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CENTRAL AGENCY ARRESTS KEJRIWAL

ED arrests Delhi CM days after it linked him to ₹100 cr kickbacks in excise case

GAYATHRI MANI, ARNABJIT SUR & MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

ARVIND KEJRIWAL, whose campaign against corruption in 2011 birthed the Aam Aadmi Party and paved the way for his ascension as Delhi's Chief Minister, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate Thursday night in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

He became the first serving Chief Minister to be arrested, after months of skipping summons by the investigation agency — nine in total — and calling them "illegal".

His arrest came hours after the Delhi High Court declined to grant Kejriwal interim protection from coercive action by the ED.

The case pertains to alleged kickbacks received by the AAP and its leaders in implementation of the now-scrapped 2021-22 Delhi excise policy.

While Kejriwal is the most high-profile arrest in the case, investigation agencies have also arrested his former deputy

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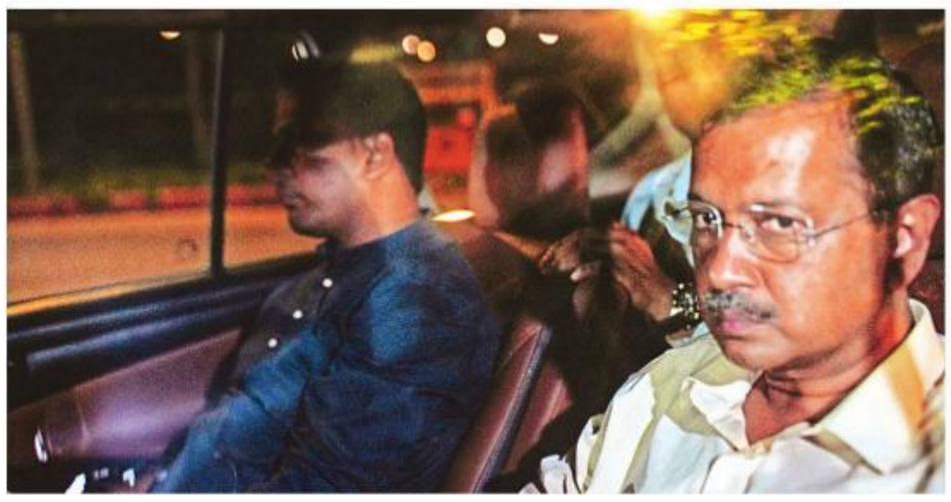

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal being taken away from his residence after his arrest in New Delhi on Thursday. *Abhinav Saha*

Frightened dictator, says Rahul; Opposition loses 'national campaign voice'

MANOJ C G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

AS ARVIND Kejriwal became the second Opposition chief minister — the first sitting CM — to be arrested in less than two months, the Opposition INDIA bloc rallied behind him and launched a blistering attack on the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

From senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK leader M K Stalin, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, a range of Opposition leaders severely criticised the Government.

Hitting out at Modi, Rahul said a "scared dictator" is sounding the death knell of democracy. Leaders of the Delhi Congress, led by its chief Arvinder Singh Lovely and AAP baiter Sandeep Dikshit, reached Kejriwal's residence in a show of support.

"While capturing all the institutions including the media, breaking up parties, extorting money from companies, freezing the account of the main

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FULL COVERAGE
PAGES 4, 5, 8

WHAT NEXT, WHO NEXT

AAP claims he will run Govt from jail, why that's easier said than done

L-G can push for President's rule if he doesn't quit; political vacuum in party

MALLICA JOSHI, JATIN ANAND & APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

EXPLAINED

WHO NEXT and what next? Never have these questions been as relevant for a political party and a government as they are now for the Aam Aadmi Party.

As Arvind Kejriwal was arrested on Thursday evening, the party maintained that he will run the government from Tihar jail.

"There is no plan to change the Delhi Chief Minister or the party chief. We have said before that if he is arrested, he will govern from jail and that stance has not changed," said Delhi Health and Urban Development minister Saurabh Bharadwaj.

That's easier said than done given the new battlelines — political and Constitutional — that are being drawn.

For Kejriwal to remain CM, he would need some respite from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BJP'S TOTAL DONORS 487, ITS TOTAL BONDS REDEEMED SINCE APRIL 2019: ₹6,060 CR

BJP recipient No. 1, its top 10 donors form 35% of its ₹6,000-cr bond kitty

SBI files compliance affidavit in SC; EC releases donor, recipient details

JAY MAZOOMDAAR, SHIJITH KUNHITTY, ANJISHNU DAS & RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

PUSHED AND prodded by the Supreme Court, the State Bank of India (SBI), which had sought time until June 30, revealed telling data on electoral bonds Thursday — from donor details to parties that redeemed the bonds, including the unique alphanumeric codes that link donors to beneficiaries.

A scrutiny of the data published by the Election Commission of India reveals that the top 10 of the total 487 donors to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party account for Rs 2,119 crore, which is 35 per cent of the party's electoral bond kitty of Rs 6,060 crore encashed since April 2019, the largest amongst all parties.

This data, published by ECI after SBI filed a compliance affidavit as directed by the top court, represents the largest disclosure regarding the controversial scheme that guaranteed absolute anonymity to donors. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FULL COVERAGE
PAGE 7

TOP 10 DONORS FOR TOP 3 PARTIES

BJP — 6,060 cr*

Megha Engineering	584 cr**
Qwik Supply Chain	375 cr
Vedanta	226.65 cr
Bharti Airtel	197.4 cr
Madanlal Ltd.	175.5 cr
Keventer Food Park	144.5
DLF	130
Birla Carbon	105
Future Gaming	100
Haldia Energy	81

TMC — 1,610 cr

Future Gaming	542 cr
Haldia Energy	281 cr
Dhariwal Infrastructure	90 cr
MKJ Enterprises	45.9 cr
Avees Trading	45.5 cr
IFB Agro	42
Chennai Green Woods	40
PCBL Ltd	40
Prarambh Securities	38.75
Crescent Power Ltd	33

CONG — 1,422 cr

Western UP Power	110 cr
Vedanta	104 cr
MKJ Enterprises	91.6 cr
Yashoda Super Specialty	64 cr
Avees Trading	53 cr
Future Gaming	50
Sasmal Infrastructure	39
Rithwik Projects	30
SEPC Power	30
Siddhi Trading	22

** Total bonds redeemed since April 2019; ** Value of bonds (Rs crore); Data compiled by Shijith Kunhitty, Anjishnu Das*

Infra, metals and energy dominate donor sectors

SHYAMLAL YADAV & JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE TOP three donors of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, the biggest beneficiary of electoral bonds, include Hyderabad-headquartered Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd, Qwik Supply Chain Private Ltd, which is associated with Reliance Industries Ltd, and Anil Agarwal-promoted Vedanta Ltd. Put together, they donated Rs 1,186 crore to the party.

According to data released Wednesday by the Election Commission of India, BJP has redeemed Rs 584 crore from Megha Engineering and its associate company Western UP Power Transmission Company Limited. Megha itself funded BJP to the tune of Rs 449 crore and Western UP Power Transmission

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Common to Cong, BJP: Group that gave the most

LALMANI VERMA & JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE NO. 1 donor to the Congress was the Megha Group's Western UP Power Transmission Company Limited which contributed Rs 110 crore via electoral bonds. The group's Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited was also the highest donor to the BJP with Rs 529 crore — it was the second largest purchaser of electoral bonds, spending Rs 1,192 crore.

The Congress redeemed poll bonds worth a total of Rs 1,422 crore since April 2019.

The Vedanta Ltd was the party's second largest poll bond donor with Rs 104 crore.

MKJ Enterprises Limited, which trades in stainless steel,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Bond Buyer No. 1 is TMC's Donor No. 1

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE BIGGEST purchaser of electoral bonds, lottery company Future Gaming and Hotel Services Pvt Ltd, which bought bonds worth over Rs 1,300 crore between 2019 and 2024, donated the highest amount of Rs 542 crore to the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

According to data released by the Election Commission on Thursday, the TMC, led by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, received Rs 1,610 crore through electoral bonds from 211 donors between April 12, 2019 and January 24, 2024.

Apart from Future Gaming, the TMC also received Rs 281 crore from Haldia Energy and Rs 90 crore from Dhariwal Infrastructure. Two companies — MKJ Enterprises and AVEES Trading Finance — donated over Rs 45 crore each. Among the other donors were IFB Agro Industries, Chennai Green Woods, PCBL, Prarambh

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL
By UNNY

SC stays Govt fact check unit, says challenge involves free speech

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

A DAY after the Centre notified a Fact Checking Unit (FCU) under the Press Information Bureau (PIB) to identify fake news about the government, the Supreme Court Thursday stayed the operation of the notification until the Bombay High Court takes a final decision on petitions challenging the 2023 amendments to the Information Technology Rules.

A three-judge bench, comprising Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the challenge before the High Court "implicates core values impinging on freedom of speech… protected by Article 19".

Staying the operation of the March 20 notification on FCU by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the bench noted that the Centre had assured the High Court on April 27, 2023 that the FCU would not be notified until petitions challenging Rule 3 (1) (b) (v) of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

How police tracked a baseball cap from CCTV to key accused in Bengaluru cafe blast case

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, MARCH 21

THE TRAIL of a baseball cap that a man wore while planting an improvised explosive device at The Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on March 1 has yielded vital clues about the suspect involved in the lunch-hour blast that left nine people injured.

A CCTV grab of the suspect

The cap the suspect is seen wearing in CCTV footage from the cafe in Whitefield was found abandoned near a religious place located around three kilometres from the cafe, where he allegedly also changed from a shirt to a round-neck t-shirt.

The branded cap, with number 10 inscribed on it, led investigators to a central Chennai mall where it was sold at a branded retail store in late January. It also led to new CCTV footage of two men purchasing the cap and other items, including the suspect seen in the cafe CCTV footage, multiple sources familiar with the probe confirmed.

The cap is a limited edition series of merchandise from a youth brand and around 400 have been sold in India by the company, which only has a presence across south India through

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Central agency arrests Kejriwal

Manish Sisodia (in jail since February 2023), party Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh (arrested in October 2023), AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair (in custody since November 2022) and BRS leader K Kavitha (held last week) in connection with the case.

Kejriwal's arrest, which comes five days after the Model Code of Conduct came into force, effectively takes him out of the Lok Sabha campaign. A key INDIA bloc partner, he had been attacking the BJP on issues ranging from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act to the misuse of investigation agencies.

With the ED closing in, Kejriwal had moved an application in the Delhi High Court seeking interim relief from "coercive" action. It was filed as part of his main writ petition challenging the summons issued to him by the ED and the validity of certain provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

A division bench of Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Manoj Jain said it had heard both sides – Kejriwal's and the ED's – but was "not inclined" to grant him protection "at this stage". The bench said the application will be heard on April 22 with the main writ petition.

Shortly after 4 pm, information began to emerge that the ED had sought information from the Delhi Police about security arrangements around the CM's residence. "Queries included whether there is a rear entry/exit at his Civil Lines home, and how many party workers were present outside," a senior police officer said.

"Messages were shared with officers of the North district and security wing. Two things were conveyed – that he was at home and that there is a gate in the backyard. A security plan was prepared and higher-ups told personnel not to share information about the raid. Police personnel were asked to reach his house and the Rapid Action Force was called to manage the crowd," the officer said.

An officer said there had been instances in the past when party workers gathered in large numbers when the ED went to serve summons to Kejriwal, which is why extra caution was taken to ensure the plan remained a secret.

"After all the arrangements were made by the Delhi Police, a message was conveyed that the ED team could come and question the CM," the officer said.

"Following questioning, the ED team decided to arrest Kejriwal after seeking legal opinion," the officer said.

In a statement later, AAP minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "Every corner of the CM's residence was searched, and the ED got Rs 70,000 in cash, which it returned."

Outside, the crowd had been swelling. With hundreds of party workers and MLAs blocking the entry and exit points from Kejriwal's home, the ED, despite arresting Kejriwal at 9 pm, could not take him out of his house for another two hours. He was then escorted to the ED headquarters.

Dozens of protesters, including MLAs Rakhi Bidlan, Sanjeev Jha and Jarnail Singh, were detained. Also in the crowd were Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely and senior leader Sandeep Dikshit. The AAP and Congress have tied up in the national capital. "We are firmly with our alliance partner. This arrest is blatant and unconstitutional," Lovely said.

The AAP, meanwhile, decided to knock on the Supreme Court doors – its legal team rushed to the Registrar's home – hoping for a late-night hearing. The top court, however, said it would hear the matter on Friday.

With its founder and chief arrested, the AAP said Kejriwal "is and will remain Chief Minister". "He will not resign," said party leader and Delhi minister Atishi.

Punjab Chief Minister, AAP's Bhagwant Mann, in a post on social media, said, "The BJP's political team (ED) cannot arrest Kejriwal's ideology… because only AAP can stop BJP. Ideology can never be suppressed."

At a press conference a little before midnight, AAP minister Gopal Rai said, "If Arvind Kejriwal can be arrested, anyone can be arrested. BJP is scared of losing the polls – it will come down from 400 to 40 seats." The party asked its workers to head home for the night, and gather at the party office on Friday morning.

While Kejriwal was not named in the FIRs registered by the ED or the CBI in the Delhi excise policy case, his name first found a mention in the ED's chargesheet wherein the agency claimed that he allegedly spoke to one of the main accused, Sameer Mahendru, in a video call and asked him to continue working with co-accused Vijay Nair.

The second reference to Kejriwal was made in a press release issued by the ED on Monday, wherein it called him a "conspirator" in the case. This followed the arrest of K Kavitha, a BRS leader and daughter of former Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao, in the case. The ED has alleged Kavitha is part of the "South group" that paid money to get undue benefits under the now-scrapped policy. "ED investigation revealed that Kavitha along with others conspired with the top leaders of AAP including Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia for getting favours in the Delhi Excise policy formulation and implementation. In exchange for these favours, she was involved in paying Rs 100 crore to the leaders of AAP," the ED alleged.

– WITH MALAVIKA PRASAD

• Infra, metals and energy dominate donor sectors

gave Rs 80 crore. The group is also the top donor for Congress.

Future Gaming, which is the largest contributor to the Trinamool Congress (Rs 542 crore) and the DMK (Rs 503 crore), also funded BJP to the tune of Rs 100 crore.

The Enforcement Directorate had initiated a money laundering probe against Future Gaming in early 2019. By July that year, it had attached assets worth over Rs 250 crore belonging to the company. On April 2, 2022, the ED attached movable assets worth Rs 409.92 crore in the case.

The BJP encashed the Rs 100 crore from Future Gaming between October 2021 to January 2022.

The data also showed that the saffron party redeemed bonds worth Rs 375 crore from Qwik Supply Chain Private Limited. The directors in the shareholding companies of Qwik Supply Chain are existing and retired top executives in Reliance Industries Ltd.

BJP has got Rs 227 crore from Vedanta Ltd, a company that figures among the top five donors of the Congress too. ED had claimed that it had evidence related to Vedanta Group's alleged involvement in the bribe-for-visa case where certain Chinese nationals were given visas by alleged bending of rules.

A reference sent by ED to CBI translated into a case of corruption in 2022 following which ED began a money laundering probe.

The data also shows that two big northern India corporate groups — Bharti Airtel Ltd and DLF Commercial donated Rs 197 crore and Rs 130 crore, respectively. Madanlal Ltd, a company belonging to Kolkata's MKJ Group, donated Rs 176 crore to the BJP.

Megha Engineering promoted by PP Reddy and PV Krishna Reddy, which is the biggest donor for the BJP, involved in marquee projects such as the Kaleswaram Dam project. It is also building the Zojila tunnel and the Polavaram dam.

• Frightened dictator, says Rahul

opposition party was not enough for the 'asuri shakti' now the arrest of the elected Chief Ministers has also become a common thing. INDIA will give a befitting reply to this," Rahul said.

Kharge said "the arrogant BJP, which makes false claims of victory every day, is trying to weaken the opposition by illegal means before the elections. If there was real confidence of victory then the accounts of the main opposition party, Congress Party, would not have been frozen by misusing the constitutional institutions. Leaders of opposition parties are not targeted right before the elections. The truth is that BJP is scared of the upcoming election results and in panic is creating all kinds of problems for the opposition."

That the Lok Sabha elections are knocking on the door is the key imperative but the larger message that the Opposition parties want to convey, many of its leaders said, is that the Modi government is hellbent on squeezing its political rivals to ensure an "Opposition-free" campaign. And Kejriwal's arrest was meant to "silence his voice during the campaign."

Earlier in the day, the top three of the Congress -- Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul -- had come out accusing the government of crippling it financially by freezing its bank accounts.

The refrain of the opposition leaders was that the BJP, despite its claim of securing a third term with an improved tally, is unsure of its victory and hence is targeting the Opposition. Kejriwal, after all, is not Hemant Soren or BRS leader K Kavitha or for that matter Manish Sisodia or Sanjay Singh. The opposition is hoping that his arrest in the excise policy scam, days after the election schedule was announced, sends a signal to the electorate of the Centre's strong-arm politics.

Emerging on the political scene as an anti-graft crusader a little over a decade ago, labelling almost every established political party and many of its well0-entrenched leaders as corrupt, Kejriwal, then the quintessential outsider, is now one of the lynchpins of the anti-BJP opposition bloc, having forged close relationships with many of its leading lights and alliances with parties including the Congress.

His arrest will also effectively keep him out of the Lok Sabha election campaign trial, robbing the opposition of a potent national voice, who takes on the BJP aggressively on its nationalism pitch -- his framing the CAA, for instance, as hurting young citizens – along with his school-mohalla clinic governance pitch.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called Kejriwal's arrest "outright vicious and part of a callous plot to silence all opposition voices just ahead of the general elections." He said the move "exposes the cowardice of those who fear democratic process and calls for collective action to resist abuse of power."

His Tamil Nadu counterpart M K Stalin called the BJP government fascist. "Not a single BJP leader faces scrutiny or arrest, laying bare their abuse of power and the decay of democracy. The relentless persecution of opposition leaders by the BJP Govt smacks of a desperate witch-hunt. This tyranny ignites public fury, unmasking BJP's true colours. But their futile arrests only fuel our resolve, fortifying the INDIA alliance's march to victory. BJP, brace for the people's wrath," Stalin said.

The Trinamool Congress, NCP, Samajwadi Party and the Left, too, slammed the arrest.

"We vehemently condemn the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal, an elected CM, especially when EC is in charge & MCC is in place. Earlier his administrative powers were snatched through an illegal ordinance. How can we expect fair elections in India if sitting CMs & prominent opposition leaders are arrested weeks before polls? If SC & ECI fail to act now, who will stand with people against BJP's oppressive politics in future?" said senior TMC leader Derek O'Brien.

He said if the "chiefs of political parties, Chief Ministers, political leaders, election agents, workers, every opponent -- being harassed & arrested like this…what will be the fate of our precious democracy."

Akhilesh Yadav was scathing. "Those who are themselves imprisoned in the fear of defeat…What will 'they' do by imprisoning someone else? The BJP knows that it will not come to power again. Due to this fear, it wants to remove the opposition leaders from the public by any means at the time of elections. Arrest is just an excuse. This arrest will give birth to a new people's revolution," Yadav said.

Condemning what he called "vindictive misuse of Central agencies to target the opposition, especially as general elections loom," NCP chief Sharad Pawar said the "arrest showcases the depth to which BJP will stoop for power." The INDIA alliance, he said, stands united against this unconstitutional action. CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury claimed that BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are in "panic" over their impending rejection by people in the Lok Sabha polls. People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti said Kejriwal's arrest reeks of political vendetta and growing authoritarianism. "The arbitrary arrest of yet another CM by ED reeks of political vendetta and growing authoritarianism," the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said.

• Common to Cong, BJP

was at No.3 with 91.6 crore. The group, better known as Madanlal & Keventer group, has four companies based in Kolkata. The main promoter of the group is Mahendra Kumar Jalan.

Other prominent donors to the Congress vial electoral bonds were Yashoda Hospitals (Rs 64 crore); Avees Trading Finance Pvt Limited (Rs 53 crore); 'Lottery King' Santiago Martin's Future Gaming and Hotel Services (Rs 50 crore); Sasmal Infrastructure Pvt Ltd (Rs 39 crore); Rithwik Projects Pvt Ltd (Rs 30 crore); SEPC Power (Rs 30 crore).

At least two companies are from West Bengal where the party is not very strong – Avees Trading Finance Pvt Ltd and Sasmal Infrastructure Pvt Ltd.

• TMC's donor

Securities and Crescent Power.

Other than the TMC, Future Gaming, run by "lottery king" Santiago Martin, also donated Rs 509 crore to the DMK from April 19, 2019 till November 14, 2023.

Among the party's other donors were: Transways Exim Private Limited, Keventer Foodpark Infra Limited, Rashmi Cement Ltd, Rahul Bhatia, Westwell Gases Private Limited, Phillips Carbon Black Limited, Misrilall Mines Pvt Ltd, Himalayan Endeavour Pvt Ltd, M/s Ramesh Agarwal C S Bottling, PL Ripley & Co Stevedoring & Handling Pvt, Castle Liquors Private Limited, and Monalisa Bottling Industries Pvt Ltd.

• How police tracked a baseball cap

retail stores and online sales.

Each cap has a serial number which can be traced to the point of sale, police sources said.

Using classic investigation tactics, police matched the CCTV footage at the retail store to the date of purchase and found the persons who had bought the cap. "The store had CCTV backup for over a month. The cap was purchased in January 2024," sources said.

CCTV footage from the store, along with footage from Bengaluru where the suspect is seen without a mask in a public bus, has provided a clearer picture of the identity of the suspect, multiple sources familiar with the probe said.

According to police sources, the man, in all probability, is Musavir Hussain Shazib, a missing suspect from the Shivamogga module of the Islamic State, who has been on the radar of investigative agencies since January 2020 and carries a Rs 5 lakh reward by the National Investigation Agency for his arrest. "The new CCTV footage confirms the theory that the suspect is Shazib," police sources said.

"The identity of the suspect has been established in some ways. We have to confirm it and catch him. The NIA and CCB are working together; we are getting closer," Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara had said on March 11.

"There are similarities with a suspect who has been missing for over four years. It can be confirmed only scientifically or after an arrest," a senior Bengaluru police officer said. Investigating agencies have found hair samples in the baseball cap, which can be used for a DNA match with the suspect's family members, sources said.

The IED went off at 12.56 pm on March 1, an hour after the suspect was at the cafe for barely nine minutes – between 11.35 am and 11.44 am. The CCTV trail of the suspect from public buses and street cameras – after his exit from the cafe – showed him entering a religious place and later boarding a bus without the cap and shirt he wore to the cafe.

The CCTV trail had first taken investigators till Ballari in north Karnataka, where the man could be seen at a bus stop around 9 pm. Parameshwara had also said on March 7 that "the accused changed clothes and travelled by bus".

No arrests have been made so far even as the case has been taken over by the NIA.

• AAP claims he will run Govt from jail, why that's easier said than done

courts. This is key because for a string of opposition ministers who were arrested, repeated denial of bail has been a gentle nudge to resign.

For Tamil Nadu Minister Senthil Balaji, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in June last year, the Madras High Court in January asked how he could continue to be a minister 230 days after being arrested. Even within AAP, Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain tendered their resignations after being denied bail.

But if Kejriwal holds on to his post, the Centre could cite that to frame new constitutional challenges. For one, a Chief Minister governing from a jail could trigger questions of "failure of constitutional machinery in state" which could be used to argue for President's rule under Article 239AB of the Constitution.

Delhi's unique constitutional scheme allows for the Lieutenant Governor to report to the President to suspend the operation of Article 239AA which governs Delhi if the LG is satisfied that "a situation has arisen in which the administration of the National Capital cannot be carried on in accordance with Article 239AA" or "that for the proper administration of National Capital Territory it is necessary and expedient to do so." The Delhi Assembly's tenure ends February 2025 but invocation of President's rule can mean that the Centre can take control of Delhi.

But who will, before an all-important Lok Sabha election, the first one that AAP is contesting in an alliance, lead the party is the political question?

Even though it has an overwhelming majority in the Delhi Assembly — AAP has 62 of 70 MLAs — there is no clear answer.

This is not only because nearly all of its most senior leaders — Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain and Sanjay Singh — are in jail but also because the Chief Minister is the glue that holds the party together.

The next biggest leader that the party has is Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who is also facing a crucial test in Punjab, where AAP is contesting on all 13 Lok Sabha seats, and stands against its alliance partner in Delhi — Congress as well as BJP and Akali Dal. In Delhi, the leadership includes Ministers Gopal Rai, Atishi and Bharadwaj.

What the AAP faces now, party insiders said, is not just a crisis of leadership but also a test of loyalty.

"We know how BJP has broken party after party over the last few years. With Kejriwal behind bars, these efforts will only become more strident. What the party needs at this hour is a leader who can take charge but who that is going to be remains a big question mark," the leader said.

"The party's fate is tied directly to that of Kejriwal. One has to remember that the party is barely 11 years old. AAP is a young party with young leaders. When an attack of this sort is made, the very foundations are tested. This is that moment for AAP," he added.

Many party leaders, however, believe that the party has the resilience and depth to tide over. "Parties with core strength do not stop existing at a time of crisis. We have stood against the BJP's tactics all these years and will continue to do so," Bharadwaj said.

The genesis of AAP lies in the 2011 anti-corruption movement that started from the narrow lanes of Jantar Mantar, before shifting to the expansive Ramlila Maidan, and eventually led to the demise of the Congress in Delhi. Then, Kejriwal shared the stage with social activist Anna Hazare, Prashant Bhushan, Yogendra Yadav, Manish Sisodia, Kumar Vishwas, Sanjay Singh and Gopal Rai.

In 2012, when the decision to form the party was taken, the posters carried photos of all except Hazare, who was against the idea. Of those who launched the party, only Gopal Rai, who is the head of the party's Delhi unit and a Delhi minister, remains.

Another line of thought in AAP is that it is the BJP that has taken a risk.

"It is AAP's history that whenever it is faced with a crisis, it emerges stronger. This party's obituary had been written countless times, only to be erased. The BJP has taken a risk by arresting a chief minister who has won not one, but three elections in the country with an overwhelming majority (twice in Delhi and once in Punjab). It is the people that BJP has to answer to now," Bharadwaj added.

On apprehensions that President's rule will be imposed in Delhi if the CM tries to run the government from jail, Bharadwaj said: "It is a possibility but eventually the BJP has to come back to the people. They have arrested someone who has been chosen by the people of Delhi to lead them. They have to be answerable to the people."

• BJP recipient No. 1, its top 10 donors form 35% of its bond kitty

scheme was called "unconstitutional" and scrapped on February 15 by the court.

The data reveals that Donor Number 1 Future Games and Hotel Services Limited funded BJP only to the tune of Rs 100 crore; three-fourths of its Rs 1,368 crore booty was split almost equally between the Trinamool Congress (Rs 542 crore) and the DMK (Rs 503 crore).

Donor Number 2 Megha Group emerged as the top donor for both the BJP and the Congress. Of the Rs 1,192 crore worth bonds purchased by the group, BJP got almost half at Rs 584 crore. This was more than five times that of Congress (Rs 110 crore).

Four companies of the Kolkata-headquartered MKJ Group bought bonds worth Rs 617 crore — put together they are the third largest donor. The BJP received Rs 372 crore, more than half the total bond purchases by the group, which includes Madanlal Ltd, Keventer Food Park Infra Ltd, and Sasmal Infrastructure. The Congress Rs 161 crore, and the Trinamool Rs 47 crore.

Eight companies of Aditya Birla Group purchased bonds worth Rs 584 crore, making it the fourth highest donor. The Group's four top donor companies — Haldia Energy (Rs 377 crore), Dhariwal Infrastructure (Rs 115 crore), Philips Carbon (Rs 35 crore) and Crescent Power (Rs 34 crore) together purchased bonds for Rs 561 crore. Of this, the Trinamool received Rs 419 crore, the BJP 126 crore and the Congress Rs 15 crore.

RPSG Group is the fifth largest donor overall with a total bond purchase value of Rs 553 crore. The top three donor companies of the Group — Essel Mining (Rs 225 crore), Utkal Alumina International (Rs 145 crore) and Birla Carbon (Rs 105 crore) accounted for bonds worth Rs 475 crore. Of this, Rs 245 crore went to the BJD and Rs 230 crore to the BJP.

Next on the list is Qwik Supply Chain Pvt Ltd, an associate company of Reliance Industries Ltd, which spent Rs 410 crore on bonds. Of this, the BJP received Rs 375 crore and the Shiv Sena Rs 25 crore.

Vedanta Limited, the seventh largest buyer of bonds, spent Rs 401 crore. The BJP is the top beneficiary with Rs 227 crore while the Congress and the BJD received Rs 104 crore and Rs 40 crore, respectively.

Four companies of the Bharti Group purchased bonds worth Rs 247 crore. The top donor, Bharti Airtel Limited, spent Rs 183 crore on bonds. Of this, the BJP received Rs 197 crore.

Four Jindal companies donated Rs 192 crore in bonds. Jindal Steel and Power, the biggest buyer, spent Rs 123 crore. The BJD received the lion's share of Rs 100 crore, while the Congress and the BJP received bonds worth Rs 20 crore and Rs 3 crore respectively.

Ahmedabad-based Torrent Group, the tenth largest donor, donated Rs 184 crore through three companies. The biggest donor — Torrent Power Ltd — spent Rs 107 crore. Of this, the BJP received Rs 107 crore, while the Congress and the AAP got Rs 17 crore and Rs 7 crore, respectively.

On Thursday, the ECI made public two sets of data, which comprised a list of 18,871 electoral bonds purchased, and 20,421 electoral bonds redeemed after April 12, 2019. Of these, the purchaser and recipient matched only for 18,741 electoral bonds, based on the unique alphanumeric number, and accounted for Rs 12,145.88 crore.

• SC stays Govt fact check unit, says challenge involves free speech

the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules 2023 are decided by the High Court.

The FCU has been a contentious issue with concerns about the government's fairness to act as an arbiter in matters where it may have a conflict of interest. There are worries about its potential impact on press freedom, especially when reports critical of the government are published. With social media platforms becoming an important tool for media companies to disseminate content, flagging of a report as fake by the FCU can prompt the government to direct a platform to remove the links to that report.

The bench said it was not making any comment on merits as the matter was pending before the High Court.

"We are of the considered view that the challenge which is pending before HC implicates core values impinging on freedom of speech, which is protected by Article 19. Since all the issues await the adjudication of the HC, we are desisting from expressing any opinion on merits which may ultimately have the impact of foreclosing a full and fair consideration by the third judge of the High Court," it said.

"However, we are clearly of the view that the notification dated March 20, 2024, which has been issued by the Union Government after the rejection of the application for interim relief, would need to be stayed," it said.

The bench said "the challenges to Rule 3 (1) (b) (v) involves serious Constitutional questions. The impact of the Rule on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression would call for analysis by the HC".

"We accordingly set aside the opinion of the third judge declining interim relief (of stay) dated March 11, 2024 and direct that pending the disposal of the proceeding before the HC, the notification of the… Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology dated March 20, 2024 shall remain stayed," the bench ruled, hearing petitions filed by the Editors Guild of India (EGI) and stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra.

Appearing for Kamra, Senior Advocate Darius Khambata said social media intermediaries will be forced to take down content flagged by the FCU as fake. "The rules make the Central government the arbiter of truth regarding facts relating to itself," he said.

"It is a question of Caesar judging Caesar. (The) Centre is not a separate class… Why is the FCU only for the Central government? Why isn't there some independent body for everybody?... If the objective is to prevent fake news, then everybody is affected by fake news. It affects individuals more than the government," he said.

Khambata said with elections approaching, "this is the time when the public should have access to all information relating to the Central government and not just filtered facts".

He contended that "this will have a deep chilling effect on free speech".

Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta cited instances of fake posts on social media and said the Rules only require the intermediary to put a disclaimer that the information is false as per FCU.

He said it is "only restricted to governmental business as understood in the Constitutional sense. So, if somebody criticises the Prime Minister, it will not fall within this. It will only relate to governmental business as defined in the transaction of business rules".

"We are only alerting it is fake," Mehta said, "Can the government be prevented from doing that?" he asked.

On March 11, the Bombay High Court had rejected applications seeking an interim stay on notifying the FCU until the court decides on multiple petitions challenging the validity of the amended rules.

The petitioners, including Kamra, Editors Guild of India, News Broadcasters and Digital Association and Association of Indian Magazines, have challenged the rules calling them arbitrary, unconstitutional, and in violation of fundamental rights.

A split verdict was delivered by the division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale in January this year. Agreeing with the petitioners,, Justice Patel struck down the amendment. Justice Gokhale, on the other hand, upheld the government position. It was then referred to a third judge, Justice A S Chandurkar.

In April last year, the MeitY promulgated the 2023 Rules, which further amended the Information Technology Rules, 2021.

Under the new Rules, if the FCU comes across or is informed about any post that is "fake", "false" or contains "misleading" facts pertaining to the business of the government, it would flag it to the social media intermediaries.

The online intermediaries would then have to take down such content if they wanted to retain their "safe harbour" (legal immunity against third-party content).

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IN EAST DELHI

Building collapse leaves two dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

TWO WORKERS died while another was left critically injured after a two-storey building collapsed on them in Northeast Delhi's Welcome a little after midnight on Thursday, officers said.

Police said the three men were working in a jeans factory that operated from the ground floor.

According to DCP (Northeast) Joy Tirkey, they received a PCR call at 2.16 am. "The first floor was vacant while the ground floor was being used for cutting jeans... three workers were trapped under the debris...Two men were declared dead at GTB Hospital."

The owner of the building and factory has been identified as Shahid, the DCP said.

The victims were identified as Arshad, 30, and Tauhid, 20. The injured man, Rehan, 22, is undergoing treatment. An officer said the first floor of the building was under construction after the landlord decided to carry out renovation work. "A lot of the construction material was kept on the first floor," said the officer.

