polar Express Expedition apart is its comprehensive itinerary that not only showcases the stark, breathtaking landscapes of the Arctic but also delves into the rich histories and cultures of Arctic communities. Travellers on this expedition can expect to encounter a diverse array of wildlife, including polar bears – the kings of the Arctic, walruses, and myriad bird species, all thriving in their natural habitats. The geography of the region offers dramatic vistas of glaciers, towering icebergs, and the ethereal beauty of the Midnight Sun during summer months, providing endless opportunities for photography and nature observation. In 2024, this expedition ticks off three things on a traveller's bucketlist: 1. Northern Lights 2. Midnight Sun 3. Spotting a Polar Bear.

Reflecting on the expedition, the impact is profound and multifaceted. The journey was not just a physical adventure but a transformative experience, challenging my perceptions of our place within the natural world. The expedition offered me a unique perspective on the world, fostering a deep appreciation for its wonders and a renewed commitment to its preservation. The memories and lessons from the Sergey Vavilov expedition will remain a guiding force, inspiring a lifelong passion for exploration and conservation.

Upon my return from Antarctica, I encountered one question time and again: 'Did you see any polar bears there?' The answer is always a gentle 'No'—polar bears reign in the Arctic, not the icy expanses of Antarctica. This curiosity, however, sets the stage perfectly to shift our focus northward, far beyond the northernmost town on Earth with a civilian airport: Longyearbyen. Let's embark on an exploration of Arctic adventures.

The Arctic Polar Express Expedition, unlike other polar expeditions that might focus solely on Antarctic landscapes, is a captivating expedition which carves its path through the Arctic's unique blend of

Antarctica and the Arctic, the Earth's polar opposites, offer distinct expeditions that are as varied as their landscapes and climates. Geographically, Antarctica is a vast, icy continent surrounded by ocean, presenting a stark, frozen wilderness with colossal ice shelves and mountains. The Arctic, conversely, is an ocean encircled by land, featuring a mix of sea ice, tundra, and boreal forests. This fundamental difference shapes each region's climate and wildlife; Antarctica is colder, drier, and windier, primarily inhabited by penguins, seals, and seabirds, while the Arctic boasts a broader ecological