Police personnel at the site of the accident. *Amit Mehra*

A case under IPC section pertaining to causing death by negligence has been lodged and raids are ongoing to arrest the owner.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Rehan's father Fardeed Ahmad said, "My son received major head and foot injuries... he recently started working at the factory and was paid around Rs 7,000 for stitching clothes."

The MCD said in a statement, "As per our information received, the building was 40 years old and its owner was bringing it down due to his personal reasons... because of which it collapsed..."

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTION TODAY

After 4-year hiatus, presidential debate brings JNU campus alive post-midnight

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE STRETCH of the road separating Jhelum Lawns from Ganga Dhaba was swarming with people; *daflis*, tambourines and conch shells played at regular intervals; and contenders made impassioned speeches and promises: The JNU campus came alive late on Wednesday night as presidential debate for the students' union election made a comeback on the campus after four years.

Election for the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) will be held – for the first time since Covid pandemic – on Friday.

The results for the elections will be announced on March 24.

A look at what some of the presidential nominees had to say during the debate that started at 12am and went on till the wee hours:

The candidates during the debate early on Thursday. *Express*

Umesh Chandra Ajmeera – ABVP

Calling himself a proud Adivasi, Ajmeera took on the Left, saying: "Naxalism is a fashion for many on this campus."

Invoking the Ram Mandir issue, he said, "...after 500 years of slavery, we finally have the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The same way, *laal gulaami* (slavery to the red) will end..."

Dhananjay— All India Students' Association (Left alliance)

"I am standing here today as the voice of several farmers who are having to protest for their rights..." Dhananjay said. Referring to former JNU students Sharjeel Imam and Umar Khalid, he said, "Our friends who were protecting the Constitution were put in jail... we are asking for their release."

He also criticised attempts to discontinue the Maulana Azad National Fellowship.

Aradhana – Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha

The sole female candidate this year, she stressed on women empowerment and pointed at the reducing strength of women on the campus. Bringing up the issue of appointments, she said, "The campus has been *laal* (red) since 1970. But still, between 2007 and 2016, why were many OBC, Dalit and Adivasi candidates declared 'Not Found Suitable' for many posts during the appointments?" Taking on the ABVP, she said, "What do you expect over a candidate who holds a PhD from JNU? Do you expect them to join the Sangh (the RSS) and then come for the interview to get selected?"

Biswajit Minji— Birsa Ambedkar Phule Students Association

Taking on both the Right and the Left, Minji said, "Leftists and rightists call this election a festival. It is a festival for them as they come from privileged sections. For us Bahujans, this election is a fight of representation and a fight for existence."

Electoral bonds: Here are AAP's top 10 donors

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE AAM Aadmi Party's top 10 donors donated Rs 52.4 crore through electoral bonds, according to data shared with the Election Commission on Thursday.

Among these, six are on the list of leading donors of the Congress party. One among these six donors, Avees Trading Finance Pvt Ltd, donated Rs 10 crore to AAP.

Three other firms — MKJ Enterprises Ltd; Torrent Power Limited; and Transways Exim Private Limited — each donated Rs 7 crore to AAP. Among the others, IFB Agro Industries Limited, a Kolkata-based distillery and bottling company, donated Rs 4 crore. Likewise, Pune-based BG Shirke Construction Technology Private Limited donated Rs 1 crore to AAP. This company provides infrastructure construction and engineering services.

The above six companies collectively donated to Congress multiple times more than to AAP.

Other top donors for AAP included Bajaj Auto Ltd (Rs 8 crore), Asian Trading Corporation Limited (Rs 5 crore), Bird Worldwide Flight Services (Rs 2 crore) and Avon Cycles Ltd (Rs 1.4 crore). Delhi-based Bird Worldwide Flight Services is a service provider in the fields of travel technology, aviation services, hospitality, retail, and education.

The data shared by the Election Commission last week showed that the AAP's win in the Punjab Assembly polls in March 2022 drew in a big amount of donations for the party. In the whole of 2021, the party received only Rs 1.85 crore through electoral bonds. Ahead of the Punjab Assembly polls held in February 2022, it received Rs 3.4 crore in January (2022). After winning the elections, the party got Rs 44.45 crore by redeeming 126 electoral bonds in three months — October, November and December — in 2022.

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CORRIGENDUM

1. Refer our advertisement published in Times of India and Indian Express on 18 Mar 2024.
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Expression of Interest (EOI) for Empanelment of Firms of Chartered / Cost Accountants for Conducting Internal Audit

Expression of Interest (EOI) for Empanelment of Firms of Chartered / Cost Accountants for Conducting Internal Audit in NFL's Corporate Office, Central Marketing Office located at Noida, Manufacturing Units located at Nangal, Panipat, Bathinda, Vijaipur and Marketing Zonal Offices located at Chandigarh, Bhopal, Lucknow & Hyderabad for the Financial Years 2024-25, 2025-26 & 2026-27 is invited. Detailed EoI and Corrigendum / Addendum, if any, shall be available on the GeM portal and on NFL website www.nationalfertlizers.com. Last date for submission of duly filled in format for technical evaluation shall be 20.04.2024 upto 15.00 hours.

Chief Manager, I\c (IA&ML)

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MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
NEW DELHI MUNCIPAL COUNCIL
CHARAK PALIKA HOSPITAL

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited for a "Walk-In-Interview" for the post(s) of Senior Resident (Dental) in the Department of Medical Services, NDMC. Eligible candidates are required to register enrolments on 05.04.2024 between 09.00 A.M to 11.00 A.M. in the **Office of the Director (Medical Services), New Delhi Municipal Council, Charak Palika Hospital, Moti Bagh-I, New Delhi-110021.**

No. of Vacant Posts 01

S. No.	Department	Vacancy	UR	SC	ST	OBC	PwD	EWS
1.	Orthodontics	01	Nil	Nil	Nil	01	Nil	Nil
2.	Prosthodontics	01	01	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
3.	Oral Surgery	01	01	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
4.	Pedodontics	01	Nil	01	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
5.	Endodontics	01	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	01

Appointment & Tenure for the post of Senior Resident (Dental): The tenure is purely temporary initially for a period of 01 year, extendable up to a maximum period of 03 years only subject to the satisfactory performance.

Note: All the details are available on the NDMC web portal i.e.www.ndmc.gov.in

Director (Medical Services)

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda
Hameshaa Aapke Liye

www.bankofbaroda.in

Notice of Specified / Cut-off Date
[In respect of Election of One Shareholder Director]

The Bank has decided to initiate the process of Election of One Shareholder Director amongst the Shareholders other than the Central Government.

Pursuant to Bank of Baroda General (Shares & Meetings) Regulations 1998 as amended (The Regulations) and other applicable Rules, Notice is hereby given that **Friday, 05th April 2024** has been fixed as the **Specified (Cut-off Date)** for the purpose of determining the list of Shareholders who shall be entitled to participate (i.e., **nominate, contest and vote**) in the Election of **One** Director of Bank of Baroda, to be elected by the Shareholders other than the Central Government from amongst themselves, to be conducted pursuant to Section 9(3)(i) of the Banking Companies (Acquisition & Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 at the ensuing Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Shareholders of the Bank proposed to be held on **Tuesday, 07th May 2024** through Video Conferencing (VC) / Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM). It is further informed that pursuant to the Regulation 65 (ii) of the Regulations the Last Date for submission of the nomination forms etc., will be upto 4.00 pm. on **22nd April 2024**.

The Notice for the Meeting along with the relevant Forms for the election will be issued in due course and also will be hosted on the Bank's website.

Place: Mumbai
Date: 22.03.2024

For Bank of Baroda
P K Agarwal
Company Secretary

(148 / 23-24)

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POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable property)

Whereas,

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **Punjab National Bank, Circle SASTRA Ara, Hotel regal, second Floor, Ara- 802301** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under Section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a **demand notice dated 27.01.2022** calling upon **M/S Jai Maa Ambey Traders, Sh Baliram Sah, S/O Triveni Sah, Present address- Village- Karwandia, PO- Hata, PS- Chainpur, dist- Kaimur, Bhabhua, Bihar- 821103, Permanent address-Vill +PO- Chhotaki Kulharia, PS- Mohania, Dist-kaimur, Bihar-821101** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.23,63,148.36 (Rupees Twenty Three Lakh Sixty Three Thousand One Hundred Forty Eight and Paisa Thirty Six only) and interest there on from 01.04.2021** within 60 days from the date of notice/ date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on this **18th day of March 2024.**

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 Punjab National Bank for an amount of **Rs. 27,53,411.47 (Rupees Twenty-Seven Lakh Fifty-Three Thousand Four Hundred Eleven and Paisa Forty-Seven Only)** as on 29.02.2024 along with future interest and expenses from 01.03.2024 until payment in full.

The borrower's/guarantor's/mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Description of immovable Property

• All that part and parcel of the property situated at: Mauza- Karwandia, Thana No- 176, PS + Anchal- Chainpur, Dist- Kaimur, Khata No- 33, Plot No-277, Bihar. Area-03 decimal. Sale Deed No- 2192 dated 25.04.2016. Owned/ Mortgaged by Smt Tetari devi, W/O Parshuram Sah and Laxmina devi, W/OBalram Sah. Bounded: North- Doman Sah, South- Chhaibar Sah, East- Ghura Sah, West- Chhawar.

Date: 18.03.2024
Place: Kaimur

Authorized Officer
Punjab National Bank

DAKSHIN BIHAR GRAMIN BANK
REGIONAL OFFICE-GAYA

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 and in exercise of power's conferred under Section 13 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice/s on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice/s date of receipt of the said notice(s). The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property /ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each account. The borrower/s in particular and the public general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank for the amounts and interest thereon.

S. N.	NAME OF THE BRANCH	NAME OF THE ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY MORTGAGED	DATE OF DEMAND NOTICE	DATE OF POSSESSION NOTICE AFFIXED	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING AS ON THE DATE OF DEMAND NOTICE
1.	A.P COLONY	7231NC00000787 **Mr. Amit kumar** S/o-Sri Gopal singh	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Building in the name of Mr/Mrs. Amit Kumar S/o-Shri Gopal Singh having Deed No.4899 Dt 04-04-2015 measuring an area of 1 Decimal of Mauza Bhadeji, P.S.Mofassil, Khata No 146, Plot No 391 Sub-Registry District-Gaya District- Gaya . **Boundary (As per Mortgaged Deed) : North :** Rasta & Laxman Prasad , **South :** Rasta & Satyanarayan Prasad . **East :** Satyanarayan Prasad, plot Haza, **West :** Rasta & Shivsharan Prasad	14.12.2023	19.03.2024	**Rs.10,41,368 /- (Rupees Ten Lakh Fourty One Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Eight Only)** as on 05.12.2023, Plus Unapplied Interest from the date of NPA, at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with Future incidental expenses, costs, charges, etc.
2.	NOURANGA	7444NC00000123 **Mr. Puran Kumar** S/o Late Birja Singh & Mrs Riki Devi W/o Sri Puran Kumar	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Building in the name of Mr/Mrs. Puran Kumar S/o Late Birja Singh having Deed No. 5187 Dt 08.04.2015, measuring an area of 4.68 Decimal of Mouja Grere , Thana No 252, Khata No 211, Plot No 728, PS- Mufassil, , Sub-Registry District- Gaya District- Gaya. **Boundary (As per Mortgaged Deed) : North :** Nij Lekhyakari, **South :** 12'.00" Rasta badahu Sanjay Singh & Shyam Singh ka makan, **East :** Jai Narayan Singh Jai Narayan Singh, **West :** 12'.00" Rasta	14.12.2023	19.03.2024	**Rs.16,69,087 /-(Rupees Sixteen Lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Eighty Seven Only)** as on 07.02.2023, Plus Unapplied Interest from the date of NPA, at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with Future incidental expenses, costs, charges, etc.

Place : Gaya
Date : 21.03.2024

Authorised Officer
Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank

'BJP UNDERESTIMATING PUBLIC SENTIMENT'

If no relief in SC, streets the next recourse

With ED team at his home, anxious supporters poured in, only to be herded into police vehicles

Atishi outside the CM's residence. *Tashi Tobgyal*

Scenes outside CM Arvind Kejriwal's residence after he was arrested and taken away by the Enforcement Directorate, Thursday. *Tashi Tobgyal*

GAYATHRI MANI & ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

A LONG fight that will be played out on the roads of Delhi, and across the country, is what the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has promised in the wake of the arrest of its convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Glimpses of what could follow could be seen outside his house Thursday evening as MLAs, workers and volunteers started to gather as soon as news broke of an ED team reaching the CM's home.

AAP's Delhi unit chief Gopal Rai said the arrest showed the BJP was scared, and asked people to gather at the AAP office at 10 am on Friday. "BJP is scared of losing the polls. It will come down from the 400 seats, that it is hoping to get, to 40 in the Lok Sabha polls... Narendra Modi has started the fight and we will finish it... everyone should be prepared to protest tomorrow," Rai said, inviting anyone who is against "dictatorship" to participate in the demonstration.

AAP sources said plans to mobilise people were being chalked out late into the night. They expressed confidence that the people of Delhi "will be out on the roads" to protest the "illegal arrest" of their "beloved" CM.

Sources said all MLAs and councillors have been asked to mobilise people and get them to the party office. "Smaller local protests are also being planned but for now, the focus will be on the party office on Friday," a party leader said.

AAP, which was born from a street protest and was labelled "anarchist" by its opposition parties, will have to return to its roots after being in power for nearly a decade. "The arrest is not just a deciding factor ahead of the polls but will also have long-term ramifications for Indian politics. BJP has underestimated the public sentiment. The entire organisation will fight it out on the streets, not just in Delhi but across the country. This takes us back to our roots, we are a party born out of an *andolan*," said senior leader Jasmine Shah.

On Thursday evening, as soon as the ED arrived at the CM's residence in Civil Lines, senior party leaders Atishi, Durgesh Pathak, MLA Sanjeev Jha, Imran Hussain, Rakhi Bidlan, Jarnail Singh, Rohit Mehraulia and scores of party workers and supporters gathered outside.

Witnessing crowds and protests by AAP workers, security arrangements and deployment of force was increased and both gates of the CM house were barricaded. Both Delhi Police as well as paramilitary forces such as the RAF were brought in to control the crowd. Protesters raised slogans against the PM and BJP.

"It was very clear from the evening that ED was going to arrest Kejriwal *ji*. Heavy security was deployed from the evening and the entire area was barricaded and cordoned off. They did not allow us to enter the stretch. This is a political conspiracy of the BJP because PM Modi is scared of Kejriwal. BJP knows it is going to lose the polls and that is why it has got him arrested before the polls," Atishi said.

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak, meanwhile, said, "Today, the entire country saw how PM Modi and the BJP have murdered democracy... I want to tell BJP, rather than filing false cases and arresting leaders like a coward, fight on the political ground..."

KEY ARRESTS

MANISH SISODIA
FORMER DEPUTY CM
■ Arrested by CBI in Feb 2023, by ED in Mar 2023
Case status: In jail

SANJAY SINGH
AAP RAJYA SABHA MP
■ Arrested by ED in October 2023
Case status: In jail

VIJAY NAIR
AAP COMMUNICATIONS IN-CHARGE
■ Arrested in Nov 2022
Case status: In jail

K KAVITHA
BRS LEADER
■ Arrested by ED in March 2024
Case status: In jail

SAMEER MAHENDRU
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF M/S INDOSPIRIT GROUP
■ Arrested by ED in Sept 2022
Case status: In judicial custody now, earlier got interim bail

DINESH ARORA
DELHI-BASED RESTAURATEUR
■ Arrested by CBI in 2022, by ED in July 2023
Case status: Turned approver in both cases

P SARATH CHANDRA REDDY
DIRECTOR AT AUROBINDO PHARMA
■ Arrested in Nov 2022
Case status: Turned approver in ED case in June 2023

RAGHAV MAGUNTA
SON OF YSR CONGRESS PARTY LOK SABHA MP
■ Arrested in February 2023
Case status: Turned approver in both cases

ABHISHEK BOINPALLY
HYDERABAD-BASED BUSINESSMAN
■ Arrested in Nov 2022
Case status: Granted interim bail by SC yesterday

WHERE DOES THE EXCISE CASE STAND?

■ CM Kejriwal was arrested on Thursday night by the Enforcement Directorate in the excise case. This came hours after the Delhi High Court refused to grant him interim protection, at this stage, from coercive action

■ Last Saturday, a Delhi court granted him bail after he appeared before it following the ED's complaints that he was not complying with its summonses in the excise case

■ In the corruption case being investigated by the CBI and the money laundering case being investigated by the ED, scrutiny of documents in the chargesheet is taking place

■ The agencies have claimed in court that the defence lawyers are trying to delay the trial and that the stage of framing of charges should commence. The defence counsel claimed that some of the documents are not clear and that the agencies must submit a status report in court before the trial can move forward.

■ Both the CBI and the ED cases are being heard in Rouse Avenue Court. Currently, arguments on the bail plea of former deputy CM Manish Sisodia are also being heard

■ Over the course of 1.5 years, over 20 persons have been arrested by CBI and ED

■ In the two cases, there are over 550 witnesses, 47 accused and three approvers (accused who later turned witnesses)

The CM's arrest came hours after the HC refused to grant interim protection, at this stage, from coercive action. *Archive*

IN SOLIDARITY

A scared dictator wants to create a dead democracy. While capturing all institutions including the media, breaking up the parties, extorting money from companies, freezing the account of the main opposition party was not enough for the 'devilish power', now the arrest of the elected Chief Ministers has also become a common thing. INDIA will give a befitting reply to this.
RAHUL GANDHI
CONGRESS LEADER

Targeting Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal in this manner due to elections is completely wrong and unconstitutional... Such a shameful scene is being seen for the first time in history of independent India.
PRIYANKA GANDHI,
CONGRESS LEADER

Strongly condemn the arrest of Delhi CM, Shri Arvind Kejriwal by the ED. It's the second sitting CM of the INDIA bloc to be arrested. Clearly, Modi and the BJP are in panic over people's rejection in the ongoing elections...
SITARAM YECHURY,
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST) GENERAL SECRETARY

... Relentless persecution of opposition leaders by the BJP Govt smacks of a desperate witch-hunt. This tyranny ignites public fury, unmasking BJP's true colours...
MK STALIN
TAMIL NADU CM

India is under an undeclared Emergency. Our democracy stands critically endangered today. Arvind Kejriwal is the second democratically elected opposition CM to be arrested ahead of the upcoming elections. What are we heading towards?
RAGHAV CHADHA
AAP RAJYA SABHA MP

TWO-TIME DELHI CM

Anti-corruption icon, populist CM, and now a corruption accused — long arc of Kejriwal

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

FROM A popular anti-corruption star, a populist leader to battling corruption charges himself, the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate in the liquor policy case marks another dramatic episode in the long arc of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief.

The dramatic rise

Kejriwal shot to fame a decade ago as an anti-corruption activist — making Anna Hazare sit on two high-profile hunger strikes in Delhi in 2011 — demanding a Jan Lokpal to rein in corruption and accusing "all politicians" of corruption. With day-long media coverage, Anna and Kejriwal became a sensation, denting the then UPA government in the process. However, to a great extent, the BJP with a large organisation — the party had been very cautious at the time of the Anna movement — took full advantage of the anti-Congress mood in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, with Narendra Modi as its PM candidate.

Kejriwal with Anna Hazare during the India Against Corruption movement in 2011. *Archive*

The politician

Meanwhile, Kejriwal formed AAP with a promise of leading a clean government that would work for the people. He tasted early success in Delhi in the 2013 assembly elections — winning 28 seats out of 70 and defeating sitting Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit of the Congress. The BJP got 32 seats in alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal but could not garner a majority. AAP threw the first surprise by becoming CM with the support of the Congress, which had eight seats. Forty-nine days later, he dramatically resigned on the ground that the Delhi Assembly was stonewalling his Jan Lokpal Bill.

Kejriwal now took a 'national' turn, deciding to contest Lok Sabha polls against Modi from Varanasi in 2014. He lost by a margin of about 2.7-lakh votes, but stood second, bagging 2.09-lakh votes. This raised his profile further.

Delhi sweep

Early in 2015, AAP posted a spectacular result in the Delhi assembly polls, winning 67 of 70 seats, with the BJP winning just three and the Congress drawing a blank. Kejriwal threw out Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav from the party within months of the victory on grounds of "anti-party activities". Bhushan decried this as dictatorship, and said the party had been reduced to a 'Khap'.

Kejriwal's image was fast changing from that of a democrat to someone who wanted to control the party through favourites. However, the power and water subsidies continued — he claimed to have improved the condition of government schools and the healthcare system in Delhi from 2014 to 2019 — thus becoming a populist leader focusing on service-delivery with ideology agnosticism. The Lokpal demand gradually disappeared altogether.

Despite his popularity, he could not win a single seat in Delhi in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, with the BJP sweeping all seven. In the 2020 Delhi assembly polls, AAP again won Delhi, bagging 62 seats. The BJP won just eight.

Punjab expansion

But that wasn't all. Kejriwal was able to expand beyond Delhi and post a stunning victory in Punjab in 2022, winning 92 of 118 seats and reducing Congress to just 18. He also made a dent in Gujarat, winning five seats in the assembly polls out of 182, with the Congress winning 17. The BJP swept the polls with 156 seats.

This makes the AAP a possible future challenge to the BJP, which is right now in pole position. But the party leadership has shown it is willing to nip the party in the bud before it expands further by attacking its only leader of stature for alleged corruption.

How absence could be felt in governance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

FROM HELMING Cabinet meetings to giving direction to the AAP's vision of governance for the Capital, Arvind Kejriwal has been at the core of both the administration in Delhi as well as the party's expansion across the country for the last decade.

During his nine years as CM, he pitched several important schemes of the AAP government — power and water subsidies, free travel for women in the city's public buses, and the education and health models.

He headed the Delhi Jal Board as its chairperson for a significant duration between 2015 and 2020, and gradually distanced himself from any official portfolio for most of the AAP's second term in power.

Kejriwal, instead, had entrusted significant departments such as power, water and the Public Works Department to Satyendar Jain before the reins of more than a dozen government departments like education were handed over to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

While Jain was arrested in 2022, Sisodia was sent behind bars in the liquor policy case last year.

The baton was handed over to Atishi who currently holds around 14 government departments in addition to any others which have not been assigned to any other Cabinet members.

Kejriwal also guided the government during several waves of the pandemic, which emerged in the aftermath of the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots.

He also led a three-day sit-in protest inside Raj Niwas – the office-cum-residence of the L-G – along with his cabinet colleagues over installation of CCTVs in the city in 2018, and addressed a large gathering over a 'one-time settlement scheme' for water bills last month.

He was, and remained, the face of the AAP's political ambitions within and beyond the Capital. While he led from the front as the Delhi government took on successive attacks on various aspects of its administration in the city through three Lt-Governors, the party formed a government in Punjab under his watch after it ousted the BJP from the MCD after 15 years in power.

Delhi riots 'larger conspiracy' case: Those facing graver charges granted bail, says Umar Khalid

Umar Khalid was arrested in 2020

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

ARGUING FOR bail in the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots 'larger conspiracy case', Umar Khalid said other accused persons facing graver allegations than him are out on bail while those allegedly involved in the same activities as him have not even been made accused by the Delhi Police. Khalid was booked under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in connection with the case.

In February, citing a "change in circumstances", Khalid withdrew his bail plea from the Supreme Court. His lawyer, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, had said "We will try our luck in the trial court".

Advocate Trideep Pais, appearing for Khalid, revealed the change of circumstances in Delhi's Karkardooma Court on Thursday. "The factual basis on which three accused in the case have been granted bail have several overlaps with me," said Pais. He also argued that the court could consider if Khalid was entitled to a bail of parity even though he was charged with the stringent UAPA as the law was interpreted differently by a Supreme Court judgment in 2023.

"The court must be satisfied with the probative value of evidence at the stage of examining bail," said Pais, adding that no terrorist act had been attributed to the accused by the prosecution.

Another change of circumstances cited by the advocate was the continued incarceration of the accused. Reading from the police chargesheet, Pais said the prosecution cited 15 instances to point out the involvement of the accused - in many of these, there were no witnesses.

BJP LEADERS CALL FOR KEJRIWAL'S RESIGNATION

'Arrest marks end of drama that has been going on for over a yr'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

AMID THE Aam Aadmi Party's calls for a nation-wide protest against the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday, the BJP said that the party was insulting the Constitution by saying that Kejriwal will run the government from jail and demanded that he resign.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said that Kejriwal's arrest had brought satisfaction to the people of Delhi.

"The liquor scam started in Delhi from 2021, and revelations have been made one after the other since on how money was laundered with brokers and liquor contractors... Today, Kejriwal's arrest marks the end of a drama that has been going on for over a year," he said.

BJP leaders also sought the resignation of the Chief Minister and said that it was not constitutionally possible for the government to run from jail.

"The statement of AAP leaders that Kejriwal will run the government from jail is an insult to constitutional norms... (former Jharkhand Chief Minister) Hemant Soren also said the same thing, but upon being arrested, he had to resign. The same thing will happen in Delhi as well," he added.

BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra; (right) Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva. *Archive*

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala, meanwhile, said AAP's "victimhood card" would not work.

"This victimhood card is not going to work... no matter how many such cards Kejriwal and the AAP play, they will have to answer how the same people who held Anna Hazare's finger and said that resignations will precede investigation... when they faced such proceedings themselves are saying that they will run the government from jail but not join investigation?" he said.

Taking on the AAP for calling Kejriwal's arrest the death of democracy, Sachdeva said, "While everyone is chanting a political slogan that BJP is killing democracy, it is nothing but a political drama... undoubtedly in a democracy, the public elects the government and removes the government, but the public does not give freedom to the government elected by it for corruption. The government is accountable to the public and is not meant to rob the public."

"This is a liquor scam which has reached all the courts, has been investigated by all the investigation agencies... if your excise policy was so good, why did you roll it back? This question has not been answered yet. How could you bring cartelisation into the liquor trade? Why did you relegate to the dustbin your own government department's advice against allowing private players in the liquor trade?" asked BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra.

What arrest means for Oppn in Delhi, heading into LS polls

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

WHAT HAPPENS after the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is as likely to have an impact on the results of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as it is on the contours of the capital's administration and governance going forward, sources across the BJP, Congress as well as AAP said. While the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress – the chief protagonists of the INDIA bloc in Delhi – believe that Kejriwal's arrest will act as a shot in the arm for its political prospects in the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP, according to insiders, has its sights the city's possible "transformation into a world class capital territory".

"The AAP has been fighting against the BJP for the sake of the Constitution of this country so far and will continue to do so… we hope the Supreme Court will protect the democracy of the country," AAP Minister Atishi said.

Throwing his weight behind his party's ally, Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely, who led a Congress delegation to Kejriwal's residence, said, "Timing of the elections shows the BJP is afraid of our alliance. Democracy is in danger. This happens in Pakistan, not in India."

Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge of the Congress, and AAP's Kejriwal and Raghav Chadha during a meeting of the INDIA bloc last year. *Archive*

The BJP, which last year began working on a 400-day strategy to corner the AAP on "10 specific scams" including the "DJB scam" – for which Kejriwal has also been issued summons by the ED – to portray the AAP convenor "as the face of corruption", maintained that his arrest was "a legal and not a political matter".

"This arrest will certainly help the INDIA bloc's prospects in Delhi; both parties have a common support base across slums, unauthorised colonies and lower-middle class households in the city. Kejriwal's arrest will trigger a wave of sympathy which will help consolidate our votes," a senior Congress leader said.

According to a BJP insider, however, the party's senior leadership was in a huddle with "legal minds" to chart the way forward with "several options" on the anvil.

"The matter has now reached the courts, where if AAP continues to stick to its strategy of Kejriwal governing the city from jail, there is a window for us to argue for the President's rule to avoid a constitutional crisis. The Centre has already stated on several occasions that since Delhi is the national capital, it needs more control over its functioning," a source said.

A senior AAP leader admitted that the Lieutenant Governor being put at the helm of the capital's governance was "a very real" possibility in days to come. "We believe putting the Delhi Assembly under suspended animation for the foreseeable future during which the L-G will act as the BJP's arm to govern the city till the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections is very much on the cards," said the leader.

"Whether or not they let the Delhi Assembly exist after that – a fear which we have expressed several times – will likely depend on whether the BJP thinks it can defeat the AAP in elections next year," the leader added.

LIC HFL — LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD.
2nd Floor, Biscoman Tower, Gandhi Maidan (West), Patna, Bihar - 800001

[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 notice dated **26.01.2023** calling upon the loanee **Kausalya Devi, Loan A/c No. - 211000009486** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 46,36,719.99** (Rupees - Fourty SixLakhs Thirty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Nineteen and Ninety Nine Paisa only) + Interest & others SARFAESI Charges & Other Charges within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The loanee **Kausalya Devi** having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the loanee 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 Ordinance read with rule 9 of the said Rules on this **16th day of March of the year 2024**

The loanee 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 charges of the **LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD** for an amount **Rs. 46,36,719.99** + Interest & others SARFAESI Charges & Other Charges and interest thereon.

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Mauza - Chanute, Thana No. - 133, Tauzi No. - 5159, Plot No. 6, 7, 8 9, Khata No. - 62, Sasaram, within the Registration Sub- District Sasaram and District - Rohtas **Boundary - North -** Self Vendor, **South -** 10 ft Road, **East -** Smt. Rajbanshi Devi, **West -** Canal.

Date : 16.03.2024, Place : Sasaram **Authorised Officer (Lic Housing Finance Ltd)**

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India (A Govt of India Undertaking)

REGIONAL OFFICE PATNA :
Nasheman Bhavan, 1st Floor, Mazharool Haque Path, Frazer Road, Patna
(Contact : 7349052850, 9102404205, 9102403812)
Email: law.ropatna@unionbankofindia.bank, cmcrldropatna@unionbankofindia.bank

Notice under Sec. 13(2) read with Sec. 13 (3) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 **DEMAND NOTICE**

Demand Notice were issued to the below mentioned borrower/guarantor in respect of Loan availed by them and after the loan account becoming NPA giving them 60 days time to pay the outstanding dues of the bank. Details are as under :-

Sr. No.	Name of Account/Borrower's/ Guarantor's/Mortgagor's and Branch	Description of secured assets Property Mortgage Date	Date of NPA/ Date of Demand Notice	Total Outstanding Amount (Rs.)
1.	**Machharhatta Branch,** G. P. Market Ashok Rajpath, Phulauriganj Chowk, Patna - Bihar **1. Mrs. Shabnam Alam,** W/o Late Mahtav Alam, **2. Mr. Ashraf Alam,** S/o Md. Salim, **3. Md. Afzal Imam,** S/o Md. Salim, **4. Mr. Fakre Alam** (Legal Heir) S/o Late Mahtav Alam, **5. Mr. Shakara Alam** (Legal Heir) S/o Late Mahtav Alam, **6. Ms. Sadkha Parveen** (Legal Heir) D/o Late Mahtav Alam, All are Resident of Amin Colony, Alam Ganj, Patna - 800007	Land and Building admeasuring area 1248sqft. standing in the name of situated at Circle No. 67, Ward No. - 18/24 (Old) and 41 (New), Sheet No. - 154, M.S. Plot No. - 2110, Holding No. 11 (P), Present Holding No. 13/A, 13/B, 13/C Under Patna Municipal Corporation, At - Alamganj, Bagbhup Singh Lane PS- Alamganj, Patnacity **Boundary: North-** Md. Naushad **South-** 4ft Rasta, **East -** Nooranibagh, **West -** 8ft Rasta, **Property Mortgage Date -** 26.06.2015	28.09.2023 16.03.2024	Rs. 19,22,427.76 as on 31.12.2023 together with further interest and Charges

You the addressees no. 1 2, 3 along with deceased Mehtab Alam herein have availed the credit facilities from our Machharhatta Branch (Branch Code 572683) and failed to pay the dues / instalment / interest. You No. 4, 5 and 6 as legal heirs of the deceased borrower Late Mehtab Alam has inherited the business and securities of late Lalan Prasad. Therefore, you as the legal heir/s of Late Mehtab Alam are liable to discharge the aforesaid liabilities and dues availed by Late Mehtab Alam. Therefore you are here by called upon in terms of section 13 (2) the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 to pay the above sum at the contractual rate as per the terms and conditions of loan document executed by you and discharge your liabilities in full within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice. Failing which, we shall be constrained to enforce the aforesaid securities by exercising any or all of the rights given under the said Act. As per section 13 (13) of the Act, on receipt of this notice you are restrained / Prevented from disposing of or dealing with the above securities without the consent of the bank. Your attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Place : Patna **Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India**

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank A Govt. of India Undertaking
सिंडिकेट Syndicate

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

PROPERTY FOR E-AUCTION

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described Movable / Immovable property mortgaged / hypothecated/ Pledged / charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive / physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Canara Bank** will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is"** on **22.04.2024.** Details are as under :

Sl. No.	Name / Add. Contact No. of the Branch	Name and Address of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor (s)	Outstanding in Rs.	Details of Property	Reserve Price (Rs.) /EMD/Bid Multiplier Amt./A/c No./ IFSC Code
1	**Patna City (1592)** **Mob. : 8210998429**	**Mrs. Urmila Aryani,** W/o Shashi Kant Prasad, 5th Floor Mohalla Patligram, Society, Block I, Flat No. - 502, Bajrangpuri, Patna, Bihar - 800007, Also at : Chaughra Post Office, 1st Road Rajendra Prasad Sah, Sudarshan Path, Sadikpur, Patna, Bihar - 800008, **Mrs. Aruna Devi,** C/o Ranjeet Prasad, Sandalpur Road, Bazar Samiti, Sampartchak, Patna, Bihar - 800006	**Rs. 8,06,839.92** as on **14.03.2024** +interest & Other Cost thereon	All that part and parcel of the hypothecated Car in the name of **Mrs. Urmila Aryani,** W/o Shashi Kant Prasad with following details : Sl. No. 1, Particulars - Card Model, Details - Maruti Suzuki Dzire - ZXI - Petrol / CNG - BS VI, Sl. No. 2, Particulars - Color, Details - Metallic Premium SIL, Sl. No. 3, Particulars - Chassis Number, Details - MBHCZFB3SNH299004, Sl. No. 4, Particulars - Engine Number, Details - K12NP4128632, Sl. No. 5, Particulars - Registration Number, Details - BR-01-FU-5941	**Rs. 5,75,000/- Rs. 57,500/- 10,000/- A/c - 209272434 IFSC Code - CNRB0001592**
2	**Patna Budhmarg (1434)** **Mob. : 8210998428**	**M/s Aiman Traders,** Proprietor - Late Ishtiyaque Ahmad represented by his legal heirs, Mrs. Afsana Bano W/o Late. Ishtiyaque Ahmad and minor son under guardian Mrs. Afsana Bano, Flat No. - 403, Raza Complex, IAS Colony, Rukanpura, Rupaspur, Patna - 800001, **Mrs. Afsana Bano,** Wife of Late. Ishtiyaque Ahmad, Flat No. - 403, Raza Complex, IAS Colony, Rukanpura, Rupaspur, Patna - 800001, All other legal heirs of Late Ishtiyaque Ahmad, Flat No. - 403, Raza Complex, IAS Colony, Rukanpura, Rupaspur, Patna - 800001	**Rs. 55,79,481.07** as on **11.03.2024** +interest & Other Cost thereon	EMT of Residential Flat No. - 403, in the name of **Late Ishtiyaque Ahmad,** situated at Raza Complex, At - Dhanaut, PS - Rupaspur, District - Patna, Bihar, Location of property : Part of Plot 772, Khata No. - 692, Thana No. - 20, Tauzi No. - 5807, Mauza Dhanaut, Anchal / District Patna. **Boundary - North -** 6ft wide passage thereafter flat No. - 408, **South -** Open Space of The Building, **East -** Lift, Duct Thereafter flat No. - 402, **West -** Flat No. - 404	**Rs. 62,73,000/- Rs. 6,28,000/- 10,000/- A/c - 209272434 IFSC Code - CNRB0001434**

Last Date of EMD 19.04.2024 For Detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in www.canarabank.com

Date : 16.03.2024 **Place : Patna** **Authorised Officer (Canara Bank)**

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक ...भरोसे का प्रतीक ! punjab national bank ...the name you can BANK upon !

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Circle SASTRA Arrah, 2nd Floor, Hotel Regal Complex, Near Ramana Maidan, Ara, Bhojpur, Bihar-802301.
Phone No. 8436747159, Email:- cs8187@pnb.co.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **29/04/2024**, for recovery of **Rs. 18,50,879.00 plus int. due from 01.10.2023 & other charges** due to the Secured Creditor from **M/S YADAV DAIRY FARM, PROP: SMT. SABITA DEVI, W/O: SH. BIRENDRA SINGH YADAV (Borrower) and SH. BIRENDRA SINGH YADAV, S/O: LATE RAM LOCHAN SINGH YADAV (Guarantor)**. The reserve price will be **Rs. 22,68,000.00** and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs. 2,26,800.00.**

OTHER DETAILS OF E-AUCTION

Sl. No.	Name of the branch; Name of the account; Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors account	Description of the Immovable Properties	(a) Date of demand Notice u/s 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (b.1) O/S amount as on date of 13 (2) notice (b.2) O/S amount as on 30.09.2023 (c) Symbolic Possession date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002.	(a) Reserve Price (b) EMD (c) Last date of EMD Bid (d) Bid Increase Amt.	Date/ Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors .
1.	**AKORHI (269600): M/S YADAV DAIRY FARM, PROP: SMT. SABITA DEVI. A/C NO: 269600AG00001378 (BORROWER) M/S Yadav Dairy Farm, Prop: Smt. Sabita Devi, W/O- Sh. Birendra Singh Yadav, R/O- Vill- Dandawa, PO: Mohania, Dist: Kaimur, Bhabhua, Bihar- 821109. (GUARANTOR) Sh. Birendra Singh Yadav (Guarantor), S/O: Late Ram Lochan Singh Yadav, R/O- Vill- Dandawa, Po: Mohania, Dist: Kaimur, Bhabhua, Bihar- 821109.**	All that Part and Parcel of Immovable Property situated at 1. Mauza – Dandawa, Thana no- 535, Thana + Anchal- Mohania, Khata No- 25, Khesra No- 05, Ward No- 03, Dist- Kaimur, Bhabhua, Bihar, Area- 03 Decimal. BOUNDARIES: North- Kudum Sharma, South- Hirawati Devi, East- Indrawati Devi, West- 10 Feet Wide Road. 2. Mauza – Dandawa, Thana no- 535, Thana + Anchal- Mohania, Khata No- 25, Khesra No- 05, Ward No- 03, Dist- Kaimur, Bhabhua, Bihar, Area- 1.50 Decimal. BOUNDARIES: North- Sabita Devi, South- Hirawati Devi, East- Indrawati Devi, West- 10 Feet Wide Road. Owner/Mortgagor: Smt. Sabita Devi, W/O: Sh. Birendra Singh Yadav. Registered Mortgage Deed No 949 Dated 15.02.2018	(a) 09.05.2023 (b.1) Rs. 17,91,503.00 + int. due from 10.05.2023 & other charges. (b.2) Rs. 18,50,879.00 as on 30.09.2023. (c) 26.07.2023	(a) Rs. 22,68,000/- (b) Rs. 2,26,800/- (c) 28/04/2024 (d) Rs 10,000/-	29/04/2024, 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Not Known

Scan QR Code for visiting www.pnbindia.in

For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Secured Creditor's website, i.e. www.pnbindia.in.

Litigations known to the secured creditors in respect to SARFAESI Action: NIL

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions.

1. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website https://www.mstcecommerce.com on **29.04.2024** from **11:00 AM to 04:00 PM.**
2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
3. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer www.ibapi.in, www.mstcecommerce.com , www.pnbindia.in

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

Date : 18.03.2024
Place : Arrah

(Md Aqueel Jawed Khan, Chief Manager)
AUTHORISED OFFICER
PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK
SECURED CREDITOR

BJP leaders C T Ravi and (right) Tejasvi Surya

After Karandlaje, Surya and C T Ravi booked for 'hate' statements

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, MARCH 21

A DAY after the Election Commission filed a case against Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje over her hate remarks, former BJP minister C T Ravi and Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya have been booked for alleged hate statements.

The Election Commission officials in Chikkamagaluru have registered a case against Ravi under Sections 153(a) of IPC and 126 of Representation of People Act.

On March 18, Ravi posted a video of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's speech and wrote, "The depths of Oceans can be measured, but Rahul Gandhi's hatred against Hindus and Hindu Dharma can never be ascertained..."

Following the FIR, Ravi said, "Dear @ECISVEEP, I have received the details of the FIR filed against me by CONgress. As a Sanatani, I responded to the irresponsible and insensitive comments made by CONgress MP Rahul Gandhi... I would greatly appreciate if you could share the details of the FIR lodged against Rahul Gandhi for his statements hurtling the sentiments of those who follow Sanatana Dharma."

Once a BJP minister, Ravi lost Chikkamagaluru seat in last Assembly elections and is a BJP aspirant from Chikkamagaluru-Udupi Lok Sabha constituency.

An FIR has also been registered against Tejasvi Surya over his alleged hate post. Surya, who is also the president of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, shared on X a video of a shopkeeper who was allegedly attacked by a group of six people for reportedly playing "bhajans" during Azan and wrote that the incident was "a direct result of Congress's appeasement politics".

A police officer told *The Indian Express* that a case was registered at Halasuru Gate police station against Surya after the Flying Squad Team (FST) of Election Commission filed a formal complaint.

On Wednesday, the Election Commission filed an FIR against BJP leader Shobha Karandlaje over her recent remarks on the people of Tamil Nadu.

CONGRESS ANNOUNCES 57 NAMES IN THIRD LS LIST

Dynasts, turncoats in; Amethi, Raebareli still out

No names for MP, UP yet, sources say Digvijaya will enter fray from MP's Rajgarh

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE CONGRESS on Thursday released its third list of Lok Sabha candidates, fielding its leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury again from Baharampur and veteran leader Pradip Bhattacharya from Kolkata Uttar in West Bengal. The list of 57 has the names of the kin of many Congress leaders and several turncoats.

While the list did not have the names of candidates from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, sources said party veteran and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh would enter the fray from Rajgarh in Madhya Pradesh and former Madhya Pradesh Congress president Arun Yadav would contest from Guna against Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

In Uttar Pradesh, state Congress president Ajay Rai may contest from Varanasi against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Imran Masood from Saharanpur, Congress veteran P L Punia's son Tanuj Punia from Barabanki, and Danish Ali from Amroha.

The party has yet to decide on Amethi and Raebareli despite the Uttar Pradesh leadership of the party pushing for the candidatures of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, respectively. A section of the party leadership argues the Gandhi siblings are not keen to contest from Amethi and Raebareli. Another section believes it is mere posturing by the brother-sister duo.

Here are the major takeaways:

SONS, DAUGHTERS & KIN

The list of candidates for eight states — Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, West Bengal and Puducherry — has the names of kin of several Congress leaders.

In West Bengal, the party replaced Malda Dakshin MP Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury with his son Isha Khan Choudhury and has fielded late Congress leader Abdus Sattar's grandson Mohammad Mortaja Hossain from Jangipur.

In Karnakata, the party has fielded PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi's daughter Priyanka Jarkiholi from Chikkodi, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy's daughter Sowmya Reddy from Bangalore South, Women & Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar's son Mrinal Ravindra Hebbalkar from Belgaum, and Agricultural Marketing Minister Shivanand Patil's daughter Samyukta S Patil from Bagalkot. Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre's son Sagar Khandre has been fielded from Bidar.

In Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's turf of Gulbarga, the Congress has fielded his son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani. In Bangalore Central, the Congress has fielded former Union Minister K Rahman Khan's son Mansoor Ali Khan. In Davangere, the Congress has fielded veteran Shamanur Shivashankarappa's daughter-in-law Prabha Mallikarjun. Her husband is a minister in the Siddaramaiah government.

In Telangana, the party has fielded Gaddam Vamsi Krishna, the son of Speaker Gadam Prasad from Peddapalle. In Maharashtra, veteran leader and former Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde's daughter Praniti is the candidate from Solapur (SC-reserved) and former Maharashtra minister and MLA K C Padvi's son Goval Padvi from Nandurbar (ST-reserved constituency).

Of the 11 candidates from Gujarat on the list, the party has four dynasts : Anklav MLA Amit Chavda, Khedbrahma MLA Tushar Chaudhary, former Gujarat Mahila Congress president Sonal Patel and current Pradesh Mahila Congress president Jenny Thummar.

TURNCOATS IN TELANGANA

In Telangana, the party has fielded G Ranjith Reddy from Chevella. The sitting MP from the seat, Reddy joined the Congress from the BRS some days earlier. In Malkajgiri, it has fielded Vikarabad Zilla Parishad chairperson Patnam Sunitha Mahender Reddy who joined the Congress recently. She too joined the Congress from the BRS. The wife of MLC Patnam Mahender Reddy, she will lock horns against BJP's Etala Rajender.

Danam Nagender, the Khairatabad MLA, who crossed over from the BRS last week been fielded from Secunderabad. He will take on Union Minister G Kishan Reddy. From Nagarkurnool, where sitting MP P Ramulu had crossed over to the BJP, the party has fielded Mallu Ravi, brother of Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu.

INTERESTING CANDIDATES

In Maharashtra's Kolhapur, the candidate is Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj, a direct descendant of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Former MLA Vasant Chavan will contest from Nanded, which is the home district of former CM Ashok Chavan.

In Rajasthan, the party named five candidates — educationist Sunil Sharma (Jaipur), Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson Sangeeta Beniwal (Pali), AICC secretary Kuldeep Indora (Ganganagar), Baran Zila Pramukh Urmila Jain Bhaya (Jhalawar–Baran) and former RLP leader Ummeda Ram Beniwal (Barmer).

— WITH INPUTS FROM ENS KOLKATA, JAIPUR, MUMBAI, BENGALURU, AND AHMEDABAD

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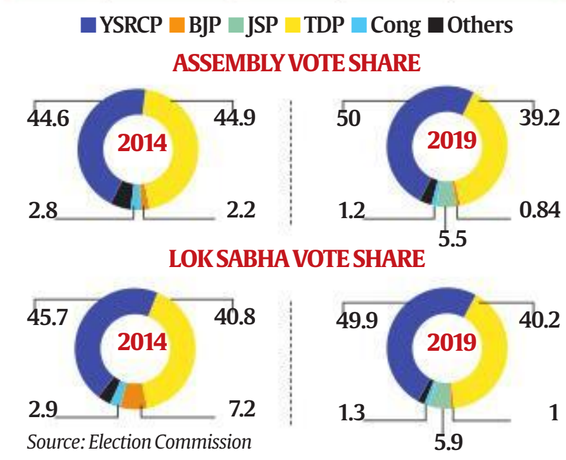
SAMAJWADI PARTY CALLS BLUFF OF APNA DAL (K), ITS SOLE REMAINING ALLY FROM 2022 ASSEMBLY POLLS

ANDHRA LS & ASSEMBLY POLL RESULTS

Party	Assembly 2014	Lok Sabha 2014	Assembly 2019	Lok Sabha 2019
YSRCP	67	8	151	22
TDP	102	15	23	3
BJP	4	2	0	0
JSP			1	0
Cong	0	0	0	0
Others	2			



Source: Election Commission

Jagan Mohan banks on candidate culls, welfare schemes as TDP-led alliance rises

PUSHKAR BANAKAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

ANDHRA PRADESH is going to elections for its 25 Lok Sabha and 175 Assembly seats on May 13. Unlike in 2019, when these were held in the state in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections, this time the simultaneous polls will take place in its fourth phase.

The 2019 elections saw the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) storming to power by sweeping the polls, winning 22 Lok Sabha and 151 Assembly seats with a vote share of just under 50%. The then incumbent N Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party (TDP), was reduced to only 3 Lok Sabha and 23 Assembly seats with a vote share of 39.1%.

This time, while CM Jagan Mohan Reddy is banking on his welfare schemes, dubbed "navaratnalu (nine gems)", and the support of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities to help the YSRCP sail through, he faces some stiff challenges.

Firstly, the TDP, which leads an alliance comprising the BJP and Pawan Kalyan-led Jana Sena Party (JSP), seems to be resurgent now. Secondly, the YSRCP will have to take on Andhra Pradesh Congress chief and Jagan's sister Y S Sharmila, who is likely to eat into the party's vote base.

Jagan is also faced with growing anti-incumbency against his ministers and MLAs, some of whom are said to have lost connect with their electorate after the commencement of disbursement of welfare scheme funds through Direct Benefit Transfer.

Jagan has dropped or shifted a slew of YSRCP MLAs and MPs in order to beat anti-incumbency, leading to an exodus of party leaders to other parties. Over the past few months, the YSRCP has faced desertion by at least six sitting MPs. "The CM's intentions cannot be questioned but a leader's comfort and stronghold must also be taken into account (while shifting them from seats)," a YSRCP office-bearer from Visakhapatnam said.

The YSRCP is also grappling with the capital issue, especially in the wake of Hyderabad ceasing to exist as the common capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh after June 2.

On the other hand, the TDP-JSP alliance has got a shot in the arm with the BJP joining it and is looking to capitalise on the consolidation of the Kamma-Kapu votes, among other things, to dislodge the YSRCP government.

Kammas, who are traditional supporters of the TDP as Naidu belongs to the community, make up around 5% of the population in Andhra Pradesh. Pawan Kalyan belongs to the Kapu community, which accounts for about 18% of the state's population.

Historically, the TDP has fared better when it has joined hands with the BJP. In 2014, the party in alliance with BJP stormed to power, winning 102 Assembly and 16 LS seats. Five years later, contesting alone, it faced a drubbing.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

BALLOTIN

Andhra polls: Sons of six ex-CMs in fray

Amaravati: The sons of six former CMs of Andhra Pradesh are contesting in the upcoming state polls.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, who is contesting from Pulivendula, is the son of former CM Y S Rajasekhar Reddy.

Nara Lokesh, son of three-time CM and TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, is contesting for a second time after his first attempt to win from Mangalagiri in 2019 ended in failure. This time around, Lokesh will be challenged by YSRCP's M Lavanya.

Tollywood actor and sitting Hindupur MLA N Balakrishna, who is the son of NTR, is contesting from the same constituency again.

Jana Sena leader N Manohar, who is the NDA candidate from Tenali seat, is the son of former CM N Bhaskar Rao.

N Ramkumar Reddy, son of ex-CM N Janardhan Reddy, is contesting on a YSRCP ticket from Venkatagiri and K Surya Prakash Reddy, son of former CM K Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, is TDP candidate from Dhone segment. **PTI**

'Taking train to karmabhoomi with happy heart': Shivraj Chouhan returns to LS fray after 20 years

Ex-CM showcases welfare schemes like Ladli Behna his govt had launched

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, MARCH 21

MADHYA PRADESH BJP stalwart and ex-chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from his home turf Vidisha seat, hit the campaign trail on Thursday, travelling by a train in a second-class coach from Bhopal to reach Ganjbasoda, which is part of his constituency.

Known for his down-to-earth approach and mass outreach – which had contributed to his becoming the longest-serving Madhya Pradesh CM involving four terms until December 2023 – Chouhan, 65, has now entered the Lok Sabha poll arena after two decades.

He has been a four-time MP from Vidisha, a BJP stronghold, which had been represented by ex-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1991) and Sushma Swaraj (2009 and 2014).

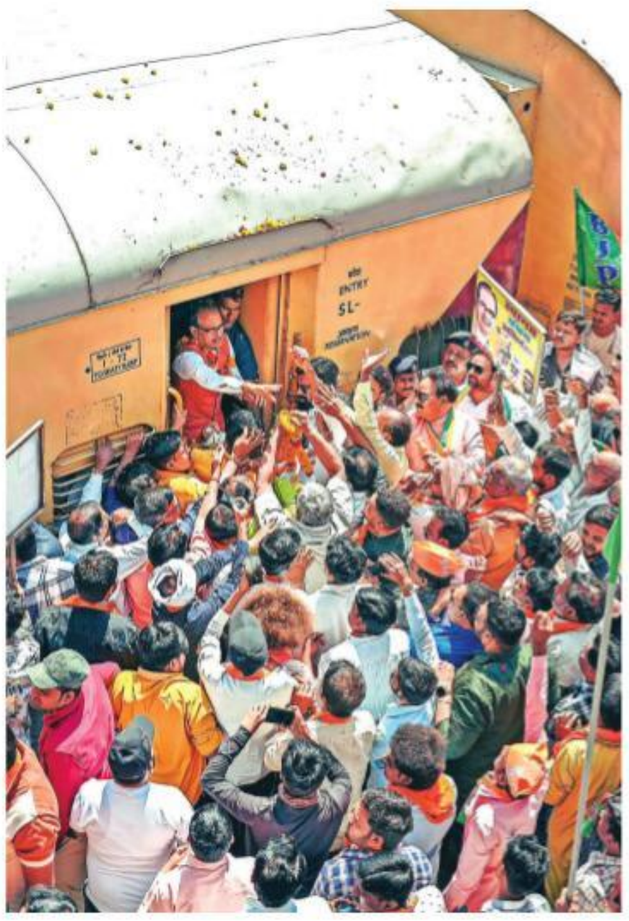
"I have been travelling by train since I was an MP. My heart is full of happiness. I am going to Ganjbasoda, which is my 'karmabhoomi' (workplace). I have family relations with the people and I am going again there to meet all of them," Chouhan said onboard the sleeper class of Bhopal-Bilaspur train. He was accompanied by his wife Sadhna.

Vidisha has remained a traditional BJP bastion for decades, with the Congress having managed to win it only twice (1980 and 1984) since 1967. The Congress is yet to name its candidate from here.

Chouhan kicked off his campaign three days ago, when he visited Icchawar where he met party workers, ate the local sweet dish *Mawa Bati*, and interacted with local people.

During his train journey, Chouhan chatted with a child, who sat on his lap, and interacted with the passengers. He also met BJP workers who had gathered in large numbers at Salamatpur, Sanchi, Vidisha, Gulabganj and Ganjbasoda railway stations.

At Ganjbasoda, Chouhan was greeted by a huge crowd who gathered in a hall. He bowed down and welcomed the crowd, apologising for the lack of arrangements. "After a long time I have got the opportunity to hug everyone... Those people who couldn't get a selfie don't worry. Many nephews and nieces keep saying 'Mama selfie, selfie'. For five years I will be among you only, why are you worrying," he told the cheering crowd.



Former Madhya Pradesh CM and BJP's Vidisha candidate Shivraj Singh Chouhan boards a train to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, in Bhopal, Thursday. *PTI*

Chouhan is popularly known as "Mama (maternal uncle)" in the state.

As the then CM, Chouhan had spearheaded the BJP's campaign in the November 2023 Assembly elections during which he addressed over 160 rallies. His campaign was based on the plank of his welfare schemes for women, especially the Ladli Behna Yojana, a monthly stipend of Rs 1,250, which many believe was an important factor behind the BJP's landslide win in the polls.

However, the BJP central leadership replaced Chouhan with three-time Ujjain MLA Mohan Yadav as the CM as it opted for a new face at the helm.

Chouhan had become the CM for the first time in 2005 and continued in his post for three terms until December 2018, when the BJP lost to the Kamal Nath-led led Congress.

In March 2020, he returned to the CM post after a defection led by Jyotiraditya Scindia brought down the Nath government.

Asked about his Lok Sabha candidature after such a long stint as the CM, Chouhan said, "My life is a mission. The aim of life is to work for the nation and public." **– WITH PTI INPUTS**

POLL SPEAK

'Happiness index in Bengal is negative... Socially, we've gone back 100 years'

ON MARCH 3, in an unprecedented move, the former Calcutta High Court judge Justice **ABHIJIT GANGOPADHYAY** resigned from his office and joined the BJP, raising questions of propriety and judicial independence. In an interview to **APURVA VISHWANATH**, the former judge says he is "not yet a politician" but only a "simple political worker "of the BJP and that what appealed to him are the party's development and nationalism planks. Excerpts:

There is a buzz you may contest the election against TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee.

I cannot recognise any such politician of West Bengal. I talk about the politicians of West Bengal but the name you uttered… I cannot recognise any such politician in West Bengal.

But you referred to the 'bhaipo (the nephew)' even in court…

I have said many things in court and I cannot remember everything. But today I cannot recall any such person who is in politics. About my contesting elections, that depends entirely on the higher-ups in BJP. I am doing some party work as I am directed and I am meeting some people from the party and getting introduced to them for the first time.

They will decide from where I will contest and if I will contest at all. Mine is not a conditional joining. I have joined voluntarily, out of my own will and there is no condition that I have to be a candidate for a seat etc, or that I have to be given an office. I am working as a simple and general worker and not more than that.

You said that the TMC motivated you to join politics and yet you do not recognise Banerjee?

Some of the spokespersons insulted me when I was acting as a judge and tried to do justice against corrupt activities by the political party in power in the state. Then they started accusing, attacking me and said a lot of things and I took a cue from that. They also said you come to the political field… their spokesperson.

Are you referring to Kunal Ghosh's statement that you contest an election against Banerjee?

Again, I have not heard of anybody by this name in politics. Bengal has a rich cultural as well as political heritage. Some miscreants… underworld persons might be by this name, but I cannot recall a politician by this name. I can only recall old and new politicians.

Give us a sense of when and why you joined the BJP? Who approached you?

THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW
ABHIJIT GANGOPADHYAY
FORMER JUDGE, CALCUTTA HIGH COURT

I joined the BJP because it is a national party which is also active in West Bengal, and it is the only party which can change the political scenario in Bengal which, in the last 10-15 years has been very bad. It is the only party that can change the situation of Bengal. There is a job crisis today in Bengal… from manual labour to IT sector folks, young people are migrating out of here, leaving behind their aged parents. It is because they aren't getting jobs here even when they are skilled or educated. The people are unhappy… the happiness index in Bengal today is negative. That is why people must vote for the BJP, which will bring in development, and people can ultimately vote the ruling party out of power in 2026. For that, the situation has to be created now.

What other aspects about Bengal worry you?

Social issues… Socially we are going back 100 years. This is due to unnecessary fights and animosity created by the political party in power. Everybody is feeling unsafe and insecure. People need guarantee that they will remain safe in their homes, their daughters will not be raped, their sons will not be murdered or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

In Bengal, we do not have many industries. We have to energise our peasants and create jobs.

As a politician now… your focus is development?

I'm in politics, but I'm so new that if anybody calls me a politician, I will not accept it… I'm still learning the different currents and rules of politics, and understanding the workflow and the political scenario in the state and also the country. It is a very complicated thing to understand. Not a politician, but I would describe myself as a general political worker of the Bhartiya Janata Party.

When judges jump into politics, there is a shadow cast on the independence of the judiciary.

Please don't use the word jumping… I have crawled into politics. I don't think it causes a shadow. How can it? Because a person can join politics only after leaving the judiciary. After joining politics, we can have no influence over the judiciary.

There has been criticism from within the judiciary about your joining politics.

My former colleagues are absolutely silent because it is not their business to comment on my personal choice.

One might argue that you built a public profile while you were in office… with the TV interview and your observations in court against a politician…

Not at all. Some political party is spreading that, but I did some work which was liked by the general people of West Bengal and that is why they accepted me as a judge and even came to my court on my last day. But I was not influenced by any such thing while in office… It is wholly incorrect and untrue. Joining politics came to my mind seven days before my resignation and when I started thinking about that, I stopped sitting in court.

Now that you have joined the BJP, there are certain ideological planks of the party that you may have dealt with in your judicial career… CAA, NRC debate…

I'm still formulating my views on these issues. I'm reading material given to me by my party and also from other sources. It will take some time, say six months or so for me to reply to all these questions.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
www.indianexpress.com

DONORS AND BENEFICIARIES

Of poll bonds bought by top individuals, over two-thirds were redeemed by BJP

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

ELECTORAL BONDS purchased by a majority of the 15 top identifiable individuals — from steel magnate Lakshmi Niwas Mittal to Biocon's Kiran Mazumdar Shaw — were redeemed by the BJP, according to the data put out by the State Bank of India Thursday and published by the Election Commission of India.

In all, 333 individuals purchased electoral bonds worth Rs 358 crore, of which the 15 identified by *The Indian Express* accounted for Rs 158.65 crore — with over 70% going to the BJP and the rest to others.

The list of top 15 identifiable donors along with the list of parties which redeemed the bonds is as follows:

LAKSHMI NIWAS MITTAL: Rs 35 crore (BJP)
The executive Chairman and CEO of ArcelorMittal bought electoral bonds worth Rs 35 crore. All were redeemed by the BJP.

LAXMIDAS VALLABHDAS MERCHANT: Rs 25 crore (BJP)
A chartered accountant associated with Reliance Industries Limited and a director with several Reliance companies, he bought bonds totaling Rs 25 crore, all of which were redeemed by the BJP.

RAHUL BHATIA: Rs 16.2 crore (TMC); Rs 3.8 crore (NCP)
The promoter of India's largest airline, Indigo, bought bonds worth Rs 20 crore in his personal capacity in 2021. Bonds worth Rs 16.2 crore were redeemed by the All India Trinamool Congress and Rs 3.8 crore were encashed by the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

INDER THAKURDAS JAISINGHANI: Rs 14 cr (BJP)
The chairman and managing director of Polycab Group, a manufacturer of electric wires and cables, bought bonds worth Rs 14 crore. All redeemed by the BJP.

RAJESH MANNALAL AGRAWAL: Rs 5 crore (BJP); Rs 5 crore (BRS); Rs 3 crore (Congress)
The Joint Managing Director of Ajanta Pharma, a multinational pharmaceutical company, he purchased bonds totaling Rs 13 crore — with Rs 5 crore each being redeemed by the BJP and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, and Rs 3 crore by the Congress.

HARMESH RAHUL JOSHI: Rs 10 crore (BJP)
He is one of the directors of the Mumbai-based Om Freight Group handling international logistics and freight. All his bonds, worth Rs 10 crore, were redeemed by the BJP.

RAHUL JAGANNATH JOSHI: Rs 10 crore (BJP)
He is also one of the directors of the Om Freight Group of companies. He also purchased bonds worth Rs 10 crore, redeemed by the BJP.

KIRAN MAZUMDAR SHAW: Rs 4 crore (BJP); Rs 1 crore (Congress); Rs 1 crore (JDS)
She purchased bonds totaling Rs 6 crore and spread the donations: BJP got Rs 4 crore, and the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) Rs 1 crore each.

SUDHAKAR KANCHARLA: Rs 5 crore (TDP)
The bonds worth Rs 5 crore purchased by the chairman of the Yoda Group and founder of Devansh Lab Works were redeemed by the Telugu Desam Party.

INDRANI PATHAK: Rs 5 crore (BJP)
She is a director with nine companies and is linked to the mining sector with operations in Odisha and West Bengal. She purchased bonds worth Rs 5 crore which were redeemed by the BJP.

ABHRAJIT MITRA: Rs 3.2 cr (Congress); Rs 1.05 cr (TMC)
A director with Kolkata-based Searock Infraproject Private Limited, he purchased bonds worth Rs 4.25 crore. Of this, Congress redeemed Rs 3.2 crore and the All India Trinamool Congress Rs 1.05 crore.

SAROJIT KUMAR DEY: Rs 2.86 cr (TMC); Rs 0.5 cr (YSRCP)
A director with seven West Bengal-based firms, he purchased bonds totaling Rs 3.4 crore: Rs 2.86 went to the All India Trinamool Congress and Rs 0.5 crore was redeemed by the YSR Congress Party.

DILIP RAMANLAL THACKER: Rs 3 crore (BJP)
Associated with 30 companies, mostly from Mumbai dealing with real estate and infrastructure sectors, Thacker bought bonds worth Rs 3 crore, which were redeemed by the BJP.

PRAKASH BALWANT MENGANE: Rs 3 crore (BJP)
A director with Shreenath Stapatya India Private Limited, a Maharashtra-based company, all his bonds worth Rs 3 crore were redeemed by the BJP.

NIRMAL KUMAR BATHWAL: Rs 2 crore (BJD)
He is a director with 21 companies. The Biju Janata Dal got all his bonds worth Rs 2 crore.

Serum Institute, Nippon Steel among electoral trust donors which didn't take bond route

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

WHILE MANY companies that donated to parties using electoral bonds also used the electoral trust route, there are some among the top 10 donors through trusts over the past five years, including COVID-19 vaccine-maker Serum Institute of India Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad-based electronics manufacturer Medha Servo Drives and ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel, who did not opt for the bonds that gave anonymity.

Among the top 10 donors through electoral trusts in 2022-2023, as per a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel donated Rs 100 crore and ArcelorMittal Design and Engineering Centre gave Rs 25 crore through Prudent Electoral Trust. While Arcelor's name did not figure in the list of donors of electoral bonds released by the Election Commission last week, executive chairman and CEO of ArcelorMittal Lakshmi Niwas Mittal donated Rs.35 crore through EBs. The data showed he purchased the bonds on April 18, 2019, when the 2019 Lok Sabha elections were on. While Serum Institute was not in the list of EB donors, its founder Cyrus Poonawala did figure in the list of individual donors to the Nationalist Congress Party.

EXPLAINED

Electoral trusts scheme

INTRODUCED BY the UPA government in 2013, the electoral trusts scheme allowed companies and individuals to donate to an electoral trust that would in turn make donations to parties. Both the contributions by companies and the trusts' donations to parties were made public in the form of annual reports submitted to the Election Commission. From 2013-14 to 2021-22, a total of Rs.2,268.6 crore was donated by trusts and 72% of that went to the BJP.

Medha Servo Drives gave Rs 30 crore and Medha Traction Equipment donated Rs 5.01 crore in 2022-23 through Prudent Electoral Trust. Both companies did not use the EB route. Serum Institute of India, the second largest donor through trusts in 2022-23, donated Rs 50.25 crore in 2022-23. Serum was also the fourth-largest donor in 2021-22, donating Rs 45 crore through Prudent Electoral Trust.

In 2021-22, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India and ArcelorMittal Design and Engg Centre Pvt Ltd were the top two donors through trusts with Rs 70 crore and Rs 60 crore respectively. GMR Hyderabad International Airport, which was among the top 10 donors through trusts in 2021-22 with Rs 20 crore donation, also did not figure in the list of EB donors.

In 2020-21, as per ADR, the top eight donors of electoral trusts had all donated through electoral bonds. Only the ninth and tenth biggest donors — Lakshmi Machine Work Ltd and Avinash Bhosale Group — did not purchase EBs. Among the top 10 donors in 2019-2020 for electoral trusts, Indiabulls Infraestate Ltd, Delhi International Airport Ltd, MIG Bandra Realtors and Builders and Abil Infra Projects Pvt Ltd did not buy EBs.

In 2018-2019, among the top donors of electoral trusts GMR Hyderabad International Airport, GMR Airport Developers, GMR Hyderabad Air Cargo and Logistics Pvt Ltd also did not buy EBs.

The Electoral Bond Scheme, introduced in 2017-18, allowed for anonymous donations by individuals and companies to parties. The Supreme Court struck down the scheme on February 15, finding it violative of the Right to Information. The court has ordered State Bank of India to make all data of donors and beneficiaries of EBs public.

Days after Aurobindo Pharma director's arrest, BJP encashed ₹5-crore bonds bought by firm

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M & ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

FIVE DAYS after Aurobindo Pharma Director P Sarath Chandra Reddy was arrested in a money laundering case tied to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy, Aurobindo Pharma purchased electoral bonds worth Rs 5 crore on November 15, 2022. On November 21, the BJP encashed this sum, bond data reveals.

The next year, in June, a Delhi court allowed Reddy, currently non-executive director at the company, to turn approver in the case. The Delhi court had also granted a pardon to Reddy in the high-profile case.

The Enforcement Directorate had earlier alleged that Reddy was engaged in the liquor business, had conspired with business owners and politicians involved in the excise case, and indulged in unfair market practices to gain undue advantage from the liquor policy.

Aurobindo Pharma Director P Sarath Chandra Reddy

Between April 2021 and November 2023, Aurobindo Pharma acquired electoral bonds worth Rs 52 crore. Electoral data reveals that a significant proportion — 66% — found its way to the BJP; 29% of these bonds were encashed by Telangana-based Bharat Rashtra Samithi and the remaining portion by Andhra Pradesh-based Telugu Desam Party. The data reveals that 57% of the Rs 52 crore in electoral bonds were acquired between November 2022 and November 2023. Besides the Rs 5-crore purchase in November 2022, the company bought bonds worth Rs 25 crore in November 2023. These bonds were encashed by the BJP on November 21, 2022, (as mentioned above) and November 17, 2023, respectively.

Aurobindo Pharma is one of the country's top pharmaceutical companies. In 2023, it earned revenue exceeding Rs 24,000 crore. The company exports its products to over 150 countries worldwide, with approximately 90% of its revenue generated from international operations.

According to the ED's prosecution complaint, AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair, acting on behalf of the party's leaders, "received kickbacks to the tune of Rs 100 crore from a group, for convenience, we may call it the South Group (as termed in the statements of various persons recorded during the investigation)". Reddy was earlier alleged to be part of this collective.

The ED claimed these kickbacks were "paid in advance to AAP leaders through Nair by South Group as a part of an agreement between South Group and AAP leaders" so it could secure "uninhibited access, undue favours, attained stakes in established wholesale businesses and multiple retail zones (over and above what was allowed in the policy)".

Nine of top 10 donors of Odisha's BJD are in mining, steel sectors

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE RULING party of resource-rich Odisha, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), got the majority of its electoral bond donations from mining and steel companies, shows data released Thursday by the Election Commission.

Out of the total Rs 775.50 crore in electoral bonds from 42 donors redeemed by the party from April 12, 2019, to January 2024, nine of the top 10 donors were mining and steel companies. The one non-mining company, Rashmi Cement, is a part of the Rashmi Group, which has iron and steel companies as well. The top donor to the party, the Aditya Birla Group-owned Essel Mining and Industries Ltd gave Rs 174.5 crore. Essel, which as per its website has one of India's largest iron ore mining operations, is located in Odisha's Barbil-Barajamda belt.

Other Aditya Birla Group companies, Utkal Alumina International Ltd Company and Grasim Industries, gave the BJD Rs 70 crore and Rs 10 crore, respectively. Jindal Steel and Power was the BJD's second-biggest donor with Rs 100 crore followed by Utkal Alumina, which operates in the state's Rayagada district.

The top 10 donors also included Rungta Sons (Rs 50 crore), S N Mohanty group (Rs 45 crore), Rashmi Cement (Rs 45 crore), Vedanta Ltd (Rs 40 crore), Penguin Trading and Agencies Ltd (Rs 30.5 crore). All these companies are involved in the mining industry. Jindal Stainless, which gave Rs 30 crore, and Rashmi Metaliks, a Rashmi Group company that gave Rs 27 crore, were ninth and tenth on the list.

Of the 27 parties that redeemed bonds between April 12, 2019, and January 2024, the BJD ranked fifth after the BJP, Congress, TMC and BRS. In the years the scheme was operational, electoral bonds became the sole source of the BJD's donations. Starting with 87.9% of its donations in 2018-2019, the share of electoral bonds increased to 99.99% of all BJD donations in 2020-2021 and 100% in 2021-22 and 2022-23, as per the party's annual accounts report to the Election Commission.

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
भारत सरकार का उपक्रम A Govt. of India Undertaking
BUXAR BRANCH Syndicate

POSSESSION NOTICE (SECTION 13 (4)) (For Immovable Property)

Whereas: The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **Canara Bank** under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as " the Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice **Dated 01.12.2023** calling upon the borrower **M/s Durga Electrical Works, Prop. Sri Vijay Kumar,** S/o Sri Sita Ram Prasad Guarantor / Mortgagor Smt. Sharda Devi W/o Sri Vijay Kumar and Sri Nandan Prasad Keshri to repay the amount mentioned in the notice, being **Rs. 18,27,000/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand only)** plus int. & Other charges within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice .
The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rule on this **18th day of March 2024**
The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Canara Bank** for an amount **Rs. 18,27,000/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand only)** and interest there on.
The Borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.
Details of Security Assets :- Deed No. 3980, All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Khata No. - Survey Khata 78 / Chak Khata - 73, Plot No. - Survey Plot 156, 157, 181 / Chak Plot 83, situated at Mauza - Sohani Patti, P.S No. - 331, P.S. - Buxar, Anchal - Buxar, District - Buxar, Area - 08 Dhur, **Boundary - North -** Santosh Kumar Singh, **South -** Passage 10', **East -** Passage 10', **West -** Barmeshwar Singh.
Title Holder - Smt. Sharda Devi, W/o Sri Vijay Kumar

Date: 18.03.2024 Authorised Officer (Canara Bank)

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD
Zonal Office, Gaya(e-AB), South Bisar Talab Road, Gaya, Bihar-823001

{Rule-8(1)}
POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)

Where as
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice u/s 13(2) on the date noted against the account as mentioned hereinafter calling upon the borrower(S) to repay the amount mentioning in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower(S) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(S) 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.
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 Indian Bank **(e-Allahabad Bank)**or an amount and interest thereon. Along with legal expenses and other expenses already incurred/to be incurred by the bank

Name of the branch:	SHEIKHPURA		
Name of the accounts	Mr Shyam Nandan Prasad		
Name of the Proprietor / Guarantor / Mortgagor:	1. Mr Shyam Nandan Prasad , S/o- Sitasharan Prasad , Vill-Audhe, Sheikhpura, Bihar-811105 2. Mrs Reena Sinha, W/o-Mrs Shyam Nandan Prasad , Vill-Audhe, Sheikhpura, Bihar-811105		
Date of Demand Notice:	06.01.2024	Date of Possession Notice:	19.03.2024
Amount Outstanding as on the demand notice:	₹ 17,88,339 (Rupees Seventeen Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Thirty Nine Only) as on 06-01-2024 along with legal and other expenses incurred & to be incurred by the bank.		
Detailed description of the Property:	Registered Mortgage of land along with present and future construction thereon in the name of Sri Shyam Nandan Prasad, S/o- Sitasharan Prasad, located at Mauza-Faridpur, Thana No-103, Ps-Sheikhpura, Khata No-03, Plot No-523, Area-12.00 Decimal, Bihar – 811105 within Sub-Registration District of Sheikhpura and Registation District of Sheikhpura. **Boundary- North –** House of Binod Kumar, **South –** Land Of Bachchu Yadav & Others **East –** Faridpur Mehush Road, **West –** House of Krishnandan Yadav		

Date: 22.03.2024
Place: GAYA.
Sd/- Authorised Officer (Indian Bank)

In UP, BJP overdrive to wrest 14 seats held by non-NDA parties

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, MARCH 21

THE 14 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, which are currently held by the non-NDA parties, have become a key focus of the ruling BJP's strategy in the crucial state in the upcoming polls. Aiming to wrest these seats in the upcoming polls, the BJP is deploying central leaders there, finetuning its message on welfare schemes, and brainstorming over the selection of suitable candidates.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP won 62 out of 80 seats in UP on its own, while its ally, the Apna Dal (Sonelal) won 2 seats. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) got 10 seats, its then ally Samajwadi Party (SP) five, while the Congress got just one seat.

In the bypolls held subsequently, the BJP managed to wrest Azamgarh and Rampur from the SP. The 14 seats which are not held by the BJP-led NDA include Ghazipur, Lalganj, Nagina, Amroha, Bijnor, Ambedkar Nagar, Saharanpur, Ghosi, Shravasti, Jaunpur, Sambhal, Moradabad, Mainpuri and Rae Bareli.

BJP sources told *The Indian Express* that a major challenge in these seats has been the selection of candidates as well as the balancing of local caste equations.

To establish a connection with the voters, BJP sources said, the party has undertaken a "sampark abhiyan" (outreach campaign) to target "labharthis" (beneficiaries) of the party-led central and state governments' schemes in these 14 seats. As part of this exercise, feedback was also sought from the grassroots party workers. The BJP has also deployed several Union ministers, including Ashwini Vaishnaw, Annapurna Dwivedi and Jitendra Singh, to visit these constituencies and address the situation on the ground.

"We have worked hard on finding out the reason for these losses. Union ministers were given responsibilities to connect with workers and scheme beneficiaries," said BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi. So far, based on feedback from its leaders and workers, the BJP has announced tickets for six of these 14 seats. In Lalganj, a Scheduled Castes (SC)-reserved seat, the BJP has repeated Neelam Sonkar, who lost to the BSP last time with a margin of 1.61 lakh votes. The party has also managed to get the sitting BSP MP Sangeeta Azad into its fold.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Cong releases first list for Arunachal Assembly polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ITANAGAR, MARCH 21

THE CONGRESS Thursday announced the first list of 34 candidates for the upcoming assembly polls in Arunachal Pradesh, scheduled for April 19. Among the candidates are three former ministers and three women nominees, with the majority being first-time contenders.

Notably, the names of Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and former chief minister Nabam Tuki and APCC vice-president Bosiram Siram were absent from the list. Party insiders claimed both Tuki and Siram would contest as Lok Sabha nominees from the Arunachal West and East parliamentary constituencies, respectively.

Tuki is the sitting MLA from Sagalee constituency in Papum Pare district. He had represented the seat since the last six terms.

The party is yet to unveil candidates for the two Lok Sabha seats in the state. Among the prominent figures listed were former ministers Kumar Waii, Takam Pario, and Tanga Byaling.

The three women debutants are Gollo Yapung Tana from Pakke Kessang constituency, Jermai Krong (Tezu) and Marina Kenglang who would contest from Changlang North constituency.

In the 2019 assembly polls, the Congress contested in 46 constituencies out of the total 60 but could manage to win in only four. The party recently received a major setback when three of its sitting MLAs switched allegiance to the BJP. Assembly and general elections will be held simultaneously in the state on April 19.

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India
ZONAL OFFICE: SIWAN ZONE
1st Floor, Tarwara More, Siwan - 841226,
E-Mail- zo.siwan@bankofindia.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE
(Under Rule 8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas, The undersigned being the authorized officer of the **Bank of India** under securitization and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed in the table hereunder written calling upon the below mentioned Borrowers to repay the amount shown in the respective notices mentioned against their names in the table within 60 Days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers / Guarantors mentioned below having failed to repay the amount shown in the respective notices issued U/S 13 (2) within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the aforementioned borrowers/ guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property (Secured Assets) Described in the table given below, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 13(4) of the said Act Read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date(s) mentioned against the respective property. The aforesaid borrowers / Guarantors in particulars and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies mentioned in the table hereunder written and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the **BANK OF INDIA.** For the amount shown in the respective column of the table and interest thereon.

Name of Borrower and Guarantor	(1) Branch (2) Date & Amount as per Notice U/S 13 (2)	Description of the Immovable / Movable Property	Date of Possession of Assets
Borrower- Mr.Uday Narayan Bhagat S/o Ram Ekbal Bhagat, **Guarantor-** Mr.Madan Murari Kushwaha	**(1) Titra** **(2) 26.07.2023, Rs.26,75,792.10** (Twenty Six Lakhs Seventy Five Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety Two and Ten Paisa Only) and Uncharged Interest thereon.	**(a)** All that part and parcel of the property consisting land and building in the name of borrower Mr.Uday Narayan Bhagat S/o Ram Ekbal Bhagat, Guarantor Mr.Madan Murari Kushwaha, situated at Mauza-Titra Tola Bangra, P.S-Mairwa, Dist-Siwan, Sale deed No-520 dated 13.01.2010 and sale deed no 14683 dated 21.08.2002. **Present Boundaries, Khata No 869, Survey No-3293,3296, Area-1 Kattha 10 dhur.** **North**-Nagina Singh and Present nij, **South**-Mustari at Present Sukhari bhagat, **East**-Kaccha Rasta, **west**-Itkaran Sadak **Present Boundaries, Khata no-869, Survey No-3293, 3296 Area 1 katha 10 dhur** **North**-Nagina Singh, **South**-Mustari, **East**-Mustari, **West**-Mustari	19.03.2024

Date- 19.03.2024
Place- Siwan
Authorised Officer
Bank of India, Siwan Zone

Stop sending PM's letter on WhatsApp: EC to MeitY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE ELECTION Commission on Thursday instructed the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to immediately stop sending a letter by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the account "Viksit Bharat Sampark" to WhatsApp users.

In a letter to MeitY Secretary S Krishnan, the EC asked the Ministry to submit a compliance report immediately. The Ministry had informed the EC in a letter on March 16 that the WhatsApp messages were sent on March 15, a day before the election dates were announced. "It was informed in that letter that though the letters were sent out before MCC period, but due to system architecture and network limitations it is possible that some letters have a delayed delivery," the EC wrote. The EC told the Ministry that it had received "complaints from various quarters that such messages are still being delivered on citizens' phones".

"Since the MCC is now in force, you are hereby directed to ensure forthwith that no further delivery of 'WhatsApp messages' takes place during MCC period. A compliance report in this regard may be sent immediately," the EC said.

Kamal Nath aide quits Cong, says no other option as son joined BJP

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, MARCH 21

FORMER MADHYA Pradesh minister Deepak Saxena, a close ally of former chief minister Kamal Nath, left the Congress party on Thursday – the same day that his son Ajay Saxena joined the BJP along with 400 other Congress members from Nath's bastion of Chhindwara.

Deepak Saxena told *The Indian Express* that he had no issues with Kamal Nath, with whom he has been associated for more than four decades, and that he had to leave the Congress because his son joined the BJP.

"I had no issue with Kamal Nath. My son wanted to join the BJP, and I tried to convince him not to take that decision. I don't know why he left the party," he said. "People would have said that the father and son are asking for votes in two different parties, so I had no choice but to leave (the Congress)," he added.

Ajay Saxena and the Congress functionaries who joined the BJP were welcomed by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and BJP state president V D Sharma.

Apart from Ajay, those who switched over from the Congress include state secretary of the Women's Front from Chhindwara, Suhagwati Sareyam; in-charge of Junnardeo Vidhan Sabha seat Narendra Singh Thakur; district in-charge of the party's student wing, NSUI, Arish Khan; Municipal Corporation of Chhindwara councillor Ram Sharma; and chairman of the Chhindwara Municipal Corporation, Chandrabhan Devre.

In a letter addressed to Kamal Nath, Deepak Saxena wrote, "I will always be indebted and grateful to you for having faith and trust in a farmer like me and for involving me in active politics."

REFUSAL TO REINDUCT DMK MLA AND FORMER MINISTER K PONMUDY AFTER CONVICTION STAYED BY TOP COURT

CJI pulls up Tamil Nadu Governor: He is defying the Supreme Court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE SUPREME Court on Thursday pulled up Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi over his refusal to administer oath to reinduct DMK MLA K Ponmudi, whose conviction was stayed by the apex court, into the state Cabinet.

"We are seriously concerned about the conduct of the Governor in this case… This is not the way. Because he is defying the Supreme Court of India. When a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court stays a conviction, the Governor has no business to tell us that this does not wipe out the conviction and it is non-existent. Those who have advised him have not advised him correctly in accordance with law. The governor better be informed that when the Supreme Court of India stays a conviction, the law has to follow its course," said Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud presiding over a three-judge bench.

The bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, asked the Governor to take a decision by tomorrow (Friday) morning, failing which it said it will pronounce a judgment. "Now we will give you overnight. Otherwise we will declare judgement tomorrow." The court will hear the matter again Friday.

The Madras High Court had recently reversed Ponmudi's acquittal in a case of disproportionate assets, but on March 13, a two-judge SC bench stayed this saying it would otherwise lead to irreversible consequences.

The court was hearing an application by the TN government, which said that after the SC order Chief Minister M K Stalin had requested the Governor to administer the oath of office to Ponmudi but the Governor, while referring to the grounds on which he was convicted by the HC, refused the request and said "his reinduction while he remains tainted of corruption would be against constitutional morality".

Appearing for Tamil Nadu, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi said the "last person to talk about constitutional morality and fundamental rights must be someone speaking on behalf of the Governor". He said it was merely a continuation of the earlier conduct whereby the Governor had refused to sign Bills passed by the state Assembly and referred them to the President.

TN Governor R N Ravi; former DMK minister K Ponmudi

"The recommendation comes in writing from the Chief Minister, please appoint my minister whose conviction has been stayed by the Supreme Court. Should the CM swear him in by himself... He does the decency of writing to the Governor and he gets this reply. This is the obstructive tactics of the honourable Governor. You already delayed an automatic, ministerial act of swearing in. It's never happened in 75 years that the Chief Minister recommends somebody whose disqualification is lifted by the Supreme Court and the Governor says this."

Singhvi added that "primacy of the elected government is part of the basic structure".

Attorney General R Venkataramani said he will get in touch with the Governor to know what prompted him to do so. He also took serious exception to the TN government approaching the SC for relief by way of an interlocutory application in an already pending petition.

The court, however, did not agree and the CJI asked, "Is that the best argument for the Governor? That I will defend my constitutionally illegal conduct by pointing fingers at how they have come to the court?"

The bench asked the AG who submitted that states were filing suits against the Centre, "What else does a state do? You tell us about that. You tell us what is the remedy."

The AG said the state seeking relief by way of interlocutory application was an important question and hoped that the court would not close its eyes to it.

The CJI then asked, "Question is what do we close our eyes to? Should we close our eyes to this technical problem which Singhvi faces or do we close our eyes on the virtual breach of the Constitution by the Governor of your state?"

The court said "We are deeply concerned with the manner in which this matter has proceeded at the level of the Governor. To say that the conviction has been stayed but that's not non-existent. Is this law? Are we governed by the rule of law...?"

The CJI said, "I may have a different view about this particular man (Ponmudi), but that's not the point. The point is about constitutional law. We have to act in accordance with the Constitution. His conviction has been stayed, and the Chief Minister says he wants to induct him into the Cabinet. That's parliamentary democracy, the Cabinet form of government."

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

TICKET, PLEASE

FOR ONCE, Malayalam was perhaps drowned out by Marathi at the Kerala House in Delhi on Wednesday. Ramesh Chennithala, the Congress in-charge of Maharashtra, was staying there and he had a steady stream of visitors — ticket hopefuls and their supporters from the state. But among the visitors, one person stood out. Actor Swara Bhasker, too, reached the Kerala House and had a meeting with Chennithala. The buzz was that she expressed her interest to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Mumbai North-Central, the seat Priya Dutt had earlier represented.

FUTURE-READY

IN THE recent brainstorming session on Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, PM Narendra Modi was understood to have taken a dig at the Indian bureaucracy. At the session, which saw presentations on a range of identified sectors by secretaries and top government officials, the PM is understood to have said that 19th century bureaucracy won't work in the 21st century. A detailed action plan for the next five years was discussed. The PM had highlighted the point with secretaries in various ways in past meetings too.

BACK TO JNU

THE SAMAJWADI Party (SP) has allowed its student wing—Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha—to contest the March 22 student union elections at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, after a gap of nine years. The wing had last contested the JNU polls in 2015 when SP president Akhilesh Yadav was the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. SP's student wing is contesting for the posts of president and councillor and has also started exercise to set up its units in Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islamia.

PARTY SAYS GOVT FREEZING ACCOUNTS BEFORE POLLS

Sonia targets PM: Systematic bid to cripple Cong financially

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

AS IT awaited the Delhi High Court's judgment on its plea against the initiation of income tax reassessment proceedings for 2017-18, the Congress on Thursday said it has received a notice from the I-T Department for a financial year as way back as 1993-94. The Congress's top three leaders, Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, accused the ruling BJP of crippling the party financially ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

At a press conference, Sonia Gandhi said a "systematic effort is underway by the prime minister to cripple the Congress financially."

"Funds collected from the public are being frozen, and money from our accounts is being taken away forcibly... On the one hand, there is the electoral bond issue... The electoral bonds have benefited the BJP hugely. On the other hand, the finances of the principal Opposition party, the INC, are under a determined assault. This is truly unprecedented," she said.

Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi address reporters in New Delhi on Thursday. *Anil Sharma*

Rahul said: "All our bank accounts have been frozen. We can do no campaign work... We cannot support our candidates... and this is being done two months before the elections. Why is it being done? One notice comes from the 90s, another notice comes from 6-7 years ago," Rahul said.

Congress treasurer Ajay Maken claimed that the party's 11 accounts in four banks have been frozen. "For a notice for financial year 2017-18, a lien on Rs 210 crore was marked in our 11 accounts in 4 banks. The reason given is, that Rs 14.49 lakh was received in cash (as donations made by our MPs to the Congress party), out of total receipt of Rs 199 crore. This cash component is just 0.07 per cent of the total donations. And the punishment was 106 per cent," he said.

Maken said the party received a fresh notice from the Income Tax Department for the financial year 1993-94 last week. "We are being asked to calculate penal charges...after 31 years of the assessment," he said.

Congress president Kharge asked whether the BJP or any other political party had ever paid income tax. "Defreeze our accounts to ensure a level playing field in polls," he said.

Anand Sharma: Caste census not a solution to inequalities

Sharma is a member of Congress Working Committee

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

SENIOR CONGRESS leader Anand Sharma, a member of the Congress Working Committee, has written to party president Mallikarjun Kharge questioning the party's aggressive campaign pitch for holding a caste census. The party had "never engaged in nor endorsed identity politics" and argued that departure from the "historic position" is a matter of concern for many in the party, Sharma wrote.

A caste census, Sharma said, "cannot be a panacea nor a solution for unemployment and prevailing inequalities".

Interestingly, Sharma in his letter has also quoted Indira Gandhi, saying her clarion call in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections was "*Na jaat par na paat par, Mohar lagegi Haath par*" and Rajiv Gandhi's September 1990 speech in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the Mandal Commission report, when he said, "We have problems if caste is defined to enshrine casteism in our country…"

In his letter, Sharma said while "divisive agenda, issues of gender justice, unemployment, inflation, and rising inequality are shared concerns of the Congress, its alliance partners and progressive forces", the national caste census had emerged as an important issue in the electoral debate and endorsed by the INDIA alliance of which the Congress is a part.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

Why BJP is confident of containing any fallout from arrest of Delhi CM Kejriwal

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

WHILE THE arrest of Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party supremo Arvind Kejriwal has come on the eve of the Lok Sabha elections, amid the Opposition's claims of a witch-hunt by the Central government, the BJP is confident that it can withstand any backlash.

It stems from the belief that taking Kejriwal out of the picture at this critical time deals a blow to the INDIA bloc at large, and the AAP in Delhi, apart from bolstering the Modi government's credentials as committed to rooting out corruption.

The BJP will be underlining the AAP chief's defiance of the ED summons to make its case, as the Opposition unites in support of Kejriwal.

A senior BJP leader said: "One of the main fallouts of the arrest would be the impairing of AAP, with Kejriwal being its face and voice mobilising crowds and resources. He is also the brain and pillar of the party. Without Kejriwal, the AAP will not be in a position to make any impact in the campaign scene."

Another party leader added: "This will also take away one of INDIA bloc's star campaigners, as well as reinforce our message of it being a coalition of the corrupt."

A source said many BJP cadres were questioning why the Modi government was playing safe on Kejriwal, saying it sent the message that it was apprehensive of acting against him due to his "popularity". "The arrest has lifted the morale of our cadre and our party as regards the leadership's uncompromising stance against corruption."

The senior BJP leader quoted above said that even with the Congress and AAP coming together, the BJP did not expect a major impact of Kejriwal's arrest in Delhi. While the AAP has now had two sweeping back-to-back victories in the Delhi Assembly polls, the BJP had won all seven of its Lok Sabha seats in 2019 with over 50% of the votes.

According to BJP sources, recent internal surveys and assessments conducted by the party in and around Delhi tried to determine, among other things, voters' sentiments regarding action against Kejriwal, which comes more than a year after his Deputy CM Manish Sisodia was held in the same case and continues behind bars. Another senior AAP leader, Sanjay Singh, is also in jail in the same case.

According to sources, the surveys indicated that the Opposition would not be able to mobilise people. "The liquor policy charges have stuck and hurt Kejriwal's image," a source said, arguing that if there was "no evidence", Sisodia would have been out on bail.

Plus, as a Delhi BJP leader pointed out, the Capital votes only in the sixth phase, or on May 25 – more than two months from now. "By then Kejriwal's absence would have weakened the AAP and affected its ability to fight."

BJP leaders admitted that Kejriwal posed a threat because of the goodwill for his government's schemes, such as free power and water, plus its health and education agenda — matching the Centre's welfare plank.

Former AAP leader Anand Kumar, who was removed from the party several years ago, also pointed to this, saying his schemes might stand Kejriwal in good stead. "I believe the arrest is related more to the support offered by Kejriwal to non-BJP endeavours, particularly the INDIA bloc," Kumar told *The Indian Express*, also pointing to the arrest's timing, coinciding with the release of full data on poll bonds.

The ED is probing charges that a Delhi government excise policy in 2022, which ended its control over sale of liquor in the Capital, gave undue advantages to private retailers. The policy was withdrawn. WITH INPUTS FROM VIKAS PATHAK

Bankruptcy of Congress is moral and intellectual, not financial: BJP

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE BJP on Thursday accused the Congress of insulting the country by dubbing the I-T department action on its bank accounts as "freezing of Indian democracy", saying this reflected entitlement that the laws of the land were not applicable to one family and also the "Indira is India" — as once said by party leader Devkant Baruah — mindset of the party.

The BJP emphasised that all proceedings had been conducted as per the Income Tax Act, and that the Congress had taken all legal routes, including moving the Supreme Court, which will hear the matter on April 1. It added that the Delhi High Court had already rejected its plea.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said the days of entitlement were over.

BJP president J P Nadda posted on X: "Congress is going to be totally rejected by the people and fearing a historic defeat, their top leadership... ranted against Indian democracy and institutions. They are conveniently blaming their irrelevance on "financial troubles". In reality, their bankruptcy is moral and intellectual, not financial. Instead of correcting their own errors, Congress is blaming authorities for their troubles. Be it the ITAT or the Delhi HC, they have asked the Congress to comply with the rules, pay the taxes due but the party never did so."

Former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said: "Under... the IT Act, a political party is exempted from income tax provided they file their return every year as to how much money has come up to Rs 20,000 and duly certified auditor's report as to how much they have received from large donations. Otherwise they lose that exemption... On 6/7/21, an order was passed for assessment year 2018-19, as they had not filed their return...."

Geelani grand-daughter, Shabir Shah daughter 'disassociate' from separatist ideology

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, MARCH 21

JAILED SEPARATIST leader Shabir Ahmad Shah's daughter Sama Shabir and Hurriyat patriarch Syed Ali Shah Geelani's granddaughter Ruwa Shah have put out nearly identical notices in local newspapers in Kashmir, disassociating themselves from "separatist ideology" and pledging their loyalty to "the sovereignty of Union of India".

Ruwa Shah, whose father and Geelani's son-in-law Altaf Ahmad Shah died last year while in jail over charges of terror funding, also distanced herself from the Hurriyat Conference faction founded by her late grandfather, in a notice in the newspapers last week. She declared she has no inclination or sympathy towards its ideology. "I am a loyal citizen of India not affiliated with any organisation or association which has an agenda against the Union of India and I owe allegiance to the Constitution of my country (India)," Shah said.

In a separate public notice, published in a local newspaper Thursday, 23-year-old Sama Shabir said she was "a loyal Indian citizen" and distanced herself from the banned separatist organisation founded by her father, who is currently in Tihar Jail on money laundering and terror funding charges.

"I, Sama Shabir Shah... want to clarify that I have not been associated nor have an affiliation with the Democratic Freedom Party, nor do have any inclination towards the ideology of the Democratic Freedom Party," she said. "I hereby declare that if any person uses my name with the said party, Democratic Freedom Party, I shall take legal action against them... I am a loyal citizen of India and I am not affiliated with any person or organisation which is against the sovereignty of the Union of India."

It is perhaps the first time that a family member of a separatist leader in Jammu and Kashmir has published such notices.

Shabir Shah, 70, the founder of the Democratic Freedom Party, has been in jail since 2017. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in July 2017 and lodged in Tihar Jail. In 2019, the National Investigation Agency took his custody in an alleged terror funding case, along with separatist leaders Masarat Alam and Syeda Asiya Andrabi. WITH INPUTS FROM PTI

BJP rolls up its sleeves in TN fight, fields state chief Annamalai from Coimbatore

Former Telangana Gov Soundararajan, Union minister L Murugan in party list

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, MARCH 21

THE BJP unveiled its Lok Sabha list for Tamil Nadu on Thursday, sending a message by fielding its firebrand state chief K Annamalai from Coimbatore, a seat central to the party's plans for the state.

The AIADMK also released its list, indicating a bold strategy for the upcoming elections, by fielding several newcomers. The party is vying for 32 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the state, setting aside 7 seats for allies DMDK, Social Democratic Party of India and Puthiya Tamilagam.

There is only woman candidate in the AIADMK list, Shimla Muthuchozhan. The daughter-in-law of former DMK minister S P Sarguna, who recently defected from the DMK, had in 2016 contested against the late AIADMK chief and former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa.

Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai.

The other names in the AIADMK list include three-time MLA R Kumaraguru from Kallakurichi, the party's IT wing president and an IIM-Ahmedabad alumni, Singai G Ramachandran, from Coimbatore, and Muthuchozhan from Tirunelveli.

Its debutants include P Karuppaiah from Tiruchi, N D Chandramohan from Perambalur and district secretary P Babu, son of ex-MLA Pounraj, from Mayiladuthurai.

The single-phase election in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on April 19, is staring at a three-cornered contest in some seats, with the BJP-led front giving voters an option. The BJP is contesting 20 seats, leaving 19 for its allies, including the PMK.

Apart from Annamalai, the BJP list includes Tamilisai Soundararajan, who resigned as Telangana Governor days ago, rejoined the party on Wednesday, and has been fielded from Chennai South. Other notable candidates include Union minister L Murugan from Nilgiris and Nainar Nagendran from Tirunelveli.

Sitting Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi MP T R Paarivendhar, who in 2019 won on the DMK ticket, is the BJP's candidate from his home turf Perambalur. Despite speculation that a new face could be fielded by the BJP from Kanniyakumari, it has repeated Pon Radhakrishnan, the BJP's 2014 MP from the seat.

Kanniyakumari and Coimbatore are the only two Lok Sabha seats ever won by the BJP in Tamil Nadu. Its two victories in Coimbatore came in the wake of the 1998 serial blasts in the town.

The younger generation in the BJP list includes Vinoj P Selvam from Chennai Central, A C Shanmugam from Vellore and C Narasimhan from Krishnagiri.

Assam CM brother among cops, DMs transferred by poll panel in five states

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE ELECTION Commission of India on Thursday transferred two senior police officers in Assam and Punjab, including the brother of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, "in view of their kinship or familial association with the elected political representatives", the EC said.

Sonitpur SP Sushanta Biswa Sarma, the brother of the Assam CM, and Bathinda SSP Harmanbir Singh Gill, the brother of Jasbir Singh Gill (Dimpa), Congress MP from the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat, were transferred by the EC.

The EC said: "The officials in these two districts have been transferred as pre-emptive measures to dispel any apprehensions of administration being biased or perceived to be compromised."

The EC also transferred 13 non-IAS and IPS officers who were holding the posts of district magistrates (DM), SP and SSP in Gujarat, Punjab, Odisha and West Bengal.

The officers to be transferred were the SP of Chhota Udaipur and Ahmedabad Rural districts in Gujarat; the SSPs of Pathankot, Fazilka, Jalandhar Rural, and Malerkotla districts in Punjab; the DM of Dhenkanal and SPs of Deogarh and Cuttack Rural districts in Odisha; and DM of Purba Medinipur, Jhargram, Purba Bardhaman and Birbhum districts in West Bengal.

BRIEFLY

NEW DELHI

Cash-for-query: CBI files FIR against Mahua

New Delhi: Acting on the directions of anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal, the CBI on Thursday registered an FIR against former Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra in the cash-for-query case, officials said. The Lokpal has issued the directions to the CBI after receiving findings of the agency's preliminary inquiry into allegations made by BJP Lok Sabha member Nishikant Dubey against Moitra. The Lokpal had directed CBI to submit its findings in six months before it after investigating all aspects of the complaints against her. **ENS**

WEST BENGAL

Man ends life, kin blame it on 'CAA panic'

Kolkata: Hours after a 31-year-old man was found hanging in Subhashgram area of South 24 Parganas district, his family alleged he "died by suicide over panic due to Citizenship Amendment Act", police said Thursday. Debashish Sengupta's father Tapan Sengupta said, "My son was worried about how he would prove his citizenship after CAA was implemented." **ENS**

RAJASTHAN

Family of 5 burnt alive after gas leak fire

Jaipur: A couple and their three children were burnt alive when a fire broke out due to an LPG gas leak in Jaipur on Thursday, police said. The fire engulfed their room when Rajesh Yadav (25) was changing the gas cylinder, SHO Rajendra Kumar said. While he was doing so, the gas started to leak and caught fire, the SHO said. **PTI**

NEW DELHI

Bina Agarwal wins inequality research award

New Delhi: Development economist Bina Agarwal has received the first Global Inequality Research Award. The newly established award, instituted by the World Inequality Lab and Science Po's Center for Research on Social Inequalities, France, has been given jointly to Agarwal and University of Massachusetts Amherst professor James Boyce "for their work on social and environmental inequalities". Agarwal is former director of Institute of Economic Growth (Delhi) and currently teaching at Global Development Institute in University of Manchester (UK). **ENS**

Carnatic artistes object to award to T M Krishna; he glorified Periyar, say musician sister duo

SUANSHU KHURANA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THREE DAYS after Chennai-based Music Academy awarded vocalist T M Krishna with the Sangita Kalanidhi, the highest recognition in the world of Carnatic classical music, an open war broke out in the Carnatic classical establishment with a number of musicians protesting against the move.

On Wednesday, sisters and musician duo Ranjani and Gayatri withdrew from the December Music Season, the annual music festival that's one of the largest such in the country, refusing to attend "the conference that will be presided over by Mr TM Krishna".

In a letter addressed to the Music Academy that they shared on their social media platforms, they wrote, "It's dangerous to overlook Mr TM Krishna's glorification of a figure like EVR (Periyar) who openly proposed a genocide of 'brahmins', repeatedly called/abused every woman of this community with vile profanity and relentlessly worked to normalise filthy language in social discourse."

The sisters were scheduled to perform at the Academy on December 25.

Krishna had released a song in 2023 in honour of Periyar, political activist and 'father of Dravidian movement', to commemorate the Vaikom Satyagraha, the anti-caste agitation in 1920s to enter the prohibited premises of Vaikom Temple in Kerala. The song, penned by noted writer Perumal Murugan, questioned caste discrimination.

Responding to the sister duo on Thursday, N Murali, the president of the Music Academy, said their joint letter was "replete with unwarranted and slanderous insinuations verging on defamation" and that he was shocked by "its vicious tone against a respected senior fellow musician".

Murali also said the decision to award Krishna was based on "careful deliberation" and "with the sole criterion being musical excellence demonstrated over a significant and sustained career… with no extraneous facts influencing our choice".

He also said the duo's stand was "unbecoming of artistes and in poor taste" and termed their act of making their letter to him public on social media as "discourteous".

Soon after Ranjani-Gayatri made their position public, another vocalist duo — Srikrishna Mohan and Ramkumar Mohan, better known as Trichur Brothers

T M Krishna

— also withdrew from the Academy's Annual Music Conference for this year and wrote on social media that Krishna "believes and propagates a value system that is diametrically opposite to our core values". Amid the escalating war of words, vocalist Vishaka Hari too joined the chorus, slamming the recent honour to Krisha.

Chitraveena Ravikiran, another popular name in the Carnatic music circuit, went a step further and decided to return his Sangita Kalanidhi in a letter addressed to N Murali, the president of the Academy. Ravikiran was awarded the honour in 2017. The Academy had in 2018 dropped Ravikiran and six other artistes after a slew of sexual harassment allegations in the #MeToo movement surfaced against them.

But in a letter addressed to the Music Academy, Ravikiran has said that his decision to withdraw his award does not stem from the "inestimable angst" he experienced in October 2018 but his "inability to relate to the kind of values the Academy is glorifying today by honouring an individual who has… tried to polarise and destabalise Indian classical music and dance and a country as a whole… has painted some of the greatest architects and institutions and its culture black… drawn numerous young minds away from the pursuit of excellence".

Ranjini-Gayatri added that Krishna had "caused immense damage to the Carnatic music world, willfully and happily stomped over the sentiments of this community and insulted the most respected icons like Tyagaraja and M S Subbulakshmi".

This is a reference to Krishna's writings and lectures on the two subjects. While singing Tyyagaraja kritis for several years, Krishna has attempted to scrutinise the complexity of the personality of the famed Telugu saint while questioning some of his aesthetic choices, politics and social commentary. In the case of M S Subbulakshmi, Krishna revered the power of the vocalist's music while touching upon her Devadasi roots and argued that Subbulakshmi Brahminised herself to receive wider acceptance. Many had accused Krishna of "Brahmin-bashing then".

In their letter, Ranjani-Gayatri also said that they were boycotting the whole season. "We believe in a value system that respects art and artists, vaggeyakaras, rasikas, institutions, our roots and culture. We would be in moral violation if we were to bury these values and join this year's conference," the duo said.

Krishna is seen by conservative Brahmins as one who tarnishes the image of the community and its huge stakes in the Carnatic world, but many others see him as a musician who has democratised the Carnatic classical space by questioning issues like caste, gender and class.

Many credit Krishna, who won the Ramon Magsaysay award in 2016, with reforms like changing the sitting positions on stage to make everyone visible to the audience, not making classical music a conserve of certain spaces only, making the field inclusive and breaking convention to merge Carnatic music with local art forms.

(WITH INPUTS FROM ARUN JANARDHANAN)

Patanjali tenders apology in SC after contempt notice over ad

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

PATANJALI AYURVED has tendered an unconditional apology to the Supreme Court in response to a notice asking it to show cause why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated for allegedly flouting an undertaking given to the top court on November 21, 2023.

Hearing a plea by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) accusing the company of allegedly violating provisions of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, and making statements critical of allopathy, a Supreme Court bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah had on March 19 sought the personal presence of company Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna and Baba Ramdev before it.

The court was upset about an advertisement issued by the company on December 4, 2023, after it had assured the court on November 21, 2023, that it would not make any "casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine".

In the affidavit filed in response to the notice, Acharya Balkrishna said he "regrets that the advertisement in question which was meant to contain only general statements inadvertently included the offending sentences".

"The same was bona-fide and added in routine course by the media department of the…Company", he said adding "the personnel of the media department of the…Company were not cognizant of the order dated 21.11.2023."

"The Deponent on behalf of

MD Acharya Balkrishna

Respondent No. 5 (Patanjali Ayurved) submits an unqualified apology before this Hon'ble Court for the breach of the statement recorded in Para 3 of the order dated 21.11.2023," the affidavit said. Balkrishna also sought to assure the court that he "will ensure that such advertisements are not issued in the future".

The affidavit added, "By way of clarification, not as a defense, the Deponent begs to submit that its intention is only to exhort the citizens of this country to lead a healthier life by consuming products of the Respondent No. 5 including products for lifestyle ailments through the age old literature and materials supplementing and backed by ayurvedic research."

Acharya Balkrishna said his "only quest is for a better and healthier life for each and every citizen and to reduce the burden on the countries healthcare infrastructure by providing holistic, evidence based solutions for lifestyle related medical complications through the usage of age old traditional approach of Ayurveda and Yoga". "In fact, the idea was to promote the ayurvedic products which are based on age old literature/material backed by scientific research," the affidavit added.

Nation's 2nd pvt rocket launch postponed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE SUB-ORBITAL launch of India's second privately developed rocket, which was scheduled for Friday early morning, has been postponed.

A day ahead of the launch, Agnikul Cosmos, the IIT-Madras incubated startup, said: "Holding our launch out of an abundance of caution based on certain minor observations from the full countdown rehearsals last night. Will keep you all posted on the new date and time. Thanks a lot for all the support that has been pouring in." The SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator (SOrTeD) is a single stage rocket that would test the company's Agnilet engine in a real flight. A sub-orbital launch takes the payloads to space or close to it but cannot push it into an orbit around the Earth. This was a much anticipated launch, with the launch vehicle using a 3D printed engine. Most launch vehicles are manufactured in parts and then assembled ahead of the launch, however, 3D printing will ensure that Agnikul's rocket engine comes in one piece.

Another significant thing about the launch is that it would use the first private launch platform that the company has set up at the country's only spaceport at Sriharikota. And, the use of this platform also means that the rocket will not utilise guiderails to determine its lift-off trajectory. Instead, Agnibaan SOrTeD will lift off vertically and follow a pre-determined trajectory.

It is expected to reach the height of around 20 km and then splash back down to Earth. To compare, commercial airplanes fly at a height of around 10 km.

The only other private company to have undertaken a sub-orbital flight was Skyroot Aerospace in 2022. They are likely to undertake their first orbital flight this year.

Outrage over classical dancer's remark on artiste's skin colour

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 21

REMARKS BY a prominent Mohiniyattam artiste about the skin colour of another renowned exponent of the classical dance has caused outrage in Kerala, with cultural institutions and political leaders condemning the comments.

Kalamandalam Satyabhama, who in an interview with a YouTube channel said that Dr RLV Ramakrishnan's skin colour was that of a "crow" and suggested that he was not "beautiful enough" to be a Mohiniyattam performer, later told reporters on Thursday that she stood by her comments. Ramakrishnan has said that he would explore legal options against her. Both are well-known exponents of the classical dance form that originated in Kerala.

Kalamandalam Satyabhama says she stands by her remark

"His colour is that of a crow. A person who performs Mohiniyattam should be a mohini (enchanting one). One should be beautiful enough to perform Mohiniyattam. There are attractive men who perform it, but his looks are unbearable," she said in the interview, referring to Ramakrishnan.

When reporters asked her later for clarification about the comments, she said, "I do not regret what I said. A performer of Mohiniyattam, be it man or woman, should be beautiful enough." Claiming that she was not disparaging his skin colour, Satyabhama said, "Have dark-skinned persons not won beauty contests? Dark-skinned girls can perform Mohiniyattam. But if boys are performing, they should have a charming appeal. If dark-skinned students come to learn dance, they will be given training, but they will be told not to attend competitions," she said.

Dr Ramakrishnan, who is the brother of the late Malayalam film actor Kalabhavan Mani, said the comments were an insult to Kerala's cultural realm.

"This is not just an insult to me as an individual. She has insulted all dark-skinned aristes in the country. To say that only beautiful people should dance gives a wrong message to society. It is an insult to Kerala's entire cultural world," he said.

– WITH PTI INPUTS

China objects to US recognising Arunachal as Indian territory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, MARCH 21

China on Thursday said it firmly opposes the US recognition of Arunachal Pradesh as part of Indian territory and affirmed that Washington has nothing to do with the India-China border dispute.

It also accused the US of "instigating and using other countries' disputes" for selfish geopolitical interests. China's strong reaction came hours after US State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel's remarks that the United States "recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory." Patel also said, "We (the US) strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments, military or civilian, across the Line of Actual Control." "China strongly deplores and firmly opposes this," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing while replying to a question posed by the official Chinese media.

The delimitation of the China-India boundary has not been completed, Lin said adding, "'Zangnan' (the official Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh) has always been China's territory. This is an undeniable basic fact. The question of the China-India border issue is between China and India and it has nothing to do with the US".

"It is well known that the US has been instigating and using other countries' disputes by all means to serve its selfish geo-political interests," the spokesperson said. The comments by the US official came days after the Chinese military reiterated its claim over Arunachal following PM Narendra Modi's visit to the state.

Biren seeks ₹2,000 crore to tackle tax loss due to unrest

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

MANIPUR CM N Biren Singh has asked the Centre for a "special" financial grant of Rs 2,000 crore to offset the loss in tax revenue due to the unrest since last May, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The Centre is likely to take a call on this shortly, sources said.

In a letter written to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier this year, Singh said that according to initial assessments the state was looking at a tax revenue loss of Rs 820 crore in the 2023-24 financial year. This might go up when the actual figures are available, he said.

"This loss will hamper the functioning of the state government considerably and may impede our developmental and security goals," Singh wrote in the letter. Saying that the state's finances were under "severe strain… not faced earlier" due to the crisis, Singh told Sitharaman his government was working to reduce expenditure in non-critical areas while exploring other avenues to increase revenues, such as lifting the three-decade old prohibition on liquor.

"These efforts will bear fruit,

Manipur CM N Biren Singh

although it may take at least 3-4 months," he said, adding that in such a situation the "need of the hour is strong support from the Central government".

He said the Centre has supported Manipur in terms of providing relief and by way of deploying central police forces in the state. Now, he said, the state requires a "Special Untied Grant for Revenue Loss and Economic Recovery" of Rs 2,000 crore.

Such a grant is the only means to "revive the state's economy, ensure stability of the state's finances, and enable the state government to fulfil its commitments of development and security" at this critical juncture, Singh wrote.

At least 212 people have been killed since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur last May.

In February, while presenting the state Budget, CM Biren Singh told the Assembly that the ethnic strife had not only created law and order issues but also severely affected the government's finances. "The current financial year has been the hardest year for our government. The unrest has greatly affected the state in multiple ways," he said.

In October last year, Singh had asked the Union Finance Ministry for an advance of Rs 600 crore in the devolution of the state's share in Central taxes for November, December and January 2024. This was over and above the regular disbursement by the Centre for those three months. The Centre granted the amount in advance.

Cong takes in Jammu leader who led public defence of Kathua accused

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, MARCH 21

AMONG THE leaders who joined the Congress Wednesday was Choudhary Lal Singh, who had to step down as minister in the PDP-BJP coalition government of Jammu and Kashmir over his public defence of the accused in the 2018 Kathua gang rape and murder case.

Singh, a two-time Udhampur MP and three-time MLA from Kathua district's Basohli constituency, had left the Congress to join the BJP in 2014, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, after the Congress denied him a ticket.

But in the wake of the Kathua case row, Singh had left the BJP in 2019, and gone on to set up a 'Dogra Swabhiman Sangathan', invoking Dogra pride.

Recently, Singh was arrested

Choudhary Lal Singh had left the Congress to join the BJP in 2014

by the Enforcement Directorate on charges of money laundering, and is currently out on bail. Separately, he is facing a CBI probe over land owned by his family-run R B Educational Trust.

Sources said that Lal Singh spent several days in Delhi to pursue his case with the Congress, with the party divided over taking him back in view of the controversies surrounding him. Within the Jammu Congress many were apprehensive he might do more damage because of the cloud over him.

But the Congress high command appears to have finally decided in favour of Singh, as he is seen by many as a strong candidate from Udhampur. The BJP had won both the Lok Sabha seats falling in the Jammu province in 2019, and is starting out this time riding the support for it in the region over the abrogation of Article 370 and the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

A senior Congress leader pointed to Singh's string of victories, both in the Lok Sabha and Assembly, contesting on tickets of different parties over the last three decades, to underline his significance.

However, in 2019, the Lok Sabha election held in the wake of the Kathua controversy, Singh had lost his deposit from both the Jammu and Udhampur seats he contested from.

Himachal Congress braces for six Assembly bypolls

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, MARCH 21

ALONG WITH the Lok Sabha elections, Himachal Pradesh will vote for bypolls to six Assembly constituencies, now vacant after the sitting Congress MLAs cross-voted in favour of the BJP in the recent Rajya Sabha elections and were disqualified. However, given that the ripples of that rebellion haven't still settled in the Congress, the party led by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is facing a tough task trying to retain the six seats, which include Sujanpur, Barsar, Gagret, Kutlehar, Dharamshala, and Lahaul-Spiti.

In the Rajya Sabha election held on February 27, the Congress had been unable to get its nominee, Abhishek Singhvi, elected despite having the numbers. The cross-voting by the six Congress MLAs apart from the support of three Independents had helped the BJP's Harsh Mahajan win. On February 29, the Himachal Assembly Speaker had disqualified the six Congress MLAs.

The Congress had won the Assembly elections in 2022 winning 40 seats in the 68-member House, with the BJP at 25. The disqualification has left the Congress at 34, with a BJP win in the bypolls likely to take its tally to 31. Given that the Independents are already favouring the BJP, that could put the Sukhu government under threat.

Worse, since the cross-voting episode, the division within the state Congress between Sukhu's loyalists and the faction led by state unit president Pratibha Singh seems to have widened. Pratibha is the wife of the late Congress leader Virbhadra Singh, a six-time CM; the loyalty of their son Vikramaditya, a state minister, remains unclear after he openly sided with the rebels and briefly quit from his post last month.

On Wednesday, Pratibha said she would not be contesting the

Independents favouring BJP may put the Sukhu govt under threat

Lok Sabha polls if nominated by the party, citing "unfavourable conditions" on the ground and the inactivity of party workers, many of whom she claims were not given "responsibilities and importance" after the Congress's Assembly poll win in 2022.

While the BJP had won all the Lok Sabha seats in Himachal in 2019, Pratibha had won the Mandi Lok Sabha seat in a bypoll in 2021. Her refusal to contest cocks a snook at the Congress high command, and underlines its failure to control the Himachal situation.

Meanwhile, it's unclear if the Congress rebels will be fielded by the BJP for the bypolls, with no party having announced their candidates yet. Sukhu is also facing a tough situation in his home district of Hamirpur; he was elected from the Nadaun seat in the district. Five of the six Congress MLAs who cross-voted had won from Assembly segments falling in the Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, which has a total of 17 Assembly segments.

Congress insiders admitted the cross-voting showed Sukhu's fragile hold on the party, including among leaders in his own district. In Hamirpur and other lower- and middle-hill areas of the state, voters have often shown the door to even veteran politicians in the past. The Hamirpur district in particular has given the state two recent CMs in Sukhu and the BJP's Prem Kumar Dhumal. But in the 2017 Assembly polls, the region had rejected Dhumal in favour of the Congress candidate, following which the BJP's Jai Ram Thakur became the "accidental CM".

Prior to that, former CM Shanta Kumar of the BJP had failed to retain his Sullah seat in the Kangra district in 1993, after a period of President's Rule in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition. Going back further, the Congress's former MP and Union minister Sukh Ram, who was often likened to politician-scholar Chanakya by his supporters, had lost the Lok Sabha poll from Mandi in 1989 despite having won the Assembly four times and the Parliamentary seat once.

Heading into election season, the BJP is confident of not only winning Himachal Pradesh's Lok Sabha seats but also flipping the state Assembly with enough wins in the bypolls. In a social media post earlier this month, Jai Ram Thakur said that with the six Assembly bypolls being held with the general elections, which the BJP would "definitely" win, there was no surprise in the outcome, and that the BJP would come to power in Himachal too.

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

A COMPUTER WOULD DESERVE TO BE CALLED INTELLIGENT IF IT COULD DECEIVE A HUMAN INTO BELIEVING THAT IT WAS HUMAN. — ALAN TURING

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

DELHI'S OUTREACH

Even a modest Indian initiative for peace will be most welcome in a war-weary Europe

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi's push for an early end to the war in Ukraine, in his phone calls on Wednesday to Russian President Vladimir Putin and his counterpart in Kyiv, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, comes amid the military stalemate on the ground and a gathering political sentiment in favour of a negotiated settlement. It is perhaps premature to talk of a major Indian role in ending the brutal war in the heart of Europe. The earlier initiatives by Turkey and China to promote a cease-fire and negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv had fizzled out. But the conditions for productive peace talks might have improved amidst the Republican Party's refusal in the US to support new military assistance to Ukraine and the growing prospects of Donald Trump winning the White House in the November elections. Modi's phone calls also come weeks before a major peace conference on Ukraine that Switzerland is organising in the coming weeks.

The Indian diplomatic initiative comes amid an important shift in international perceptions of India's role in Ukraine. Ever since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2024, India has received many brickbats in the West for its refusal to criticise the Russian aggression formally. Delhi's presumed political tilt towards Russia in the Ukraine war was magnified by the surge in India's oil purchases from Moscow. The US and Europe sought to inflict economic pain on Moscow by imposing sanctions on its energy trade. Despite sharp media criticism of India, sensible elements in the West saw Delhi's close ties with Moscow as a potential political asset in promoting peace. Recent Western media reports have lauded Modi's role in 2022 in preventing nuclear escalation in Ukraine, as Putin threatened to use atomic weapons if the West directly intervened in favour of Kyiv. Being Putin's best friend is not enough of a qualification to be a peacemaker in Ukraine. Over the last year, Delhi has stepped up its contact with the Ukrainian leadership and sought to dispel the notion that it was taking Russia's side in the war. PM Modi, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar, and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval have been in regular touch with their Ukrainian counterparts. In a reflection of this balanced approach, India is expected to host the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, in Delhi next week. This will be the first time that Delhi is receiving Ukraine's top diplomat.

PM Modi, who is basking in the balmy sun of a successful diplomatic run over the last decade, is seizing the diplomatic possibilities in Ukraine, slim though they might be. India's growing salience on the world stage is matched by Modi's high personal prestige among world leaders. This allows the PM considerable room to explore a potential peace-making role in Europe. Even a modest Indian contribution will be most welcome in a war-weary Europe. It would also boost Modi's domestic image as an influential world leader in his quest for a third term as India's PM. Both the PM and the nation have everything to gain from Delhi's bold diplomatic moves on Ukraine.

LABELLING THE PEOPLE

Shobha Karandlaje's remarks don't just pose a hurdle to her party's ambitions, they also drag down level of public discourse

IN THE RUN-UP to elections, with the Model Code of Conduct in place, the Election Commission has done well to take note of BJP leader and Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje's irresponsible and polarising statements about "people who come from Tamil Nadu" to "plant bombs here". Karandlaje is the BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from North Bengaluru. Her remarks, made to reporters on Tuesday, are also surely an embarrassment for her party, which has intensified its focus on the southern states — the push is led by the Prime Minister himself.

Karandlaje's latest outburst — which also included sweeping statements that labelled "people of Delhi" and "people who come from Kerala" — has drawn strong condemnation from Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK government as well as the ruling LDF and opposition UDF in Kerala. She has stoked similar controversies earlier. In 2020, Kerala Police had filed a case against her for a social media post suggesting that Hindu families in Malappuram were denied water for supporting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Now, Karandlaje has apologised, but she may well have contributed to making the BJP's challenge in the region — an uphill task — more difficult. For a party hoping for a third term at the Centre, making gains in the south may be crucial. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, out of 129 seats from the region, the BJP won 29 — of these, 25 were from Karnataka and four from Telangana. Of the five states, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which send 20 and 39 MPs respectively, have been the toughest for the BJP to crack. It has never managed to get its candidates elected to the Lok Sabha from Kerala, while in Tamil Nadu, the party has only won from two constituencies — Coimbatore in 1998 and 1999 and Kanniyakumari in 2014. These are the odds that the BJP is trying to overcome as it makes an all-out effort to woo voters down South, with development projects worth thousands of crores, multiple rallies and road-shows addressed by the PM across the five states.

Polarising remarks of the kind made by Karandlaje don't just pose a hurdle to her own party's ambitions, they also drag down the level of public discourse ahead of a crucial election. In the weeks to come, other attempts will be made to deepen divides and embitter the contest. Going ahead, the challenge will be to ensure that even as they plunge into the heat of battle, both parties and their candidates respect the inviolable rules of the game.

DEAD OR ALIVE

This election season, AI is being used to generate life-like impressions of deceased stalwarts. It's problematic

EVEN IN THE analogue age, the great men and women of Indian politics used to cast a long shadow. They built movements and parties, mobilised communities and won elections, ran governments and brought them down. In death, the assumption went, they would continue to inspire but would no longer have to perspire. A photo on the wall, an invocation at a political meeting of the "guiding light", was enough. Apart from allowing the deceased to rest in peace, the passing of a generation — in politics, as in much else — allows new leadership to emerge and find its own vocabulary and practice. With AI, deepfakes and no barrier to distribution, however, the Digital Age is ensuring that deceased leaders do not, in a sense, die.

This election season has already witnessed a wide variety of content generated through artificial intelligence tools. There are parodies featuring leaders of the ruling party and the Opposition that have them singing songs and making statements. These videos and sound files mimic the appearance and voice of the leaders — sometimes so accurately that they are almost indistinguishable from the genuine article. And, as reported in this newspaper, the deepfake as a campaign tool is also indulging in necromancy. Both the DMK and AIADMK have used likenesses of their deceased leaders. A video of M Karunanidhi (died, 2018) was released by the former in which he is praising his son, Chief Minister M K Stalin. AIADMK workers received a message in the late J Jayalalithaa's voice last month, asking them to support party leader Edappadi Palaniswami.

The all-too-real fakes will present a challenge for the Election Commission. But the issue in using the likenesses of deceased leaders is not just one of authenticity. It also speaks of a failure of imagination in terms of defining future politics — by looking ahead, not by going back to the past. The challenge for leaders of today is to take a legacy forward, to re-imagine and re-invent. But then, who wants to lose their star campaigner, dead or alive?

From Gwadar, a warning

The growing infrastructure of violence in Pakistan does not augur well for the region in the long run

ANJU GUPTA

ON MARCH 20, Pakistan security forces thwarted a complex coordinated attack on Gwadar Port Authority Complex in a two-hour-long battle and claimed to have neutralised all eight militants. Two soldiers were killed in action. The Majeed Brigade of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), claiming responsibility for the attack, stressed that their fighters had targeted Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Military Intelligence facilities. Less than two weeks ago, the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) ambushed a convoy of 10 military vehicles in the Kolwa town of Kech.

The Baloch insurgency in Pakistan has been gaining momentum for the past two years and insurgents can regularly breach the perimeter security of Pakistani military and paramilitary installations across Balochistan in bold, frontal attacks. The Gwadar incident is yet another big-ticket attack that points to the growing capability of armed Baloch groups. Meanwhile, the newly elected "hybrid" government in Pakistan seems to be following the decades-old policy of ruthless repression of Baloch populations, fuelling the insurgency to alarming levels.

Baloch armed groups, including the BLA, BLF, Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), and the Baloch Republican Guard (BRG) created an operational umbrella alliance under the banner of Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS) in 2018 to coordinate their actions on the ground. The BRAS have claimed over 612 attacks and over 600 casualties of armed forces in 2023, while the BLA alone has claimed over 247 attacks, including on 23 military installations and big attacks in Turbat and Gwadar. The BLA even briefly captured a facility in Quetta in 2023 and arrested and released troops after giving them a "warning".

Apart from economic deprivation and lack of political freedom, the burning issues in Balochistan have been the forced disappearances of thousands of men and extrajudicial killings of many of those reported missing.

Balochistan and the Gwadar port are immensely important for Pakistan, especially for the army that has taken on the responsibility of making the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its end port, Gwadar, a success story for China's Belt and Road Initiative. Chinese President Xi Jinping has always maintained that CPEC is a part of his 'vision'. However, not just in Balochistan but also in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the forces have repeatedly failed to provide fool-proof security to the project for many years. Additionally, in February, after almost a decade, Pakistan approved work on the first phase of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline from the Pakistan-Iran border to Gwadar and has assured Iran of timely completion to avoid a huge penalty in arbitration.

The community has lodged several protests in the past. However, Since November last year, Balochistan has seen fresh public movement on the issue of forced disappearances. This was triggered by the "encounter" of a 24-year-old Baloch man, Balaach Mola Bakhsh. He had been missing since October. Due to public protests and on the basis of a court order, an FIR was registered against counter-terrorism officials, but no action was taken by law enforcement officials.

Mahrang Baloch, one of the most prominent leaders of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee, or Baloch Solidarity Committee, who had lost her own father in an extrajudicial killing became the face of women-led protests in Balochistan. The women's group marched to Islamabad in December and staged a sit-in at the National Press Club. But, following repeated rough treatment by state actors, it called off the sit-in and returned to Quetta on January 23. In the middle of electioneering, the welcome rally for Mahrang Baloch and team was far bigger than any election rally by national parties. The Islamabad march by women has re-energised the issues in the minds of the population, civil society and armed groups.

The ill-treatment of women has led to a deadly round of violence by Baloch groups, who claimed over 92 small and big attacks between January 28 and February 6. The attacks included unprecedented mobilisation of over 380 fighters who took over control of Mach town and the surrounding areas for two days. They used 12 suicide bombers and claimed responsibility for 78 fatalities to troops in the March attacks alone. Calling it "revenge" for the torture of women folk, Baloch groups have now openly expressed readiness to "work with any nation against the common enemy for mutual benefit".

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The Chinese may, for now, continue holding the hand of the "all-weather ally" with respect to moving forward on CPEC and Gwadar port. However, in the larger scheme of things in the Indian Ocean region, given the grave security imperatives for Pakistan, the Gwadar port may not be able to compete with the Iranian port of Chabahar for business and trade.

Late last month, Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir blamed the Taliban regime for supporting the Baloch insurgency after repeatedly warning it against supporting the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) network. In January, Pakistan retaliated against Iranian airstrikes into Balochistan. Earlier this month, it mounted air strikes into Afghanistan, reportedly killing civilians while claiming the strikes were targeting the TTP. Apart from serious domestic troubles on security, Pakistan does not enjoy good relations with most of its neighbours at the moment. By continuing to point to the "foreign hand" for its own failings in securing the nation, the Pakistan army is an unlikely "partner of choice" for regional or global security considerations. The growing infrastructure of violence in Pakistan does not augur well for the region in the long run.

The writer is a security analyst and former director general of police

IN THE SAME BOAT

India and UAE can join hands to ensure that water scarcity does not stoke conflicts

ABDULNASSER ALSHAALI

WATER SCARCITY IS not a distant concern; it is a current challenge with global ramifications. From Europe to Asia, governments and communities are grappling with an issue that threatens international security, contributing to humanitarian crises, social unrest, and even armed conflicts.

Alarmingly, this issue, in the time of climate change, is likely to grow ever more demanding. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, global warming of 2 degrees Celsius could lead to a further 800 million to three billion people experiencing increased water scarcity. The gravity of this threat underscores the urgency for collaborative action to secure a sustainable future for all.

The UAE is directly impacted by the challenge of water scarcity. Situated in a dry, arid environment, the UAE has long prioritised effective water management, and has prioritised the implementation of a range of cutting-edge technologies that better support the sustainable use of this critical resource.

Our commitment to responsible management of water resources extends to global initiatives, where the UAE has endeavoured to play a leading role in addressing the urgent issue of water scarcity. During our hosting of COP28, the UAE sought to place the issue of water scarcity front and centre of policy debates. In this context, the UAE government urged nations to accelerate actions for water security and resilience, making water the first target in the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the Global Goal of Adaptation (GGA).

This initiative aims to significantly reduce climate-induced water scarcity and enhance resilience to water-related hazards. The Water Action Event at COP28 focused on supporting countries around the world to develop coherent national policies that integrate water planning, particularly in agriculture, for transformative climate outcomes. Notably, COP28's Food, Agriculture, and Water Day saw key announcements, new partnerships, and financial commitments dedicated to tackling global water scarcity and food security. Furthermore, the UAE's release of the discussion paper 'Ripple Effect Water Scarcity — The Hidden Threat to Global Security and Prosperity' underlined the gravity of the situation, emphasising the need for international collaboration and increased investment to confront the challenge effectively.

In the face of the growing negative impact of water scarcity on agricultural production, joint efforts to develop solutions that support a much more stable food supply chain remain essential. By integrating water conservation measures into agricultural policies and practices, supporting sustainable future investment endeavours, and encouraging collaboration between our respective public and private sectors to foster innovative solutions, our two countries will be better able to mitigate the impact of water scarcity and enhance food security outcomes to our mutual benefit.

Building on these efforts, the UAE's recent investment of $150 million in innovative solutions through the XPrize Water Scarcity competition further exemplifies our commitment to fostering actionable strategies to support countries throughout the world grappling with this issue. This transformative initiative seeks to ensure universal access to clean water by harnessing technological innovation.

The UAE is not alone in recognising the threat of water scarcity. India also experiences unique challenges on this issue. According to the World Bank, despite 18 per cent of the world's population residing in India, the country contains only four per cent of global water resources. Commendable steps have been taken over recent years within India to mitigate this current and future challenge. From community-level efforts to better manage groundwater resources to national strategies, such as India's National Water Policy 2020, it is clear that India shares the UAE's concerns and interests with respect to addressing the challenge of water scarcity.

To address these concerns and support our interests, our two countries must collaborate much more closely to mitigate issues relating to water scarcity. Together, the UAE and India have the knowledge and resources to foster innovative solutions that support a water secure future not only for our own communities, but also partners around the world.

In the face of the growing negative impact of water scarcity on agricultural production, joint efforts to develop solutions that support a much more stable food supply chain remain essential. By integrating water conservation measures into agricultural policies and practices, supporting sustainable future investment endeavours, and encouraging collaboration between our respective public and private sectors to foster innovative solutions, our two countries will be better able to mitigate the impact of water scarcity and enhance food security outcomes to our mutual benefit.

The urgent need for novel solutions to meet the threat of water scarcity necessitates collaboration and collective action. The UAE extends an open invitation to collaborate with stakeholders in India to explore and implement transformative ideas that will secure a sustainable water future for all. The time for decisive action is now, and together, we can ensure that water scarcity does not become a catalyst for conflict, but rather an impetus for unity and shared prosperity.

The writer is UAE's ambassador to India

MARCH 22, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDIAN EXPRESS

PUNJAB-CENTRE TALKS

PUNJAB GOVERNOR B D Pande advised the Centre not to take any step that might provoke the Akali leadership to escalate the confrontation. However, Pande has expressed confidence that the state administration will be able to control the situation and check extremist activities. He was called by the Centre for consultation and to assess his reaction to the ban on the All India Sikh Students Federation.

VIPS' MURDER PLOT

THE MURDEROUS ATTACK on the Haryana Deputy Speaker, Ved Pal, on the night of March 9 followed a "conspiracy" to liquidate some VIPs of the state as "terrorists' revenge". The conspiracy was cracked after extensive investigation which led to the detention of about 80 persons. According to the police theory, 15 persons were directly involved in the conspiracy, 10 of whom have been arrested.

RAO DISMISSES CLAIMS

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER P V Narasimha Rao categorically rejected insinuation suggesting India's hand in the abortive attempt to dislodge President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan and termed reports to this effect in the Western media as "absolutely baseless and highly reprehensible". In a strong rebuttal of the charge that India was involved in the attempted coup, Rao described the reports as "flights of fancy".

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

IT WAS A sentimental journey down memory lane for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi when she, along with her family, attended the Navroz celebrations of the Parsis, organised by the Capital's 150-year-old Parsi Anjuman. Speaking at a function to celebrate the arrival of the Parsi New Year and spring, she recalled an intimate chapter of her life — how she met and married Feroze Gandhi. Mrs Gandhi said her first meeting with Feroze was "romantic".

THE IDEAS PAGE

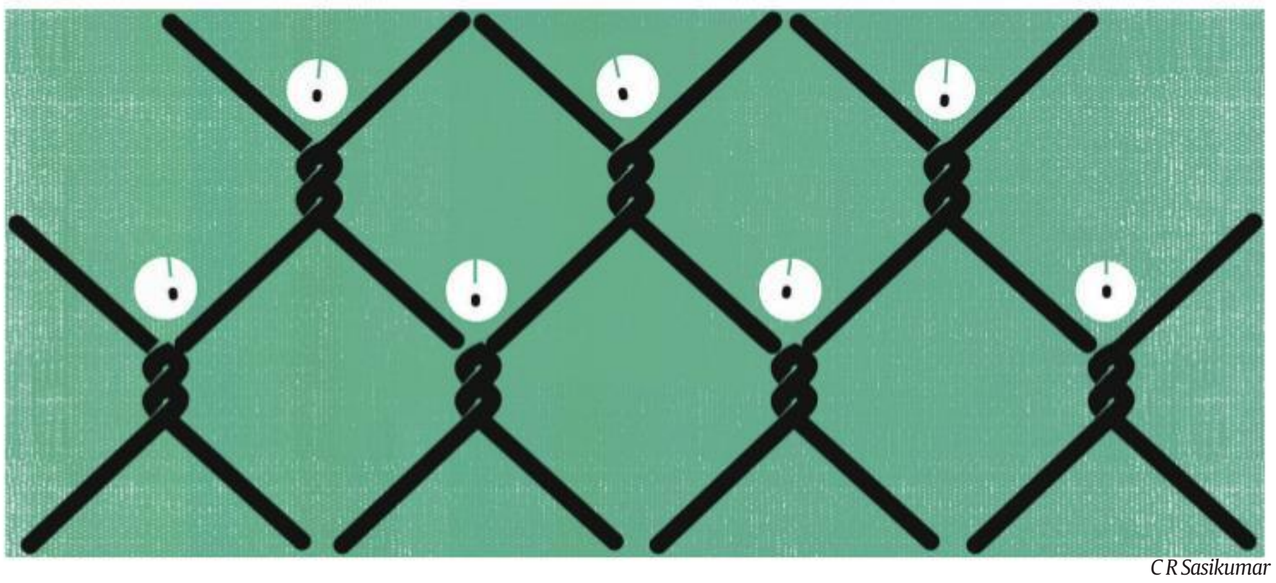
WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Gwadar is said to be under a security blanket, mainly to protect Chinese nationals and others associated with CPEC projects in Balochistan... This nexus needs to be broken immediately, or else it will compromise the security situation to a dangerous extent in KP and Balochistan..." — DAWN, PAKISTAN

Citizens on the edge

Despite the political fanfare, CAA Rules fail to heed lessons from asylum policies globally or to establish a fair and transparent system for the proclaimed beneficiaries

MOHSIN ALAM BHAT AND AASHISH YADAV



C R Sasikumar

THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT Rules, released by the central government on March 11, have proven its critics right. Rather than a humanitarian refugee policy for persecuted people, they create opaque procedures that do not provide legal safeguards for asylum seekers in India.

These Rules are meant to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. The Act offers routes to Indian citizenship for non-Muslim "illegal migrants" who came to India before the cut-off date of December 31, 2014, from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan. The Act is under challenge in the Supreme Court for being arbitrary and discriminatory on the grounds of religion, which, if established, would render it unconstitutional.

Even beyond religious discrimination, the newly released Rules show that the CAA is bound to also fail its ostensible beneficiaries. The Rules operate with the same logic that policies like the NRC in Assam have adopted, with terrible consequences for ordinary people who were compelled to participate. They do not create a judicious, fair and accountable refugee system that protects fundamental human rights. Rather, they are poised to push people into a bureaucratic nightmare of uncertainty and vulnerability.

Under the Rules, those seeking benefits under the CAA will need to provide a document to prove that they are citizens of Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, and entered India before the cut-off date. It is not difficult to imagine that those applicants, who fled persecution before 2014, would find it difficult to procure or present such documents. Inevitably, there will be situations where they have lost such documents.

Potential applicants may have been compelled to damage these documents for fear of being further victimised based on their nationality after their migration. Applicants who arrived and resided unlawfully are also unlikely to possess the listed documents that prove the date of entry into India.

Recent global trends show that governments often demand asylum seekers fulfil onerous documentary burdens to establish fear of persecution. This leaves them tangled in delays and rejections. It has been widely observed that asylum seekers do not possess enough documents to satisfy state authorities.

Refugee law experts, for example, have shown that refugees in Australia face a higher burden of proof than even criminals. There are several cases of Australian authorities demanding that Afghan asylum seekers produce state documents, despite the well-known fact that Afghanistan's documentation system has collapsed. South Asians seeking asylum in the United Kingdom face constant suspicions regarding the authenticity of their documents. Consequently, these countries have considerable backlogs of asylum applications, and cases take between one to three years to conclude with no right to work for asylum seekers. Australia and the UK have been criticised for arbitrary and regressive policies that leave vulnerable asylum seekers in undignified conditions and even indefinite detention.

Over-reliance on documents is a major reason for these conditions. The new citizenship rules, rather than heeding these warnings from international experience, make documents central to the process.

This documentary logic is only the tip of the problem. The opaque bureaucratic system is the worst offender. The Rules provide that state-level Empowered Committees and District Level Committees will receive and process applications.

The Empowered Committee has to be convinced, after "making such inquiries as it considers necessary", that the applicant is "suitable", "fit and proper". But the Rules provide no meaningful guidance and procedures for these committees. The mandate of the Empowered Committee has not been laid down beyond the responsibility of generally ascertaining the suitability of the applicant. It remains debatable if the Committee will merely presume "persecution" for non-Muslim applicants, which is a qualification for citizenship under the CAA, or conduct an inquiry.

It is unlikely that these committees are fit for purpose, not least because they are composed of administrators like census, postal and intelligence officials, and not those familiar with asylum claims. This composition shows that this system is not conceived as an asylum system for vulnerable people fleeing persecution.

It is also unclear what the role of the committees will be in adjudicating documents provided by the applicants. For example, District Level Committees are expected to assess the "veracity" of documents but the Rules do not indicate how this will be done. Among the documents to prove nationality, applicants can submit "any document" issued by the country of origin. But this would imply that the committee will adjudicate the relevance and authenticity of these documents. This appears to be a logistically demanding, if not impossible, task for Indian authorities, especially if the issuing authorities in the country of origin are obscure or have ceased to exist. It may lead to delays or exclusion from Indian citizenship with no safeguards protecting them from detention and further marginalisation.

> The CAA Rules expect — and their implementation on the ground will inevitably involve force — people to declare themselves as 'illegal migrants' in order to be eligible for Indian citizenship. Once they do so, they are bound to become exposed to the arbitrary powers that the state exercises in relation to foreigners, despite government assurances. The Indian system could have followed respected asylum adjudication that involves trained professionals who exercise their powers judiciously, and has mechanisms for appeals and revision.

Applicants are also expected to submit "eligibility certificates" from "locally reputed community institutions" as proof of religious and national identity. It is uncertain how the committees will assess these certificates, or if they will follow a fair and transparent procedure. The complete lack of guidelines suggests that the Rules are likely to be implemented arbitrarily.

The Committees' lack of transparency and fairness in functioning brings to mind the patently arbitrary Foreigners Tribunals that have deprived over 1.5 lakh people of citizenship in Assam. These tribunals — like the Empowered Committee — have operated without any legislated procedure and separately from ordinary courts. Rather than creating another freewheeling body, the Rules should have clearly instituted independent and accessible judicial remedies for applicants, including the rights of appeal to higher courts.

Most concerningly, the CAA Rules expect — and their implementation on the ground will inevitably involve force — people to declare themselves as "illegal migrants" in order to be eligible for Indian citizenship. Once they do so, they are bound to become exposed to the arbitrary powers that the state exercises in relation to foreigners, despite government assurances. They may be forced to do this only to face a bureaucratic maze.

The government could have learnt from good international practices that are not narrowly built around state-issued documents, but accept wide-ranging evidence including testimonies to show fear of persecution. The Indian system could have followed respected asylum adjudication that involves trained professionals who exercise their powers judiciously, and has mechanisms for appeals and revision.

It is clear that the Rules — despite all the political fanfare — fail to establish a fair and transparent asylum system for its proclaimed beneficiaries. The framing of the CAA and its Rules makes it clear that the government sees them not as a mechanism for addressing refugee rights but just another administrative formality.

Bhat is Lecturer in Law at Queen Mary University of London. Yadav is Assistant Professor of Law, O P Jindal Global University. Views are personal

The judge's code

Members of the judiciary should follow a self-imposed discipline — and be seen to do so too

SATVIK VARMA

FORMER JUDGE ABHIJIT Gangopadhyay officially joined politics within 48 hours of demitting office. There is nothing wrong in how he chooses to occupy himself post his resignation, which came five months before his retirement. His desire to serve the electorate of his home state is laudable and one wishes him the best in his new innings.

Admittedly, Gangopadhyay is not the first judge to demit office and join politics. Former Chief Justice of India, K Subba Rao, also resigned three months prior to his retirement. A staunch supporter of civil liberties, CJI Rao was part of the majority decision which held that Parliament has no authority to take away fundamental rights. Upon his resignation, CJI Rao became the Opposition's candidate for the Presidential elections. Given the electoral college system of indirect voting to elect the President, Justice Rao wasn't elected as the ruling party of the time pushed through its candidate.

Next was Justice Baharul Islam who was a seasoned politician active from his youth. He served two terms in the Rajya Sabha and resigned from the house to be appointed as a High Court Judge in his home state of Assam. Islam was elevated to the Supreme Court from where he resigned five weeks before the end of his tenure. Immediately thereupon, he was appointed as a Lok Sabha election candidate, which ultimately did not happen and so he came back as a Rajya Sabha member. This nomination of Islam saw people raise questions about some of his judicial decisions in politically sensitive cases. Justice Gangopadhyay may well face similar scrutiny.

The last instance is of Justice K S Hegde who was first an elected member of the Rajya Sabha, then came back to legal practice and was then appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of India. After a gap of four years, he successfully contested for the Lok Sabha, and eventually became the speaker of the lower house of Parliament.

Juxtaposed to the above precedents, all of which were several decades ago, what is disconcerting about Gangopadhyay's foray into politics is that he used his Constitutional highchair as the pulpit from which he broadcast his political ambitions. Political barbs were exchanged in the courtroom and he courted controversy for having run-ins with fellow judges, for giving press interviews about matters pending before him and for breaking rank by summoning documents from the Supreme Court of India. His acts raised questions about judicial propriety, impartiality, institutional integrity and independence. These values are the essential pillars on which the independence of our judiciary rests and form part of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct of which India is also a member state.

These Principles draw upon the "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life" and were adopted by the full court of the Supreme Court of India in the late 1990s. They resolved that, "a judge, like any other citizen, is entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly, but in exercising such rights, a judge shall always conduct himself or herself in such a manner as to preserve the dignity of the judicial office and the impartiality and independence of the judiciary." Did Gangopadhyay's actions uphold that dignity and help preserve people's faith in the judiciary?

Notably, in India, the only check on the judiciary's exercise of powers is the self-imposed discipline of self-restraint. As former Supreme Court Judge E S Venkataramiah penned, "A judge should be independent of himself. A judge is a human being who is a bundle of passions and prejudices, likes and dislikes, affection and ill will, hatred and contempt and fear and recklessness. In order to be a successful judge these elements should be curbed and kept under restraint and that is possible only by education, training, continued practice and cultivation of a sense of humility and dedication to duty... It is the inner strength of judges alone that can save the judiciary. The life of a judge does not really call for great acts of self-sacrifice; but it does insist upon small acts of self-denial almost every day."

Quite contrastingly, on numerous occasions, Gangopadhyay drew the light upon himself. So much so that the Supreme Court on its own stayed his judicial decisions and reallocated cases pending before him to other benches. As the French philosopher, Michel De Montaigne said, and what is often cited in Indian jurisprudence "Were I not to follow the straight road for its straightness, I should follow it for having found by experience that in the end it is commonly the happiest and the most useful track." The straight and narrow merits being walked upon even if one is the lone one treading it. After all, as the revered son of Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote, "*Ekla chalo re*!"

The writer is a senior advocate in Delhi

My MP and I

Notes from a 2014 Lok Sabha campaign, some pointers for 2024

ROHINI NILEKANI

THE HEADLINES BROUGHT back sharp memories of a hot summer wind. Exactly 10 years ago, we had embarked on a grueling campaign for my husband Nandan Nilekani from Bangalore South constituency for the Lok Sabha elections of 2014.

Everyone knows how that particular movie ended, but there was so much we learnt which may be relevant for the sequel now playing out around the country. The first lesson that 900 million plus voters could acknowledge is that politics may be the world's most difficult profession. We personally witnessed how politicians work 24/7, 365 days a year, surprisingly often without rewards, to meet voter demands. So, can we give a thumbs up to the thousands of candidates from dozens of parties, of whom only 543 will win, but who will all keep our vital electoral democracy humming?

The second issue is that too many voters, especially from the elite urban classes, still take the elections too lightly. They should not. India does not have a compulsory vote like 21 countries do. Our elections are more of a celebration of the right to vote than a cumbersome duty.

But we let ourselves down when we don't participate in the free and fair elections India is so proud of, when we don't vote. Sure, our elections come in the way of the precious summer holidays; sure, some of us may find our names removed from the voter list. But think hard of what would happen if a majority thought it was not worth their time to vote. What kind of country would India be?

The third, critical question is what people should expect from their candidates. Most voters may not have internalised that we will be choosing those whose main job is to minister parliament as good law makers. The media does not highlight this enough. Politicians only rarely talk about it themselves.

MPs have the representative responsibility to reflect the aspirations of their constituents, the power of the purse responsibility to approve the expenditure of the government, and some oversight over the executive.

But their main job is to participate in understanding, debating on and helping pass legislation that enables the nation to function smoothly, fairly and without conflict. In our experience of the 2014 campaign, that is not what the voters had understood or even wanted.

Walking for months through many slums, middle class neighbourhoods and fancy apartment complexes, we listened deeply to the people all day long. Some moments were particularly illuminating.

One sweltering day, in a fancy apartment complex, after my impassioned speech on how Nandan, if elected, would help drive systems reform, one man nodded wisely and said, "Wonderful. But what will he do about my crazy neighbour who feeds stray dogs at 1 am?"

In middle class neighbourhoods, people asked what we would do for street lights, or to keep their park green. In one such park, a lady probed — "You want my vote free or what? What will you give me?" When I mumbled something about a hardworking, ethical candidate, she was amused.

In slum areas, people were still desperate for basic services. "Bari neeru kodi, saaku," they begged. If you can provide water, it is enough. Others spoke of electricity, transport, and hospitals. This was their one chance to pour out their frustrations to candidates and their crews.

Eventually, our team realised, even in a developed and educated city like Bengaluru, people want personally from their MPs what they should collectively organise for, or solicit from their corporators, local bureaucrats or MLAs. They want a direct solution to their local irritants, not abstract rewards.

None of these demands are unreasonable. Many, especially on basic services, are critical to meet. The question is, who should be fulfilling them?

It cannot possibly be up to the MP, who has no authority or legally sanctioned resources apart from a meagre MPLAD scheme, to meet any of these aspirations. If he or she has to please such a voter, the winning candidate has to perform a politics of patronage and brokerage.

A modern democracy needs enlightened politicians to work with efficient bureaucrats to solve forever more complex issues. Too often, our laws and policies are signed off on without any discussion. Too often, we the people can't see how that affects our day-to-day lives.

To take just one example, the Telecommunications Act 2023 cements the power of the government to suspend internet services. No urban voter even knows anymore how to live without the internet for more than a few hours. Do we not need our MP to intervene to ensure internet shutdowns can be ordered only in the rarest of rare circumstances?

For the nearly 2 crore new young voters, policy issues may be critical for what they care about most — the future of work. Similarly, for women enrolling in larger numbers than ever, laws and rules on safety and health, equity and access, may be even more important than immediate relief.

We have an opportunity, as voters of the 17th Lok Sabha, to flip the old mental model. We can elect men and women who will speak up for our freedoms and guard against our fears when new laws are designed or old ones are modified.

Good parliamentarians make good laws. Good laws make for a good society. Good laws when well implemented enrich a democracy with justice, equity, rights and protections. Good laws written today create a better future for countless generations ahead.

Our MPs need not be distracted by local issues, for which we must hold local governments accountable. Surely we can spare 543 leaders to focus on ideas that matter more than we can immediately perceive.

Ten years ago, our campaign team treaded the heated streets, canvassing for strategic votes. In a few weeks, we will ink our fingers as members of the world's largest and proudest voting population.

We, the *samaaj* of India can deepen India's democracy by electing those candidates who will design good laws to nourish us all.

The writer is chairperson, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, and author of Samaaj, Sarkaar, Bazaar — A citizen first approach

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POLLUTION MENACE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Delhi to Begusarai' (IE, March 21). The fact that 83 Indian cities are among the top 100 most polluted cities in the world speaks volumes about our utter inability to address the worsening air pollution problem. New Delhi has been named the world's most polluted capital city for the fourth consecutive year. November to January every year is our worst period as PM 2.5 levels skyrocket. Unless the primary driver of such winter-time surge in bad air quality — widespread stubble burning in neighbouring states — is adequately addressed, our northern region will descend into a veritable gas chamber, rendering all other mitigating measures futile. Instead of pointing fingers at each other, the Centre and all concerned states must work in mission mode to defeat their common enemy.

Kamal Laddha, *Bengaluru*

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Delhi to Begusarai' (IE, March 21). Air pollution is a serious problem in several Indian cities. The unbearable pollution levels in Delhi are much higher than the permissible limit. The root cause is lopsided development. Begusarai and the northeastern city of Guwahati were ranked as the two most polluted cities in the world. If tier 3 cities are given earnest priority, it could mitigate pollution levels. Only seven countries met the WHO's annual PM2.5 guideline, which is an annual average of five micrograms per cubic metre or less. One hopes that the Centre and the state governments will work in tandem to tackle the menace.

S S Paul, *Nadia*

ETHICS IN MEDIA

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The problem is not difference of opinion. It's poverty of thought' (IE, March 21). Nitin Gadkari, while addressing the 17th Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards, recalled how *The Indian Express* braved the censorship of Emergency. Goenka's contribution can be encapsulated in the following Urdu couplets of Akbar Allahabadi "*khinchon na kamanon ko na talvar nikalo / jab top muqabil ho to akhbar nikalo*" (neither bow and arrow nor a sword do you require / publish a newspaper when faced with canon fire). The downfall of journalism is not solely dependent on the journalist's choice between ethics or convenience. It is conditioned by media house operations. This was aptly described by former CJI N V Ramana when he said that when media houses have other business interests, they are vulnerable to external pressures and often commercial interests prevail over independent journalism which compromises democracy.

L R Murmu, *New Delhi*

STARS ON THE RISE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'WPL is here' (IE, March 20). If anyone is still doubtful about the state of affairs of women's cricket, it is well and truly on the rise. RCB's victory in the second edition of WPL is a testimony that women's cricket in general and WPL in particular is here to stay and thrive. It is heartening to see it gaining traction by all stakeholders, including fans. Smriti Mandhana, Richa Ghosh, Shreyanka Patil, Asha Sobhana, and all others gave great performances, which also augurs well for the forthcoming T20 World Cup. Shreyanka Patil is the future star of Indian women's cricket as she won the Purple Cap and Emerging Player awards. Their games will only improve if they play more bilateral series with tougher teams.

Bal Govind, *Noida*

ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS

UN RESOLUTION BACKS EFFORTS TO ENSURE AI IS SAFE

United Nations: The General Assembly approved the first United Nations resolution on artificial intelligence Thursday, giving global support to an international effort to ensure the powerful new technology benefits all nations, respects human rights and is "safe, secure and trustworthy." The resolution, sponsored by the US, was adopted by consensus with a bang of the gavel and without a vote, meaning it has the support of all 193 UN member nations.

TOP OF THE WORLD

PORTUGAL

Centre-right wins polls but populists want a say in govt

Lisbon: A centre-right alliance led by the Social Democratic Party has won Portugal's general election by a slender margin and is set to form a minority government that could have a difficult term in office as a radical-right populist party that came third in the voting tries to get a hand on the levers of power. Results published late Wednesday gave the Democratic Alliance a final tally of 80 seats in the 230-seat National Assembly. The centre-left Socialist Party placed second with 78 seats. The hard-right Chega (Enough) party collected 50 seats, up from 12 seats in 2022. Chega leader Andre Ventura is demanding that the Social Democrats give his party a say in governing the country. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa invited Luis Montenegro, head of the Democratic Alliance, to form a government. **AP**

PAKISTAN

Two killed, 22 injured in suicide blast in KPK

Peshawar: At least two people were killed and 22 others injured when a suicide bomber rammed a vehicle laden with explosives against a convoy of the security forces in Pakistan's restive northwest region on Thursday, police said. The incident happened in the Dera Ismail Khan district of the country's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province when the security convoy was on the move from one part of the district to another. "In the suicide blast, at least 2 people were killed and 22 others injured. The two deceased are believed to be from the Army. However, it is not confirmed yet," said a senior police officer. **PTI**

Pak seeking 24th IMF bailout package: Sharif

Islamabad: Pakistan would require another IMF bailout programme for its macroeconomic stability, the cash-strapped country's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Thursday, a day after Islamabad reached a staff-level agreement with the global lender on the successful completion of the existing short-term facility. Addressing a meeting of the Special Investment and Facilitation Council's Apex committee, Sharif asserted that the new tranche of the bailout package by the IMF would likely be received in a few days. **PTI**

NEPAL

Billionaire calls land scam case a 'political stunt'

Kathmandu: Nepal's only billionaire and Nepali Congress lawmaker Binod Chaudhary on Thursday rejected allegations against him in a government land grab scam, calling it a "political stunt". Chaudhary's remarks came after the Central Investigation Bureau recorded his statement in connection with the Bansbari Leather and Shoe Factory land grab scam. Chaudhary claimed that the government action against him was "a stunt and driven by political motives." **PTI**

IN CYPRUS, OFFICIALS FROM 36 COUNTRIES DISCUSS AID DELIVERY PLAN

Truce possible as gaps are narrowing, US drafting a UN resolution: Blinken

US Secretary of State holds talks with Egypt President, fighting rages in Gaza

REUTERS
CAIRO, MARCH 21

US SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken met Egypt's president on Thursday for talks on securing aGaza ceasefire, as Gaza's Palestinians despaired at observing Ramadan without relatives who had been killed or adequate food for their children.

In Gaza, Israel's offensive focused on the Al Shifa hospital, for a fourth day, and local residents said they had seen buildings inside the complex in flames. The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said only the expansion of land crossings into Gaza could prevent famine.

Blinken met Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Cairo after ceasefire talks resumed in Qatar this week, centred on a truce of around six weeks that would allow the release of 40 Israeli hostages in return for hundreds of Palestinians detained in Israeli jails. Blinken told the Arabic broadcaster Al Hadath that such a ceasefire would bring "immediate relief to so many people who are suffering in Gaza – the children, the women, the men", and that the US had drafted a UN resolution to that effect. "I think the gaps are narrowing, and I think an agreement is very much possible," Blinken told Al Hadath.

Sisi stressed the need for a truce to address the escalating humanitarian crisis and warned of the dangers of a military operation in Rafah. But an Israeli official insisted Israel would take control of Rafah even if it caused a rift with the US, saying that a quarter of Hamas's original fighting force was there. Officials from 36 countries and UN agencies gathered in Cyprus to discuss ways to expedite humanitarian deliveries.

UN CHIEF TO EU: AVOID DOUBLE STANDARDS OVER GAZA AND UKRAINE

Brussels: European Union leaders were urged to show the same respect for international law in Gaza as they aim to uphold in Ukraine. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed to the leaders to remain strong and united in their respect of standards enshrined in the UN Charter. "The basic principle of humanitarian law is the protection of civilians. We must stick to principles in Ukraine as in Gaza without double standards." Guterres told reporters, standing alongside EU Council chief Charles Michel, who chaired the summit. **AP**

Palestinians fleeing north Gaza after Israeli troops raided Al Shifa hospital, Thursday. *Reuters*

How name-dropping Messi saved an Israeli grandmother from Hamas

REUTERS
TEL AVIV, MARCH 21

"I'M FROM where Messi is from," 90-year-old Esther Cunio told the two masked Palestinian gunmen who moments earlier invaded her home in southern Israel. It was the morning of Oct. 7 and Hamas was carrying out its killing spree in communities near the Gaza border, including in Kibbutz Nir Oz, where Cunio, who was born in Argentina, was living.

The two armed men were demanding to know where the rest of her family was.

"'Don't speak to me', I said, 'Because I don't know your language. You speak Arabic and I speak Hebrew poorly'. I tell him, 'I speak in Argentine Spanish'," Cunio recounted. "So he says to me 'What is Argentina?'" "So I tell him, 'Do you watch soccer?' Then he says to me, 'Yes, yes, I like soccer'. So I say to him, 'I'm from where Messi is from'. Then he replies, 'Messi! I like Messi'." And then, one man leaned over the seated Cunio, and placed his assault rifle on her lap. The other man photographed them.

Cunio and the masked assailant. *@BowTiedMarq/X*

In another part of Nir Oz, Cunio's family was taken hostage. Her grandchildren David, 33, and Ariel, 26, are still being held in captivity in Gaza. Now, she awaits the return of her "golden boys".

People take shelter inside a metro station during a Russian missile strike in Kyiv on Thursday. *Reuters*

Russia launches 31 missiles at Kyiv in 1st attack in 44 days

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV, MARCH 21

RUSSIA FIRED 31 ballistic and cruise missiles at Kyiv before dawn on Thursday in the first attack on the Ukrainian capital in 44 days, officials said. Air defenses shot down all the incoming missiles, though 13 people including a child were injured by falling wreckage, they said.

Residents of Kyiv were woken up by loud explosions around 5 am as the missiles arrived at roughly the same time from different directions, said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv City Administration. Ukraine's air force said Russia launched two ballistic missiles and 29 cruise missiles against the capital. An 11-year-old girl and a 38-year-old man were hospitalised, the city administration said. Eight other people sustained light injuries, according to Mayor Vitali Klitschko. The attack came after Ukraine aerial attacks in recent days on Russia's Belgorod region. Russian President Vladimir Putin had threatened to "respond in kind" to the attacks. Putin had said Russia "can respond in the same way regarding civilian infrastructure." **AP**

RUSSIAN ASSETS TO ARM UKRAINE? EU HOLDS TALKS

Brussels: European Union leaders arrived at a summit on Thursday to discuss whether to use billions of euros in profits from frozen Russian financial assets to buy arms for Ukraine. Russia on Wednesday described the EU plan as banditism and theft. **AP**

Migration at record high, Australia tightens visa rules for students

REUTERS
SYDNEY, MARCH 21

AUSTRALIA WILL begin enforcing tougher visa rules for foreign students this week as official data showed migration hit another record high, which is likely to further exacerbate an already tight rental market.

From Saturday, English language requirements for student and graduate visas will be increased, while the government will get the power to suspend education providers from recruiting international students if they repeatedly break rules.

"The actions this weekend will continue to drive migration levels down while delivering on our commitments in the migration strategy to fix the broken system we inherited," Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil said in a statement.

A new "genuine student test" will be introduced to further crack down on international students who look to come to Australia primarily to work, while the imposition of "no further stay" conditions will be used on more visitor visas.

The moves follow a raft of actions last year to close off COVID-era concessions introduced by the former government, including unrestricted working hours for international students. The government at the time said rules would be tightened for students. Australia boosted its annual migration numbers in 2022 to help businesses recruit staff to fill shortages after the pandemic brought strict border controls, and kept foreign students and workers out for nearly two years.

ROPE OF HOPE

Rohingya refugees stand on a capsized boat as a rescuer throws a rope to them in the waters of West Aceh, Indonesia, in a photograph released on Thursday. A total of 69 people have been rescued by an Indonesian search-and-rescue ship. *Reuters*

Tibet offers college exam takers a spot if their parents invest $400,000

REUTERS
BEIJING, MARCH 21

TIBET IS luring investors from elsewhere in China with a promise to let their children take university entrance exams there in return for an investment of at least $400,000, an unusual move to exploit what is considered an easier scoring system.

With a population that is 90% ethnic Tibetan, the region has one of China's lowest college entry barriers, a key edge for the millions of students who take the competitive "gaokao" entrance exams each year, hoping to secure lucrative white-collar jobs.

The plan has sparked debate on Chinese social media, however, with some posters arguing it would be unfair to students from the mountainous region, while others supported it.

"What about the enrolment rate of kids born in Tibet?" asked one user on Weibo platform.

Amid growing concern as the exam approaches in early June, the education ministry issued a notice on Wednesday vowing to crack down on "gaokao migrants", as students seeking to benefit from such a plan have been dubbed.

In 2023, a student in Tibet scoring at least 300 out of 750 on the entrance exam would have qualified for an undergraduate place at more than 1,200 universities nationwide.

By comparison, those taking the exam in Beijing would have needed a score of 448.

Ex-General accused of rights abuses declared winner in Indonesia polls, opponents cry foul

SUI-LEE WEE & MUKTITA SUHARTONO
JAKARTA, MARCH 21

A FEARED former general won last month's presidential election in Indonesia, official results released Wednesday showed, confirming unofficial projections. Prabowo Subianto, who is now Indonesia's defense minister, garnered 58.6% of the vote, according to the final tally by the General Election Commission.

Prabowo Subianto, Indonesia's defence minister

The result means that Prabowo won the election outright, avoiding a runoff with the second-place candidate.

His opponents — Anies Baswedan, who had 24.9% of the vote, and Ganjar Pranowo, who took 16.5% — have said they plan to challenge the result. They accuse the outgoing president, Joko Widodo, of improperly influencing the election and claim widespread irregularities during the Feb. 14 vote. They have not provided proof of election-day impropriety but said they had evidence to prove their claims in court. Prabowo's representatives reject these claims, noting that nearly every poll before the election showed him as the front-runner. For many observers and critics, the election has tarnished Indonesia's hard-won reputation of a vibrant democracy. The focal points of their discontent are the actions of Widodo preceding the vote and how he used state resources to support Prabowo, whom he beat in the previous two elections. Widodo exerted his influence, they say, on a court that changed a law, allowing his son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, to run as Prabowo's running mate. Then Widodo "violated norms" by appearing to campaign. **NYT**

First pig-to-human kidney transplant performed in US

REUTERS
BOSTON, MARCH 21

A 62-YEAR-MAN with end-stage renal disease has become the first human to receive a new kidney from a genetically modified pig, doctors from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston announced on Thursday. The four-hour surgery, performed on March 16, "marks a major milestone in the quest to provide more readily available organs to patients," the hospital said.

The patient, Richard Slayman of Weymouth, Massachusetts, is recovering well and expected to be discharged soon, the hospital said. Slayman had received a transplant of a human kidney at the same hospital in 2018 after seven years on dialysis, but the organ failed after five years and he had resumed dialysis. The kidney was provided by eGenesis of Cambridge, Massachusetts from a pig that had been genetically edited to remove genes that could be harmful to a human recipient and add certain human genes.

THE IMPLANT SEEKS TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO CONTROL COMPUTER CURSOR OR KEYBOARD USING ONLY THEIR THOUGHTS

Musk's Neuralink shows first brain-chip patient playing online chess

REUTERS
NEW YORK, MARCH 21

ELON MUSK'S brain-chip startup Neuralink livestreamed on Wednesday its first patient implanted with a chip using his mind to play online chess.

Noland Arbaugh, the 29-year-old patient who was paralysed below the shoulder after a diving accident, played chess on his laptop and moved the cursor using the Neuralink device. The implant seeks to enable people to control a computer cursor or keyboard using only their thoughts.

Arbaugh had received an implant from the company in January and could control a computer mouse using his thoughts, Musk said last month.

"The surgery was super easy," Arbaugh said in the video streamed on Musk's social media platform X, referring to the implant procedure. "I literally was released from the hospital a day later. I have no cognitive impairments."

Noland Arbaugh (second left), who was paralysed below the shoulder after an accident, played chess on his laptop and moved the cursor using the Neuralink device. *X*

"I had basically given up playing that game," Arbaugh said, referring to the game Civilization VI, "you all (Neuralink) gave me the ability to do that again and played for 8 hours straight."

Elaborating on his experience with the new technology, Arbaugh said that it is "not perfect" and they "have run into some issues."

"I don't want people to think that this is the end of the journey, there's still a lot of work to be done, but it has already changed my life," he added.

Kip Ludwig, former program director for neural engineering at the US National Institutes of Health, said what Neuralink showed was not a "breakthrough."

"It is still in the very early days post-implantation, and there is a lot of learning on both the Neuralink side and the subject's side to maximise the amount of information for control that can be achieved," he added. Even so, Ludwig said it was a positive development for the patient that they have been able to interface with a computer in a way they were not able to before the implant. "It's certainly a good starting point," he said.

Last month, Reuters reported that the US Food and Drug Administration inspectors found problems with record keeping and quality controls for animal experiments at Elon Musk's Neuralink, less than a month after the startup said it was cleared to test its brain implants in humans. Neuralink did not respond then to questions about the FDA's inspection.

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to **explained@indianexpress.com**

Why SC has stayed Govt's 'Fact Check Unit' for now

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE SUPREME Court on Thursday stayed the operation of the amended Information Technology (IT) Rules, which empowered the government to identify "fake news" on social media platforms through a "Fact Check Unit" (FCU).

The Union Electronics and IT Ministry had notified the FCU on March 20 as a statutory body under the Press Information Bureau with the power to flag what it believes is false information related to the central government and its agencies on social media sites.

The amendment to the IT Rules, 2021, which allowed the Ministry to appoint the FCU, were notified in April 2023. On January 31 this year, a two-judge division Bench of the Bombay High Court gave a split verdict on a challenge to the Rules.

A third judge who was assigned to give an opinion on the split verdict is yet to give his final decision. However, after the third judge declined to stay the setting up of the FCU, the division Bench on March 13 said by a 2-1 majority that it would not stay the notification of the FCU.

The amended Rules

The amendment to The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified in April 2023 brought in a legal framework for the online gaming eco-system and, more importantly, introduced a legal mechanism for the government to fact-check online content pertaining to "government business".

The Rules made it obligatory for intermediaries like social media platforms "to not publish, share or host fake, false or misleading information in respect of any business of the Central Government". The changes raised concern that the FCU would make the government the "sole arbiter of truth" in respect of any business related to itself.

The rules were challenged before the Bombay High Court.

Question before HC

The petitioners, including standup comedian Kunal Kamra, Association of Indian Magazines, Editors Guild of India, news channel TV18 Broadcast Ltd, and Bennett, Coleman & Company Ltd, challenged Rule 3(1)(b)(v) of the IT Rules 2021 as being violative of Article 14, Article 19(1)(a) and (g), and Article 21 of the Constitution, and Section 79 and the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act).

The amendment to Rule 3(1)(b)(v) of the IT Rules 2021 expanded the general term "fake news" to include fake news involving government business.

This provision, when enacted in 2021, referred to "…any information which is patently false or misleading in nature but may reasonably be perceived as a fact".

By the 2023 amendment, after the word "nature", the words "or, in respect of any business of the Central Government, is identified as fake or false or misleading by such a fact check unit of the Central Government as the Ministry may, by notification published in the Official Gazette, specify" were inserted.

The petitioners argued that this would have a "chilling effect" on the freedom of speech and expression. Under the Rules, the Centre would ask intermediaries — not an individual or media organisation directly — to take down speech that it found misleading. However, the restraint on the intermediaries would directly affect the individual.

EXPLAINED LAW

Section 2(1)(w) of the IT Act defines an "intermediary" as "any person who on behalf of another person receives, stores or transmits that record or provides any service with respect to that record and includes telecom service providers, network service providers, internet service providers, web-hosting service providers, search engines, online payment sites, online-auction sites, online-marketplaces and cyber cafes". This broad definition would include big tech, social media sites, and Internet service providers such as Airtel, Reliance Jio, etc.

Section 69 of the IT Act empowers the government to issue directions to block public access to any information through any computer resource. The Rules were framed essentially in exercise of this power.

However, no rule-making powers can be exercised by Parliament in a manner that is contrary to Part III of the Constitution, which deals with fundamental rights.

The Bombay High Court examined if these Rules were violative of free speech, and were arbitrary in nature.

HC ruling and after

On January 31, Justice G S Patel struck down the amended Rules, while Justice Neela Gokhale, the other judge on the Bench, upheld them.

Justice Patel held that the "state cannot coercively classify speech as true or false and compel the non-publication of the latter. That is nothing but censorship."

Justice Gokhale said the "right of citizens to participate in the representative and participative democracy of the county is meaningless unless they have access to authentic information and are not misled by misinformation, information which is patently untrue, fake, false, or misleading, knowingly communicated with malicious intent".

Since a split verdict was delivered, as per rules of the Bombay High Court, the case had to be heard afresh by a third judge whose opinion would create a 2-1 majority one way or another. However, before beginning a substantial hearing, Justice Atul S Chandurkar — who was assigned by Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya as the third judge — had to decide if the Rules were to be stayed.

After the central government told the court that the Rules were yet to be notified in the official gazette, Justice Chandurkar refused to grant an interim stay on the amended Rules.

An appeal was filed before the Supreme Court against the rejection of interim stay. However, a day before the SC was to hear the appeal against rejection of stay, the Centre notified the 2023 Rules in the official gazette. With Lok Sabha elections less than a month away, the Rules are crucial for the government's engagement with news about "government business".

The stay by the SC

The top court on Thursday stayed the amended Rules until the Bombay High Court reaches a final decision. Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud observed that the issue before the court is whether the status quo should be allowed to change when one judge (Justice Patel) had completely struck down the notification.

Can the SC stay a law before it can rule it unconstitutional?

A law made by Parliament carries the presumption of constitutionality. It is subject to judicial review, but the onus is on the petitioners to prove that the law is unconstitutional. Navigating the line between judicial review and Parliament's power to legislate, courts usually shy away from staying a law before they can rule on its constitutionality.

However, there are two important aspects in this case.

One, the Rules in question are made by the Ministry in exercise of powers delegated to the central government by Parliament, and are not a direct expression of the will of Parliament. The threshold for the presumption of constitutionality varies.

Two, the SC has in the past stated that an interim stay can be granted only on an explicit finding of unconstitutionality. It can be inferred from the observations of CJI Chandrachud that Justice Patel's detailed 148-page ruling, although part of a split verdict, is an "explicit finding of unconstitutionality".

In 2020, the SC stayed the operation of a Maharashtra law granting reservation to Marathas in jobs and educational institutions through an interim order.

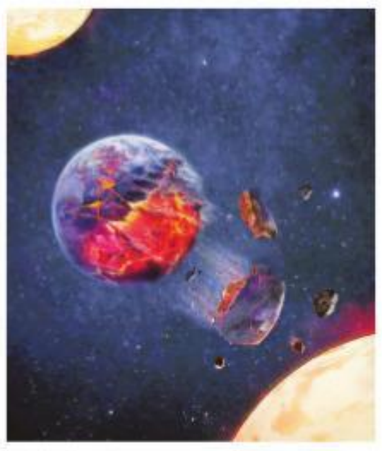
The farm laws — which were ultimately repealed — were also stayed by the SC in an interim order in 2021.

EXPLAINED SCIENCE

MEET TWIN STARS OF THE UNIVERSE, WHICH GOBBLE UP PLANETS

THE PLANETARY system that includes Earth and its sibling planets orbiting the sun has been remarkably stable during its roughly 4.5 billion years of existence. But not all planetary systems are so lucky, as per a new study involving "twin" stars.

An examination of 91 pairs of stars with matching sizes and chemical compositions showed that a surprising number exhibited signs of having ingested a planet, scientists said on Wednesday, likely after the planet was sent hurtling out of a stable orbit for any number of reasons.



Artist's impression of a planet being devoured by a twin star. *Reuters*

What are twin stars?

The study, published in the journal *Nature*, looked at pairs of stars that formed within the same interstellar cloud of gas and dust — called co-natal stars — giving them the same chemical makeup, and roughly equal mass and age. These are the "twins." While the pairs are moving together in the same direction within our Milky Way galaxy, they are not binary systems of two stars gravitationally bound to each other.

A star's chemical composition changes when it engulfs a planet because it incorporates the elements that made up the doomed world. The researchers looked for stars that differed from their twin because they had higher amounts of tell-tale elements like iron, nickel or titanium indicating remnants of a rocky planet, relative to certain other elements.

In seven of the pairs, one of the two stars bore evidence of planetary ingestion.

How do twin stars eat planets?

Possible reasons for a planet making a death plunge into its host star include an orbital disturbance caused by a larger planet, or another star passing uncomfortably close.

"The stability of a planetary system like the solar system is not a given," said astrophysicist and study co-author Yuan-Sen Ting of the Australian National University and Ohio State University.

The researchers said while it is most likely that their observations signalled whole planets being ingested, it was possible it was planetary building blocks consumed during the system's period of planet formation.

Instability in planetary systems may be more common than previously known, considering that about 8% of the stellar pairs studied had one star that apparently devoured a planet.

Most planetary systems should be stable because, as in our solar system, the planets are under the influence mainly of their host star, not their sibling planets, Ting said.

"But for other planetary systems with different initial conditions and configurations, this might break down, leading to very chaotic dynamics," Ting added.

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TELLING NUMBERS

Aspects of inequality in India

Key takeaways from World Inequality Lab research: scale of wealth and income gap in population

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

A NEW working paper by World Inequality Lab (WIL), an international collaboration of researchers, has presented data that show inequality in India "declined post-Independence till the early 1980s, after which it began rising and has skyrocketed since the early 2000s".

The paper, *Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj*, co-authored by economists Nitin Kumar Bharti, Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, and Anmol Somanchi, has used data from national income accounts, wealth aggregates, tax tabulations, rich lists, and surveys on income, consumption and wealth to arrive at the results.

WIL is a Paris-based global research centre focused on the study of inequality and public policies that promote social, economic, and environmental justice. Here's what the data show.

GROWTH IN AVERAGE INCOMES: Between 1960 and 2022, the average income of Indians grew at 2.6% per year in real terms (that is, after removing the effect of inflation). This period can be broadly divided into two halves: 1960-1990, when real growth rate of income was 1.6% per year; and 1990-2022, when average incomes grew by 3.6% per year. The periods 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 saw the fastest growth at 4.3% and 4.9% per year respectively.

VERY HIGH NET WORTH INDIVIDUALS: The period after 1990 saw the emergence of very high net worth individuals (with net wealth more than $1 billion at market exchange rate). Their numbers increased from 1 in 1991 to 52 in 2011, and to 162 in 2022.

INCREASE IN INCOME TAX PAYERS: The share of the adult population that filed income tax returns was under 1% until the 1990s, and rose significantly after the economic reforms of 1991 onwards. By 2011, more than 5% of the adult population was filing ITRs. From 2017-2020, around 9% of adults filed returns.

EXTREME LEVELS OF INEQUALITY: In 2022-23, the percentage of national income that went to the top 1% of the population was 22.6%, the most in the data series since 1922, and more than even during the inter-war period. The share of wealth with the top 1% was 40.1% in 2022-23, the highest level since 1961, when the data series on wealth began. "The 'Billionaire Raj' headed by India's modern bourgeoisie is now more unequal than the British Raj headed by the colonialist forces," the paper says.

Inequality in five charts

Figure 1: Long-run income inequality in India, 1951-2022

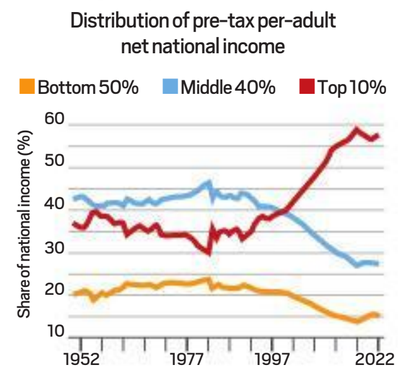

Figure 2: Top 1% national income share, 1922-2022

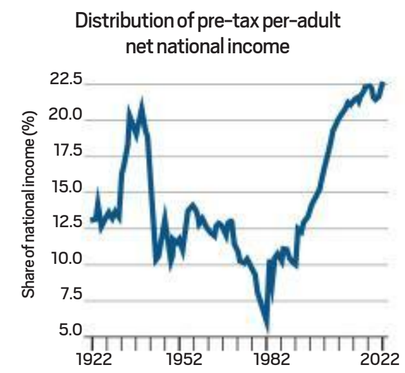

Figure 3: Top 1% national wealth share, 1961-2023

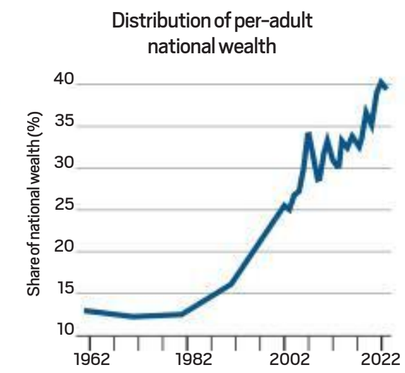

Figure 4: Top income shares, global perspective, 2022-23

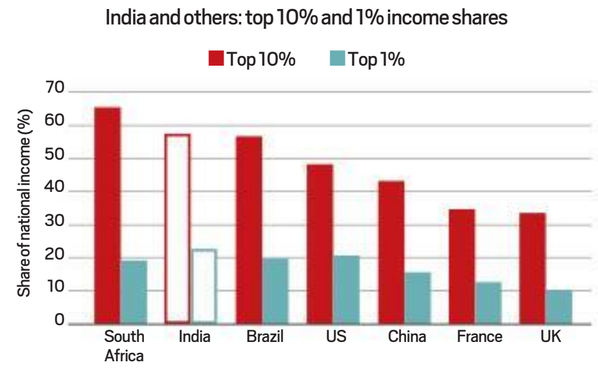

Figure 5: Top wealth shares, global perspective, 2022-23

EXTREME WEALTH AT VERY TOP: Between 1961 and 2023, the share of the top 1% in national wealth increased threefold from 13% to 39%. Most of this gain came after 1991. (Figure 3) Within the top 1% wealth share of 39% in 2022-23, "29 percentage points went just to the top 0.1%, 22 percentage points to just the top 0.01% and 16 percentage points to just the top 0.001%", the paper says.

INCOME INEQUALITY GLOBALLY: The paper compares India's income inequality level (as of 2022) with that in Brazil, China, France, South Africa, the UK, and the US. Looking at the income share of the top 10%, India is second only to South Africa (Figure 4). If one compares the income shares of the top 1%, India is on top with 22.6%. "India's top 1% income share appears to be among the very highest in the world based on World Inequality Database data, behind only perhaps Peru, Yemen, and a couple of other small countries," the paper says.

WEALTH INEQUALITY GLOBALLY: The picture on wealth inequality is slightly less extreme. "In terms of top wealth shares, we see that both with top 10% and top 1%, India comes out in the middle of the pack, with Brazil and South Africa standing out with their extreme wealth concentration levels...," the paper says (Figure 5)

LIKELY UNDERESTIMATION OF INEQUALITY: The authors have emphasised that "the quality of economic data in India is notably poor and has seen a decline recently". Therefore, it is likely that the results represent "a lower bound to actual inequality levels", the paper says.

POLICY SOLUTION: a super tax: "Implementing a super tax on Indian billionaires and multimillionaires, along with restructuring the tax schedule to include both income and wealth, so as to finance major investments in education, health and other public infrastructure, could be effective" to address rising inequalities, the paper says.

Who are Majeed Brigade, Baloch militants who carried out Gwadar attack?

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE MAJEED Brigade of the separatist group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has claimed responsibility for Wednesday's attack on a complex outside Pakistan's strategic Gwadar Port. Pakistan has said eight militants and two security personnel were killed in the attack; the BLA has, however, claimed to have killed 25 security personnel.

The BLA is the most prominent separatist group in restive Balochistan. The Majeed Brigade, which has been active since 2011, is the BLA's dedicated suicide squad. The unit is named after two brothers, both called Majeed Langove. This is their story.

The Balochistan context

Balochistan, in Pakistan's southwest, is the country's largest and most sparsely populated province. It has oil reserves and abundant natural resources, but the ethnic Baloch are Pakistan's poorest and most under-represented people.

At the time of Partition, Balochistan comprised multiple chiefdoms owing allegiance to the British. Ahmed Yar Khan, the chief of Kalat, was the most powerful of these tribal chiefs, and hoped to secure an independent state for his people. However, he was forced to accede in 1948 after Pakistan invaded Kalat. This triggered an insurgency which is ongoing, fuelled by persisting economic disaffection, political disenfranchisement, and repression by the Pakistani state.

In many ways, the China-backed Gwadar Port is a symbol of the economic injustice faced by the Baloch — despite rampant unemployment in the province, engineers and technical specialists were hired from Punjab, Sindh, and even China.

In recent years, Baloch militants have repeatedly targeted both Gwadar, and Chinese nationals in the country.

Majeed Sr and Bhutto

In May 1972, the National Awami Party (NAP) came to power in Balochistan. Nationally, the NAP sat in opposition to Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP). The NAP had long advocated for greater regional autonomy in Pakistan, and it was emboldened by the secession of Bangladesh in 1971.

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

But Bhutto, chafing from the humiliation of Pakistan's defeat to India, was unwilling to grant any major concessions. From the beginning of the NAP's term in the provincial government, Bhutto attempted to undermine its working.

Meanwhile, the more radical Baloch nationalists continued the insurgency, which created a serious law and order situation in the province. After a cache of arms supposedly meant for insurgents was discovered, Bhutto dismissed the NAP government in February 1973. This led to both the insurgency and the Pakistani state repression becoming worse in Balochistan. Between 1973 and 1977, thousands of fighters and military personnel were killed in the fighting, and there were reports of mass atrocities against the Baloch by Pakistani forces.

It is in this context that Majeed Langove Senior, then a young Baloch man, decided to assassinate Bhutto. On August 2, 1974, as Bhutto arrived in Quetta to attend a public gathering, Majeed Senior waited atop a tree, a grenade in hand. He had no plans to escape, and was most certainly going to lose his life in his bid to kill Bhutto.

And he did — even before he had a chance to kill the Pakistani leader. The grenade burst in Majeed Senior's hand as he waited for Bhutto's motorcade, killing him.

Jr's sacrifice, Majeed Brigade

The death of Majeed Senior was mythologised for posterity by the actions of his younger brother, Majeed Langove Junior, who was born two years after Senior was killed.

On March 17, 2010, Pakistani forces surrounded a house hosting a number of Baloch militants in Quetta. One man — Junior — decided to put up a fight, and buy time for his comrades to exit. After an hour's resistance, Junior was killed. Majeed Junior's death was mourned by nationalists across Balochistan. After it became widely known that he was the younger brother of Senior, who too had given his life for the cause of Balochi freedom, the Majeed Langove brothers were raised to near-mythical status.

When Aslam Achu, a BLA leader, decided to establish a suicide squad, the name 'Majeed' was chosen for it. The Majeed Brigade carried out its first attack on December 30, 2011, targetting a tribal leader and Pakistan Army proxy called Shafiq Mengal. While Shafiq himself escaped unhurt, at least 14 persons were killed.

After a long hiatus, the group became active again in 2018, attacking a bus carrying Chinese engineers in Dalbandin near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The Majeed Brigade has also attacked the Chinese Consulate in Karachi (2018), the Gwadar Pearl Continental Hotel (2019), and the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi (2020), according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,KM GURPREET KAUR,W/O PARAMJIT SINGH,R/O 24,FEROJPUR-NANGAR, MUZAFFAR NAGAR(UP)-251316,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO GURPREET KAUR. 0040721192-3

It is for general information that I, SARITA KUMARI D/O MATHURA PRASAD R/O A-102, First Floor, Street No-4, Madhu Vihar, Uttam Nagar, D.K Mohan Garden, West Delhi, Delhi-110059 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SARITA in my Pan Card No-JJKPS5837P, Voter Card No-RBI6135602, SC Certificate No-SC/9/967/12493/8/6/2015/9051 9671233732 and all Educational Documents. The actual name of mine is SARITA KUMARI which may be amended accordingly. 0040721100-2

It is for general information that I, Khoinou Devi Watham W/o Ashish Shukla R/o E201 Amrapali Platinum sector119, Noida, UP-201301, declare that my name has been wrongly written as Khoinou Watham in my child Virat Krishna Shukla's Passport No-U6434546. MY actual name is Khoinou Devi Watham, which may be amended accordingly. 0070895410-1

I,hitherto known as GULSHAN, S/O SHRI ASHOK KUMAR, R/O B-302,Gali.no.14,B-Block, Bhajanpura,Delhi-110053,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GULSHAN KUMAR. 0040721117-5

I,Yameen S/o Abdul Gani R/o 852/17, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Mohammad Yamin. 040721175-3

I,Vinod Malhotra,S/O Pyarelal, R/O T-41,Jain colony Uttam D K Mohan garden-Nagar New Delhi-110059,have changed my name Vinod Kumar. 0040721176-1

I,VIMLA DEVI,mother of, Ashok Kumar presently, residing at Vill-Shyampura, Post- Nua, Dist- Jhunjhunu, State-Rajasthan,PIN- 333041,have changed my name from VIMLA DEVI to BIMLA DEVI,Vide-Affidavit- 21.03.2024. At New Delhi. 0040721161-9

I,Tanu Gupta W/O Vishrut Mittal R/O 7229 B-10 Vasant Kunj,Delhi-110070,Have Changed,My Minor Daughter Name Cyra Mittal To Kyra Mittal. 0040721175-1

I,Dharmender S/O Dilbag Singh,R/O H.NO-E-1C Secto-35,Suncity Rohtak Haryana-124001,Have Changed my Name to Dharmender Lakra. 0040721171-6

I,SAHIL,S/O UDAY SINGH,R/O FLAT.NO-172, POCKET-3,ROYAL GREEN APPARTMENTS, DWARKA,SECTOR-11,DELHI-110075,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAHIL YADAV 0040721117-2

I,SHEKHAR CHANDRA,S/O TEJPAL,residing at,N-27/B-3, POCKET N,DILSHAD GARDEN, DELHI-110095,have changed my minor son name from ARSH SHEKHAR to ARSH SHIRIN, for all future purpose. 0040721171-10

I,SIVAKUMAR,S/O SHENBAGA ANBALAGAN R/O HOUSE.NO.-80,GAIL SOCIETY SECTOR-32 PI-1 & 2 GREATER-NOIDA UP,HAVE CHANGED,MY NAME TO SIVAKUMAR ANBALAGAN. 0040721175-2

I,SUBHASH KUMAR BARAWAL,S/O ZILE SINGH,R/O-12, MAIN KANJHAWALA ROAD, UDAN-PANA,KANJHAWALA, DELHI-110081,have changed my name to SUBHASH KUMAR. 0040721176-7

I,SUNEYNA DEVI,MOTHER OF,SEKHAR KUMAR MONDAL,R/O NARSINGH BANDH MUNGERIA KHATAL PO-BURNPUR DISTT-PASCHIM BURDWAN WEST BENGAL-713325,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM SUNEYNA DEVI TO SUNAYANA DEBI MONDAL VIDE AFFIDAVIT IN-DL61870232721560W DATED-21/03/2024, BEFORE NCT-DELHI. 0040721181-5

I,SYED JAVED AKHTAR,R/O-A93 JAUHRIFARM,NOORNAGAR EXT JAMIANAGAR,NEW DELHI-110025,IN MY PASSPORT MY DETAILS ARE INCORRECT SYED JAWED AKHTER,S/O-SYED SHAMSHUL HASSAN AND SPOUSE NAME SAJJU MUSSARAT KHATOON CORRECT NAME ARE SYED JAVED AKHTAR,S/O-SHAMSUL HASAN SPOUSE NAME MUSSARAT BANO. 0040721176-9

I,Samreen,W/o Mohd Gulfam Qureshi,R/o N-64 Vishnu Garden,New Delhi-110018, Have Changed my name to Samrin,for all purposes. 0040721175-4

I,Savita Sahrawat,W/O Dharmender Lakra R/O,H.NO-E-1C Secto-35,Suncity Rohtak Haryana-124001,Have Changed my Name to Savita Lakra. 0040721171-5

I,Sharda W/o Girish Kumar Sharma,R/o 2660,Chhoti Baradari Sher Afghan Ballimaran,Chandni Chowk,North-Delhi-110006, have changed my name to Sharda Sharma. 0040721175-8

I,RITU GIRDHAR W/O RITESH R/O HNO.C-5/76, KESHAV-PURAM, LAWRANCE-ROAD, DELHI-110035. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RITU WADHAWAN. 0040719444-7

I,Shibha Gupta,W/o Siddharth Aggarwal, R/o-16A,Ram Kishore-Road, Civil-Lines, Delhi-110054,have changed my name to Shibha Aggarwal, for all,future purposes. 0040721176-2

I,Shiv Prasad Yadav S/o Sh.Pancham Yadav,R/o House.No.199B/4,Anand Apartment,Ward.No.2,Mehrau li,New Delhi-110030,have changed my name from Shiva Prasad Yadav to Shiv Prasad Yadav,for all purposes. 0040721117-10

I,Shruti Williams W/o Jonathan Williams R/o A-21 Anand Niketan New Delhi have changed my name to Shruti Sudhir Williams. 0040721161-2

I,Shubh Karan Berwal alias Shubh Karan,S/o Rameshwar Singh Saini,R/o 6-A/70, Channa Market,W E A Karol-Bagh, Delhi-5,have Changed my name to Shubh Karan Saini. 0040721171-8

I,Sujata Kumari,W/o Mrigank Shekhar Jha,R/o H.No.13, 2nd-Floor,Street No.5, Shanti Niketan,Moti Bagh,New-Delhi 110021,Have changed my name to Sujata Jha,for all purposes. 0040721175-5

I,Suresh Kumar,S/o Late Shri Khushi Ram Kochar R/o-1/4 Madhuvan Apartment, Pitampura Delhi-110034,have changed my name to Suresh Kumar Kochar 0040721161-5

I,Rohan S/o Devender Malik, R/o-769/20, Near Balaji Sweets, Durga Colony,Prem Nagar,Rohtak,(Haryana)-124001,have changed my name to Rohan Malik. 0040721192-1

I,Rana Amardeep Singh R/O.B-64,near Ranbir Bakery,Fateh-Nagar,Tilak-Nagar,New Delhi-110018,have changed my minor daughter's name,from Maahira Kaur to Maahira Kaur Marwah,for all Purposes. 0040721117-7

I,Rajesh Kumar,S/o Lila Krishan,R/o H.No. 438/11, Ratan Garden, Gurugram (Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Rajesh Kumar Tutuja. 0040721175-6

I,RAKESH,S/O SUSHIL KUMAR RESIDENT 2189, SECTOR-12, OPPOSITE-ECE FACTORY, SONI PAT, HARYANA,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAKESH KHATTAR. 0040721117-4

I,RAKESH GAMBHIR/RAKESH KUMAR GAMBHIR,S/O DINA NATH R/O 8B-POCKET, HNO.32,SECTOR-15,ROHINI, DELHI-110089.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAKESH KUMAR. 0040721171-3

I,RAFIA FARIDI,W/O ABU OBAIDA FARIDI R/O H.NO.D-241/B, FIRST-FLOOR,ABUL FAZAL ENCLAVE-1,JAMIA NAGAR,SOUTH DELHI,DELHI-110025.INFORM THAT GIVEN NAME-RAFIA BEGUM,FOR ALL,PURPOSE. 0040721171-7

I,RADHIKA RANI/RADHIKA W/O RAKESH KUMAR R/O 8B-POCKET, HNO.32, SECTOR-15, ROHINI,DELHI-110089.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RADHIKA GAMBHIR. 0040721171-4

I,Prayansh Pratap Singh S/O-Abhishek Yadav,R/O-56-D,MIG Swarnim Vihar, Sector-82, Noida-201304,have changed my name to Prathmesh Pratap Singh. 0040721188-3

I,POOJA,W/O PREM VALLABH PANDEY,R/O I-84, FIRST-FLOOR, SWAMI DAYANANK COLONY, KISHAN GANJ, DELHI-110007, have changed my name to POOJA PANDEY. 0040721176-6

I,P SOWJANYA,W/O P ARUN KUMAR,R/O SMQ.N-16,CAMERO COMPLEX SUBROTO PARK,NEW DELHI-110010,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM P SOWJANYA TO BUNGA SOUJANYA,VIDE AFFIDAVIT IN-DL61869163746564W, DATED-21/03/2024,BEFORE NCT-DELHI. 0040721181-6

I,Niti Malik D/o-Ram Gopal Ahlawat,W/o Devender Malik,R/o-769/20,Near-Balaji Sweets,Durga-Colony,Prem Nagar,Rohtak, (Haryana)-124001,have changed my name to Niti Ahlawat. 0040721192-2

I,Navjot Singh,S/o Sh.Shranjit Singh,R/o WZ-4,Plot No.17A, T/F,Vishnu Garden Part-1,New Delhi-110018,have changed my minor son name from Sanmeet Singh to Sunmeet Singh. 0040721176-3

I,MUSSARAT BANO,R/O,A-93,JOUHRI-FARM NOOR NAGAR-EXT JAMIANAGAR, NEW DELHI-110025,IN MY PASSPORT MY DETAILS ARE INCORRECT MUSSARAT KHATOON, D/O-KAMAL AHMAD,W/O-JAWED AKHTER CORRECT NAME ARE MUSSARAT BANO, D/O-KAMAL HASAN,W/O-SYED JAVED AKHTAR. 0040721176-8

I,Keerti Sharma,W/O-Shri Anil Sharma,R/O-C-80,2nd Floor, Ashok Vihar,Phase-1, Delhi-110052,have changed my name to Kirti Sharma for all Purposes. 0040721188-2

I,Anusakti Barik,S/o Dibakar Barik,R/o 6, K10 Second-Floor,Near Central Arcade Mall,DLF Phase-2,Gurgaon, Haryana-122008,have changed my daughter name Agastya N Barik to Agastya Anusakti Barik. 0040721161-6

I,Alam Mirza,S/O Jahangir Mirza,R/O 1710 Gali Saleem Wali Pahari Bhojla Turkman Gate Delhi 110006,have changed my name to ALAMGEER MIRZA, Permanently 0040721175-10

I,Kamal Singh Rawat@Kamal Singh,S/o F.S. Rawat,R/o,103-104-A, 2nd Floor, Savitri Nagar,Malaviya-Nagar,Delhi-110017,declare that Kamal Singh Rawat & Kamal Singh both name are one and same person. 0040721117-1

I,AMARJEET SINGH,S/O RAGHBIR SINGH R/o-23,First-Floor,Pocket-1,Ramprastha Greens, Sector-7,Vaishali, Ghaziabad(UP)have changed my name to AMARJEET SINGH JUNEJA. 0040721192-4

I,KISHORE,S/O RAJENDER SAINI RESIDENT HOUSE.NO-216,KABIRPUR,SONIPAT-131001,HARYANA,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KISHOR SAINI. 0040721117-3

I,JYOTSNA W/o Sh.Sumit Bhandari,R/o G-17/8A,Ground-Floor,Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027,have changed my name to Jyotsna Bhandari. 0040721176-5

I,Hemant Dhupper R/o 633, Bhoor Bharat Nagar, Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP-201001,have changed my son's name from Ishaan Dhupper to Namish Dhupper, for all purposes. 0040721098-1

I,Hemant Dhupper R/o 633, Bhoor Bharat Nagar, Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP-201001,have changed my daughter's name from Ishanya Dhupper to Nyra Dhupper, for all purposes. 0040721098-2

I,Hansika Lohani,D/o Deepak Lohani,R/o A-45/17, Third-Floor,DLF Phase-1,Sikanderpur Ghosi(68),Gurgaon,Haryana-122002,have changed my son name Agastya Mehtani to Agastya Lohani. 0040721161-7

I,Girish S/o Yogesh Kumar Sharma,R/o 2660,Chhoti Baradari Sher Afghan Ballimaran, Chandni Chowk, North-Delhi-110006,have changed my name to Girish Kumar Sharma. 0040721175-7

I,GURPREET SINGH S/o Sh.Mahinder Singh R/o-491,DDA-Flats,Tagore-Garden Extn.,New Delhi-110027,have changed my name to Gurpreet Singh Khanijou. 0040721176-4

I,GAURAV SHRIVASTAVA,S/o prakash chand Shrivastava, R/o PLOT.NO.9,C4,MARUTI NANDAN APTS,RAJENDRA NAGAR,SEC-5, SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD-201005,UTTAR PRADESH, HAVE CHANGE MY NAME TO GAURAV,for all,future purposes. 0040721117-6

I,Dalsingar Dudhnath Prajapati F/o.-No.15740989H, Sigmn Prajapati Anurag Dalsingar, R/o-Kunjniwas Compound, Sahkar Road,Vill-Jogeshwari, (West),Teh-Andheri, Dist-Mumbai,have changed my name from Dalsingar Prajapati to Dalsingar Dudhnath Prajapati,for all the future purpose. Vide affidavit before public notary,Maharashtra, Dated-15-Mar-2024. 0040721176-10

I,DEEPAK S/O HARI PRAKASH R/O 300,DEEPALI ENCLAVE, PITAMPURA,DELHI-110034. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DEEPAK GARG. 0040721171-1

I,Arshi Rehman,W/O Alamgeer Mirza,R/O 1710 Gali Saleem Wali,Pahari Bhojla Turkman Gate Delhi-110006,have changed my name to ARSHI ALAM Permanently. 0040721175-9

I,Abhishek Dutta S/o Rajiv Dutta R/o J- 7/50, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi have changed my name to Abhshek Dutta. 0040721161-1

I,ARCHNA W/O DEEPAK GARG R/O 300,DEEPALI ENCLAVE, PITAMPURA,DELHI-110034. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ARCHANA. 0040721171-2

I, NEHA W/O MUKESH KUMAR R/O 3765/3, 1st FLOOR, KANHAIYA NAGAR, TRINAGAR, DELHI-110035 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NEHA SAINI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPORES. 0070895437-1

I, Nutan Sinha W/o Mr. Nikunj R/o Flat No. I-804 Tower-1 Aditya Celebrity Homes, Sector-76, Noida Distt., G B Nagar, UP-201301 have changed my name from Nutan Kumari Sinha to Nutan Sinha for all future purposes. 0040721156-2

I, Parshant garg S/O Subhash Garg, R/o TF-2 A, 24-25, Devli Road, Near Dena Bank, Jawaharpark, Khanpur, South Delhi, Delhi- 110062, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Prasshant garg. 0070895430-1

I Sunita Devi W/o Late Sh. Surender Kumar R/o B-99, Vishwas Park, Uttam Nagar, Dist: West Delhi-110059 is also known as Sunitha. Both names are of one and the same person. 0040721100-5

I Swati Jambla W/O, Prateek Kumar R/o E-20 Dronacharya Apartment Mv 1 Delhi 110091 have changed my name to Swati Ralhan due to my marriage. 0040721150-1

I hitherto known as, TANAY TULSANEY, S/o Sh. MANOHAR TULSANEY, R/o 328, Dhruva Apartments, Plot no.4, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi 110092, do hereby declare that ,"TANAY TULSANEY" and "TANAY MANOHAR TULSANEY" are the names of the same and one person i.e myself and "MANOHAR TULSANEY" , "MANOHAR LEKHRAJ TULSANEY" AND "M.L. TULSANEY" are the name of same and one person i.e my Father, for all future purposes. 0040721123-1

I, Puskar S/O Karan Pal, R/o H No-C-62, Street No- 16, Shastri Park, Extension Nathupura, Burari, North Delhi, Delhi-110084, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Pushkar Gautam. 0070895433-1

I, Rahisa Parveen W/o Zaheer Ahmed R/o G-12/229-A Sangam Vihar New Delhi-110080 have changed my name to Raisha Praveen for all future purposes. 0070895435-1

I, SAGAR CHAUDHARY, S/o BHUPINDER SINGH, R/o L-117 A/93, STREET NO. 3, MAHIPAL PUR EXTENSION, DELHI-110037, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAGAR KUHAR, FOR ALL PURPOSES IN FUTURE. 0070895446-1

I, Sarita Rani Agarwal, W/o Ajay Kumar Agarwal, R/o-A-100, First-Floor, Anand Vihar,Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Sarita Agarwal Permanently. 0040721101-1

I, Satish Kumar, S/o Gyashi Ram, R/o Flat No. 549, C&D Block, Kanishka Apartment, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi, have changed my name to Satish Kumar Jasoria for all purposes in future and both are the same person. 0040721109-1

I, Shamshad Ahmad Zaidi S/o Shri Syed Mohammad Husain Zaidi resident of B1/505, Gali No. 4, Vijay Park Maujpur, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053 India. Declare that I have discontinued using first word "SYED" of my name as mentioned in my educational certificates as Syed Shamshad Ahmad Zaidi and I also use S.A. Zaidi as initial name of my full name vide affidavit dated 20.03.2024 sworn before Notary Alaka Nayak. 0070895440-1

I, Suraj S/o Anil Kumar R/o HNo G1/7, Gobar Dhan Park, Uttam Nagar, Delhi have changed my name from Suraj to Suraj Mittal 0040721158-1

I, URMILA RANI KISHORE, D/o SHIRI RAMBHAROSE VISHARAD LAL, W/o NAND KISHORE RAINA, R/o HIG-97, NEAR WATER TANK, BRIJ VIHAR, CHANDER NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201011, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO URMILA RAINA, FOR ALL PURPOSES IN FUTURE. 0070895443-1

I, Urvashi, R/O H.NO.– 64/B ,Shyam Colony, Ballabgarh, faridabad-121004 , hereby declares that my father's name was incorrect in my 10th marksheet as "Yogesh Goyal" as his correct name is "Yogesh Goel" . For all purposes. 0040720980-1

I, Zaheer Ahmad S/o Abdul Zabbar R/o G-12/229-A sangam vihar new delhi-110080 have changed my name to Zaheer Ahmed for all future purposes 0070895436-1

I,ABU ZAID ABU OBAIDA,S/O ABU OBAIDA R/O.H.NO.D-241/B,FIRST-FLOOR,ABUL FAZAL ENCLAVE-1,JAMIA NAGAR,SOUTH DELHI,DELHI-110025.INFORM THAT GIVEN NAME-ABU ZAID,FOR ALL PURPOSE 0040721161-3

I,Hitherto known as Kishan Kumar,S/o Bhagwat Ral,R/o-E-150 Gali.No.3,West Vinod Nagar,Delhi-110092,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Satish Kumar. 0040721171-9

I Lalit Sukheja S/o Sh. Kanwarbhan Sukheja R/o 189-190, 1st Floor, Pocket-6, Near Prince Public School, Sector-24, Rohini, North West Delhi, Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Lalit Arora for all purposes. 0040721100-3

I NEEMRAJ S/O BALDEV R/O VILLAGE RAIPUR KHADAR SECTOR-126 NOIDA G.B.NAGAR U.P. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NEEMRAJ BHATT FOR ALL THE FUTURE PURPOSES. 0070895441-1

I NUSRAT AHMED and NUSRAT BI, W/o Jamal Ahmed, R/o 3807, Gali Magzine Wali Chooriwalan Ajmeri Gate, Delhi-110006, have changed my name to NUSRAT BEGUM. 0040721142-1

I Bharti Bansal W/o Rana Raj Singh Bansal Residence F-55-B. Gali No.12, Mangal Bazar, Laxmi Nagar,Delhi-110092, my name in my Husband Office Pension A/c No.KK-20920 wrongly mentioned as Bharti Devi. But correct name is Bharti Bansal for all future purposes. 0040721154-1

I DEEKSHA D/o RAJ KUMAR, W/o TUSHAR MEHTA R/o B-1645, SHASTRI NAGAR, DELHI-110052, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DEEKSHA KOLI, FOR ALL PURPOSES IN FUTURE. 0070895448-1

I Deep Shikha D/o Sh. Ravinder Singh R/o Village Ghuskani, Teh & Distt- Bhiwani, Haryana-127031 have changed my name to Deepshikha Singh for all purposes. 0040721100-1

I Dheeraj S/o Sh. Ram Kumar R/o H.No.2929, Gali No.69, 2nd 60 Feet Road, Molarband Extn., Badarpur, South Delhi, Delhi-110044 have changed my name to Dheeraj Sharma for all purposes. 0040721100-4

I, Madhu Bala R/O 6A/40, WEA, Karol Bagh, New Delhi. Have Changed My Name Madhu Bala To Madhu Bala Khanna For All Future Purpose. 0040721170-1

I, Monica Dua w/o Vikram Mahajan r/o A-12, First Floor, Kirti Nagar, Delhi-110015 have changed my name to MONIKA DUA 0040721116-1

I, Anoop Seth S/o Saty Prakash Seth R/o B-9/435-36, Sector-3, Rohini, Delhi-110085 have changed my name from Anoop Seth to Anup Seth 0040721158-2

I, Gauri Kakkar alias Gauri Khanduja W/o Shri Nitin Khanduja R/o R-2/5, Raj nagar, Sec-2, Ghaziabad, inform that before marriage my Name was Gauri Kakkar, after my marriage my name is Gauri Khanduja for all future Purposes. 0070895432-1

I, Geeta w/o Gulshan Goswami r/o 13/73-74, Second Floor, Subhash Nagar, Delhi-110027 have changed my name to GEETA GOSWAMI 0040721116-3

I, Gulshan s/o Harcharan Das Goswami r/o 13/73-74, Second Floor, Subhash Nagar, Delhi-110027 have changed my name to GULSHAN GOSWAMI 0040721116-2

I, Jitender Garg S/o Ram kishan Gupta R/o- J-13 DLF, Sector-10 faridabad, have changed my name to Jitender Kumar 0040721101-2

I, Jude Camillus Gonsalvez S/o Francis Gonsalvez, R/o 46D, DG-2,Vikas Puri,Delhi-110018 declare that Jude Camillus Gonsalvez and Jude C Gonsalvez both are my names and both are the same person. 0040721135-1

I, Kashish Mishra D/o Shri Brijesh Mishra R/o Village Hoshiyapur, Sector-51, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my name from Km. Madhvi Mishra to Kashish Mishra, in my LIC Policy number-283736769 my was written as Km. Madhvi Mishra both are one and same person. I will be known as Kashish Mishra in future 0040721156-1

I, Manisi Bhaskar Rao S/o Sh. M. Tataya, R/o WZ-10C, Possangipur, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058 & Father of Manisi Kartik do hereby solemnly affirm & declare that my son's Name is Manisi Kartik instead of M. Karatike for all future purposes. 0040721108-1

I,Anil Kumar Sharma,S/O-Shri Hazari Lal Sharma,R/O-C-80,2nd Floor,Ashok Vihar, Phase-1,Delhi-110052,have changed my name to Anil Sharma for all Purposes. 0040721188-1

I,MANJALI,D/O.YASHPAL SHARMA, H.NO.1901-B, GALI.NO-19,GOVIND PURI EXTENSION KALKAJI,SOUTH-DELHI 110019,changed my name to MANJALI SHARMA,for all,future purposes. 0040721161-4

I,REKHA DEVI, W/O. SANDEEP KUMAR, ADD-VILLAGE KHERA KHURAMPUR(8) ,GURGAON HARYANA-122506,changed my name to REKHA YADAV, for all future purposes. 0040721192-9

I,Sunita Dalsingar Prajapati, M/o-No.15740989H,Sigmn Prajapati Anurag Dalsingar, R/o-Kunjniwas Compound, Sahkar Road,Vill-Jogeshwari(West),Teh-Andheri, Dist-Mumbai,have changed my name fm Sunita to Sunita Dalsingar Prajapati,for all the future purpose. Vide affidavit before public notary, Maharashtra, Dated-15-Mar-2024. 0040721176-11

मैं, प्रेमलता वर्मा, पत्नी स्व. हरि श्याम वर्मा तथा पुत्री स्व. युगल किशोर श्रीवास्तव, पता एमएम 307, सेक्टर डी, अलीगंज, लखनऊ उ.प्र. 206024 की निवासी हूं। मैं प्रेमलता वर्मा और आशा वर्मा दोनों ही नाम से जानी और पहचानी जाती हूँ। 50239474

LOST & FOUND

I,Anil Garg,S/o-Sugan Chand Garg,R/o-A-103,Rosewood Apartments,Mayur Vihar Phase-1 Extn, Delhi-110091,have lost Property documents(Possession Letter,Allotment Letter,of above address.Finder contact.Mobile no.-8588857255. 0040721188-4

I, LATA D/o Rishal Singh, 791/7, Govindpuri, Kalkaji, New Delhi-19 have lost Special Power of Attorney, Will, Affidavit, Agreement to Sell and all other relevant documents of Plot No.M-8, Nangla Gujran, Faridabad, Khasra No.8/3, Haryana. Founder please contact 9205950705 0040721107-1

Lost my original possession slip of property No.37B (Red) MIG Flats, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027. Finder may contact Nisha Verma/ Bhupinder Kaur.#9810567301. 0040721161-10

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of general public that my client **Mr. Rajat Kumar Gupta.** Son of Late Sushil Kumar Gupta is proposing to purchase a plot vide No. AK-1/179-A. Indirapuram, Ghaziabad from Mr. Kunal Sharma son of Mr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma Prop. of M/s United Builders R/o 33/8 Shakti Nagar, Delhi., who has got the right on the basis of registered gift deed and by virtue of law of inheritance after the death of his father. There is no sucession certificate is on record, The Agreement to Sell and Will of previous owner has also been misplaced in respect of Plot No. SK-IV/476 (now AK- 1/179-A), Indirapuram, Ghaziabad. Our client has also lodged a NCR on 20.03.2024 for the same.

Any person having any right, interest or claim in respect of the said property are hereby required to give notice of the same to the undersigned on below mentioned address together with copies of all documents on the basis of which claims are made, failing which any such right, title, interest, or claim, if any, will be deemed to have been waived within 21 days and not binding on our Client.

Sd/-
C.K. Jha (Advocate)
Chamber No. E-524,
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please take notice that my client Shri Daya Shankar Sharma, S/o Shri D.D. Sharma, R/o C-168/A, Gali No.11, C-Block, Clock Tower, Hari Nagar, New Delhi-110064, has disowned his son Navin Sharma and his wife Kamal Sharma @ Kamal Kashyap @ Pooja Sharma, from all his moveable and immoveable properties and also severed all his relations with them, if any body deals with said Shri Navin Sharma and his wife Kamal Sharma @ Kamal Kashyap @ Pooja Sharma, in any manner whatsoever, shall do so at his/her/their own risk and my client shall not be responsible of any acts and deeds of the abovesaid persons.

HIMANSHU (ADVOCATE) DELHI HIGH COURT ENROLLEMENT NO (D/715/2021) MOBILE 9873343801

सार्वजनिक सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरे मुव्वकिल श्रीमती राम सती पत्नी स्व. राकेश, डब्ल्यू. जेड. 14, नजदीक शिव नगर, पोसंगीपुर, जनकपुरी, वेस्ट दिल्ली-110058 ने अपने पुत्र पारस पुत्र स्व. राकेश निवासी डब्ल्यू.जेड. 14, नजदीक शिव नगर, पोसंगीपुर, जनकपुरी, वेस्ट दिल्ली-110058 को अपनी समस्त चल-अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल कर दिया है और उसके साथ अपना हर प्रकार का रिश्ता-सम्बंध समाप्त कर दिया है, क्योंकि पारस मेरे मुव्वकिल के कहने-सुनने में नहीं है। यदि कोई व्यक्ति / युवती / संस्था / कम्पनी या कोई अन्य पारस के साथ कोई लेन-देन करता है या कोई संबंध रखता है तो मेरे मुव्वकिल / राम सती की इसमें कोई जिम्मेदारी या जवाबदेही नहीं होगी।

RAJIV KUMAR (ADV.) Enrol No. D/326/2015
Ch. No. 310, Lawyers Chamber Sector-10
Dwarka Court Complex New Delhi-110075

PUBLIC NOTICE

GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORM THAT MY CLIENT. **SH. SUSHIL MALHOTRA** S/O SATPAL MALHOTRA R/O 3061/224, CHANDER NAGAR TRI NAGAR, ONKAR NAGAR, NORTH WEST DELHI-110035 HAS DISOWNED AND DEBARRED HIS SON NAMELY **ANSH MALHOTRA** FROM ALL HIS MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY DUE TO THEIR ILL HABITS AND BEHAVIOUR. IF ANY PERSON SHALL DEAL IN FUTURE WITH THEM THEN SHALL BE AT ITS OWN RISKS. MY CLIENT SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAME.

Sd/-
PIYUSH KATYAL
Advocate
Enrol. No. D/5509/21
OFF: 16/32, GEETA COLONY
DELHI-110031

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all concerned that our client Smt. Chinta Devi W/o Sh. Mani Ram Vishkarma and Sh. Mani Ram Both R/o House no. 816/26, gali no. 09, khasra no. 65, block-D, near Shiv Mandir, Mukundpur, Delhi-110042 is disowning their son Sh. Kishan Kumar Vishkarma S/o Sh. Mani Ram Vishkarma and Smt. Neelam W/o Sh. Kishan Kumar Vishkarma from all their movable & immovable properties because of their ill deals and conduct. Our clients have ouster them from her property and life by way of present publication as at this stage of life our clients want to live peacefully; therefore, our clients are severing all her relationships with their aforesaid sons and daughter-in-law. If anybody is dealing with them, they shall be doing it at their own risk, liability and consequences, and our clients shall not be liable for their act or omission.

Sd/-
Roop Narain (ADVOCATE)
Ch. 320, Civil Side, Tis hazari Courts Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby inform to general public that my client Smt. Rita Lawrence W/o Late Mukesh Lawrence, R/o H.No. 36/2, Christian colony, Patel Chest, Delhi University, North Delhi, Delhi-110007, have debarred/disinherited her son Namely Michael Lawrence and his wife Mrs. Kamiya Lawrence, due to their undesirable acts and behaviors and they shall hereinafter have no right, title and interest in the assets and estate i.e. movable and immovable properties of my client. My client Smt. Rita Lawrence have no concern with her son Namely Michael Lawrence and his wife Mrs. Kamiya Lawrence, whatsoever and they shall not be responsible for any of their acts, deeds, omissions and misconduct. If any person deals with them in any manner whatsoever, then they will be doing that at their own risk, responsibility, cost and consequences.

Sd/-
PRITHU (Advocate)
Ch.No.174-175 w.wing
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby notified that my client Smt. Ram Dulari, W/o. Late Sh. Bhagwandeen, R/o A-1027, Gali No.14, Shyam Colony, Phase-2, Budh Vihar, Shani Bazaar Road, Budh Vihar, Distt. North-West Delhi, Delhi-110086, have disinherited and disowned her son and daughter-in-law namely Sh. Hari Shankar Verma and Smt. Rekha Verma, from all of her moveable and immoveable properties as well as from the line of succession and have broken all ties with her son and her daughter-in-law. My client is neither responsible for any liabilities nor responsible for any Acts, Deeds or things done by her said son and daughter-in-law or any other person (s) dealing with him or her shall be dealing so at his on risks, costs and consequences.

Sd/-
SONU KIRAR (Advocate)
Bar Room NO.3 Civil wing,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public that my clients (1) Bibishan Rai S/o Late Narsing Rai & (2) **Anju Devi** W/o Sh. Bibishan Rai, both are R/o Plot at Kh. No. 606/2, Shyam Vihar Phase 1, Block-Z, Najafgarh, New Delhi - 110043 are hereby disowning and debarring their elder son **Ankit Kumar Rai,** daughter-in-law **Himanshi Singh** and their granddaughter **Baby Yakshita** from all their movable and immovable properties and severed all their relations with them as they are arrogant & hostile as well as disobedient, and are not faithful/Trustworthy towards us. My clients shall not be responsible in future for any acts and deeds of their disowned elder son & daughter-in-law, and shall also not be responsible for any civil or criminal liability/action arising out of the said act, deed and deal whatsoever.

Sd/-
VISHAL RATHORE (Advocate)
Enrol. No. D/863/2021
H. No. 112, Deepak Vihar,
Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, for and on behalf of my client namely SHRI SURESH KUMAR GUPTA S/O LATE SHRI NET RAM R/O B-6/19, MODEL TOWN-I, DELHI-110009, hereby declare that he is the sole and absolute owner of entire Property No.B-6/19, Area 50 Sq. Yds., Model Town, Delhi-110009, vide Relinquishment Deed Dt.15.2.2023, duly Regd. as Document No.2528, in Addl. book No.I, Volume No.11526, on pages 111 to 117, Regd. on 17.2.2023, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, S.D. No.VI-A, Delhi, and there is not any claimant regarding the said property, and he has full right and power to hold, use, enjoy, sell, mortgage the same, in any manner. If anybody has any right, title, interest, claim in the said property then please contact at 9891234252 or at dpsassociates94@gmail.com within 15 days from the publication of this Public Notice.

Devendra Pal Singh
Advocate Enrol. No.D/2621/06
office No.G-4, Balaji Plaza, Plot No. 8, L.S.C., Gujranwalatown, Part-I, Delhi-110009. Ph. No.9891234252

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the general public information that my client MEHARBAN SINGH S/O LATE SH. DHYAN SINGH R/O H. NO. 17 E-407, KONARK ENCLAVE, SECTOR-17, NEAR VASUNDHARA POST OFFICE, VASUNDHARA, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201012, has debarred, disown and break down all the relationship from his son namely NITIN RAWAT, from all his movable and immovable properties either self acquired or ancestral situated all over India due to theirs misconduct, disobedience and misbehavior attitude. My client will not be responsible in future for his and her acts or deeds, which was done by them.

Sd/-
NARENDER KUMAR
ADVOCATE
Ch.No. 568, PATIALA HOUSE COURT, NEW DELHI-01

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SENSEX: 72,641.19 ▲ 539.50 (0.75%) **NIFTY:** 22,011.95 ▲ 172.85 (0.79%) **NIKKEI:** 40,815.66 ▲ 812.06 **HANG SENG:** 16,863.10 ▲ 320.03 **FTSE:** 7,887.48 ▲ 150.10 **DAX:** 18,143.05 ▲ 127.92

International market data till 1900 IST

Accenture lowers FY24 sales forecast as clients cut spends

SAMEER RANJAN BAKSHI
BENGALURU, MARCH 21

Accenture's performance is regarded as a benchmark for the Indian IT industry. *Reuters*

ACCENTURE THURSDAY lowered its revenue forecast for fiscal 2024, with economic uncertainty prompting its clients to cut spending on its consulting services.

The IT services provider's revised outlook expects full-year revenue growth to be in the range of 1% to 3%, down from its earlier projection of 2% to 5%.

After the announcement, the company's shares fell by around 5% in pre-market trading on the New York Stock Exchange. The American Depository Receipt (ADR) shares of IT majors Infosys and Wipro were also trading up to 4% lower post the announcement.

Accenture has also forecast third-quarter revenue in the range of $16.25 billion to $16.85 billion, below an estimate of $17.01 billion, according to London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) data. Revenue for its communications, media & technology segment fell 8% year-on-year.

Accenture's performance is widely regarded as a benchmark for the Indian IT industry, providing a peek into the expected outcome for domestic companies.

The January-March quarter earnings season commences on April 12, with bellwether Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) expected to report its earnings.

Accenture saw its second-quarter revenue at $15.8 billion. New bookings, a key indicator of future revenue, fell 2% to $21.6 billion. Operating margin came in at 13%, compared with 12.3% in the second quarter of FY24. The Dublin-headquartered company follows a September-August financial year.

The IT major reported revenue of $15.80 billion, slightly lower than analysts' estimate of $15.84 billion in Q2. It is set to book $450 million in severance-related costs this fiscal after recording $1.1 billion the previous year, when it said it would cut around 19,000 jobs, or 2.5% of its workforce. **FE**

Before India's reversal of laptop licencing rules, pushback from US

ADITYA KALRA, DAVID LAWDER & SHIVANGI ACHARYA
NEW DELHI, WASHINGTON, MARCH 21

A file pic of USTR Katherine Tai with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. In a meeting between the two on Aug 26, Tai 'raised concerns' on the laptop policy. *File*

INDIA REVERSED a laptop licensing policy after behind-the-scenes lobbying by US officials, who however remain concerned about New Delhi's compliance with WTO obligations and new rules it may issue, according to US trade officials and government emails seen by Reuters.

In August, India imposed rules requiring firms to obtain licences for all shipments of imported laptops, tablets, personal computers and servers, raising fears that the process could slow down sales. But New Delhi rolled back the policy within weeks, saying it will only monitor the imports and decide on next steps a year later.

The US government emails — obtained under a US open records request — underline the level of alarm the curbs caused in Washington, and how the US scored a rare lobbying win by persuading PM Narendra Modi's government to reverse policy.

US officials have often been concerned about India's sudden policy changes which they say create an uncertain business environment. India maintains it announces policies in the interest of all stakeholders and encourages foreign investments, even though it often promotes local players over foreign ones.

Some of the language in the documents was blunt. US officials were upset that India's changes to laptop imports came "out of the blue" and were "incredibly problematic" for the business climate and $500 million worth of annual US exports, the documents and emails showed.

Research firm Counterpoint estimates India's laptop and personal computer market to be worth $8 billion annually.

US Trade Representative Katherine Tai met Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi on August 26, soon after the policy was announced. Although the USTR's public readout said Tai "raised concerns" about the policy, she privately told Goyal during that the US wanted India to "rescind the requirement", a USTR briefing paper showed.

India's "surprise" announcement "prompts U.S. and other firms to think twice about doing business in India", stated the "talking points" of her briefing paper.

Around the same time, a US diplomat for trade in New Delhi, Travis Coberly, told his USTR colleagues that Indian officials had conceded the sudden rollout of the laptop licensing policy was a mistake. India's IT ministry "understands they (India) screwed up. They admitted as much. American companies here have been hammering them about this," he wrote.

Brendan Lynch, acting Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, said the USTR was satisfied that the current monitoring system so far had a minimal impact on trade but it was still closely tracking India's scrutiny of imported devices.

Goyal's Commerce Ministry said Tai "did raise some concerns" during their August meeting and New Delhi had "conveyed India's security concerns". It did not elaborate on why it reversed its decision or on the US emails. Three Indian officials said New Delhi did not reverse its policy under any US pressure and took the call as it realised local manufacturing of laptops and tablets wasn't significant at this stage.

The US State Department too expressed concerns about the policy. "US firms perceived the move as highly protectionist..." State Department official Timothy Wiley wrote in an email to USTR colleagues containing "talking points". **REUTERS**

US sues Apple, accuses it of monopolising smartphone mkt

DAVID MCCABE & TRIPP MICKLE
WASHINGTON, MARCH 21

US govt argued that Apple prevented other firms from offering apps that compete with Apple products. *NYT*

THE JUSTICE Department and 16 state attorneys general filed an antitrust lawsuit against Apple on Thursday, the US government's most significant challenge to the reach and influence of the company that has put iPhones in the hands of over a billion people.

The government argued that Apple violated antitrust laws by preventing other companies from offering applications that compete with Apple products such as its digital wallets, which could diminish the value of the iPhone. Apple's policies hurt consumers and smaller companies that compete with some of Apple's services, according to excerpts from the lawsuit.

"Each step in Apple's course of conduct built and reinforced the moat around its smartphone monopoly," the government said in the lawsuit.

The lawsuit caps years of regulatory scrutiny of Apple's wildly popular suite of devices and services which have fueled its growth into a nearly $2.75-trillion public company that was for years the most valuable on the planet. It takes direct aim at the iPhone, Apple's most popular device and most powerful business, and attacks the way the company has turned the billions of smartphones it has sold since 2007 into the centerpiece of its empire.

By tightly controlling the user experience on iPhones and other devices, Apple has created what critics call an uneven playing field, where it grants its own products and services access to core features that it denies rivals. Over the years, it has limited finance companies' access to the phone's payment chip and Bluetooth trackers from tapping into its location-service feature. It's also easier for users to connect Apple products, like smartwatches and laptops, to the iPhone than to those made by other manufacturers.

The company says this makes its iPhones more secure than other smartphones. But app developers and rival device-makers say Apple uses its power to crush competition.

"This lawsuit threatens who we are and the principles that set Apple products apart in fiercely competitive markets," an Apple spokesperson said. "It would also set a dangerous precedent, empowering government to take a heavy hand in designing people's technology."

The lawsuit asks the court to stop Apple from engaging in practices including blocking cloud-streaming apps, undermining messaging across operating systems and preventing creation of digital wallet alternatives. It also asks for Apple to pay an unspecified financial penalty.

It's unclear what implications the suit — likely to drag out years before any resolution — would have for consumers. **NYT**

India composite PMI rises to 8-month high in March

New Delhi: The HSBC Flash India composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to an eight-month high of 61.3 in March from 60.6 in February, amid buoyant demand conditions, which fuelled growth and accelerated aggregate sales, S&P Global said Thursday.

"Led by the strongest manufacturing output in nearly three-and-a-half years, the composite output index rose quickly. New orders rose at a faster pace than in the previous month, and within that both domestic and export orders showed improved vigour," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Service providers noted a sharp increase in business activity that was broadly similar to February, while manufacturers recorded the strongest upturn in production since October 2020, S&P Global said. "According to survey participants, efficiency gains and robust consumer appetite, alongside investment in technology and favourable market conditions, spurred sales," it said. **FE**

A busier summer for Indian airlines

Indian airlines will operate a total of 24,275 weekly domestic flights during the summer schedule starting from March 31, a nearly 6% increase compared with the year-ago period.

The 2024 summer schedule stretches from Mar 31 to Oct 26

The number of scheduled weekly departures is 2.30% higher than the figure for the winter schedule that ends March 30,

Indian carriers will connect 37 countries, including the US, the UK, Uzbekistan, Maldives, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The international flights will be operated from 27 domestic airports.

Indian carriers will operate 1,922 weekly international flights, a rise of 5.1% from the 2023 summer schedule. In comparison with the winter schedule, the increase is 1.6%

Airline	Flights	% change
IndiGo	13,050	13.82% ▲
Air India	2,278	4.59% ▲
Vistara	2,324	25.22% ▲
Akasa Air	903	14.30% ▲
SpiceJet	1,657	22.28% ▼

Source: Aviation regulator DGCA

Sebi asks MFs to stop investing in overseas ETFs

Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has directed Indian asset management companies (AMCs) to stop accepting inflows into funds that invest in overseas exchange-traded funds (ETFs) from April 1.

Sebi's step was taken in anticipation that the $1 billion (around ₹8,300 crore as of March 21, 2024) limit for the overall industry might have been breached. Industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India has already informed fund houses about halting ETF investments following a Sebi directive.

The upper limit available to MFs to invest in overseas securities is $7 billion. Since this limit was reached in January 2022, Sebi had asked fund houses to stop investing overseas. The limit to invest in overseas ETFs is $1 billion which is about to be breached, said a mutual fund industry source. An exchange-traded fund is a basket of securities that trades on an exchange just like a stock does. **ENS**

Sebi guidelines out for beta T+0 settlements

New Delhi: Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Thursday put in place a framework to introduce the beta version of the same-day (T+0) trade settlement cycle on an optional basis.

To begin with, this option will be available for a limited set of 25 scrips and with a limited number of brokers.

The framework will come into force from March 28, Sebi said in a circular. **PTI**

Express awards celebrating women achievers announced

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

THE WINNERS of the third edition of the Express Awards for Women Entrepreneurs (or ExpressAWE) — instituted by *Financial Express* as a joint initiative with FICCI-FLO — were announced on Wednesday. The awards aim to recognise women who have carved out a niche in select domains. The following is the complete list of winners:

EXPRESS AWE WINNERS

Vineeta Singh
Fashion & Lifestyle

Deepika Padukone
Social Impact - Mental Health

Meher Pudumjee
Sustainability

Gazal Alagh
E-commerce

Jyotsna Suri
Travel & Hospitality

Laila Tyabji
Social Impact – Crafts

Dr Indu Shahani
Education & Skill Development

Meena Ganesh
Health & Wellness

Zoya Akhtar & Reema Kagti
Media & Entertainment

Renuka Ramnath
Finance & Venture Capital

Avarna Jain
Promising FICCI Flo Entrepreneur

Ananya Birla
Newsmaker of the year

Roshini Nadar Malhotra
Legacy Entrepreneur

Swati Piramal
Lifetime Achievement

INDUSWE WINNERS

Ankur Dahiya
Company: Rozana Rural

Rhea Thahryamal
Company: Sanskar School

M&M inks agreement with Adani Total on EV charging network

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 21

The companies said the pact is aimed at accelerating EV adoption in the country. *File*

IN A move that could accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) in India, Mahindra & Mahindra has announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Adani Total Energies E-Mobility Ltd (ATEL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Total Gas Limited, to set up EV charging stations across the country.

"The memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Mahindra and ATEL sets a roadmap for the creation of an expansive EV charging infrastructure across the country," said a statement from M&M.

The partnership will also entail rolling out e-mobility solutions to provide seamless access to the charging network for the customers covering discovery, availability, navigation, and transactions. "With this association, the XUV400 customers will now have access to more than 1100 chargers on the Bluesense+ App, significantly enhancing the convenience and reach of electric vehicle charging for Mahindra EV owners," it said.

Veejay Nakra, President - Automotive Division, M&M, said: "This alliance is a cornerstone in enhancing the EV charging infrastructure, ensuring our customers enjoy seamless access to charging network and digital integration for an unparalleled EV experience."

"This is one more step towards expanding the footprint of Adani Total Gas Ltd in the EV space. The collaboration with M&M for the charging infrastructure will bolster the confidence of customers to embrace EV technology as part of the energy transition," said Suresh P Manglani, Executive Director & CEO of Adani Total Gas Ltd.

SP Group in talks for ₹20,000-cr fundraise

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 21

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI Group (SP Group) is in talks with a host of firms, including the Power Finance Corporation, to refinance or raise about ₹20,000 crore.

Discussions are also on with global alternative investment firms Davidson Kempner Capital Management and Cerberus Capital Management, sources said. The group will formally launch the fundraising initiative in seven to10 days as the debt repayments are due in May.

SP Group had taken the debt in 2021 by pledging its stake in Tata Sons, the investment holding company of business conglomerate Tata Group. Sterling Investment Corporation (SICPL), SP Group's investment vehicle, holds a 9.1% stake in Tata Sons.

The debt, raised through issuance of bonds, had a repayment tenure of a little over three years. The funds were primarily raised from US hedge fund Farallon Capital and Ares.

In June, Goswami Infratech, a promoter entity of SP Group, secured ₹14,300 crore through non-convertible debentures to a group of global investors, including Varde Partners, Canyon Capital and Ares SSG.

Separately, Sterling and Wilson, SP Group's engineering, procurement and construction company, is also in talks with a group of strategic investors to raise ₹700 crore through a stake sale in its data centre business. It is planning to carve out the data centre business into a new entity.

Reliance refuses to accept Sovcomflot oil shipments

New Delhi: Reliance Industries, operator of the world's biggest refining complex, will not buy Russian oil loaded on tankers operated by shipper Sovcomflot after recent US sanctions, two sources said.

The development adds to oil export problems for Russia as its oil firms may face difficulties finding ships to sell surplus oil after Ukrainian attacks on refineries.

In February, the US imposed sanctions on Sovcomflot and 14 crude tankers involved in transporting Russian oil. Reliance, a large buyer of Russian Urals oil, has requested that the new supplies not be shipped by Sovcomflot-operated tankers, said the sources.

Meanwhile, more Indian refiners plan to shun the use of Sovcomflot vessels, which may weigh on India's import of Russian oil and leave Russia with fewer outlets to place its flagship product, sources said. **REUTERS**

BoE holds key rate, indicates cuts ahead

REUTERS
LONDON, MARCH 21

BRITAIN'S ECONOMY is "moving in the right direction" for the Bank of England to start cutting interest rates, Governor Andrew Bailey said Thursday. The BoE's interest rate-setters voted 8-1 to keep borrowing costs at their 16-year high of 5.25% as the two officials who had previously called for higher rates changed their stance.

Bailey said there had been "further encouraging signs that inflation is coming down" but he also said the BoE needed more certainty that price pressures in the economy were fully under control. "We're not yet at the point where we can cut interest rates, but things are moving in the right direction," Bailey said.

The BoE decision follows the US Federal Reserve's announcement on Wednesday that it remained on track for three interest rate cuts this year which sparked a global rally in stock markets. The European Central Bank has tried to cool talk about a run of rate cuts for the euro zone.

VW to make EV foray in India with ID.4 rollout in Oct-Dec

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR
JAIPUR, MARCH 21

Volkswagen executives at the event in Jaipur, Thursday

GERMAN CAR giant Volkswagen will introduce its premium all-electric car ID.4 in the December quarter of 2024 to mark its entry into the burgeoning electric vehicle space in India.

The ID.4, VW's largest selling electric model, will be fully imported into the country and could be priced in the range of ₹40-50 lakh, competing against the newly launched BYD Seal.

Skoda's yet-to-be-launched Envaq, Hyundai Ioniq 5 and Kia EV6 will be the other competition for the ID.4. A Volkswagen official said the model will be priced competitively in its segment.

Ashish Gupta, brand director, Volkswagen India, said, "This launch must be seen as the first steps in our steps towards electrification for the future. We have been talking about it for a long time but this is the proof that we are committed towards transforming ourselves as a brand in line for electrification."

At the global level, last year Volkswagen sold 394,000 EVs with a growth of 21%, achieving a penetration of 8% in the worldwide volume of 4.87 million units. In Germany, about 30,000 ID.4 models were delivered, while the US saw deliveries of 38,000 units of the car.

Volkswagen clocked a total volume of 43,700 units in 2023, which was a growth of 8% over 2022 and the best in six years. It is targeting a growth of 15% in volumes in 2024 to little over 50,000 units, which would still be short of its all-time peak of 72,000 units clocked in 2012. India's share in VW's global sales as of 2023 stood at 0.87%.

Over half of the 8% growth in volumes last year came from new areas. "We still remain largely an urban brand but last year 30-35% came from Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns. The endeavour is to go into new urban centres," Gupta said. **FE**

(The writer was in Jaipur at the invitation of Volkswagen)

भारतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड
Container Corporation of India Ltd.
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) (A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

NOTICE INVITING E- TENDER

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

Tender No.	CON/A-II/Mumbai Cluster/Civil-AMC/Mihan/2024
Name of Work	Zonal Civil Maintenance and Minor Works Contract for MMLP MIHAN, ICD Aurangabad and CONCOR Flats at Aurangabad & CONCOR House at Nagpur in Mumbai Cluster, Area-II.
Estimated Cost	₹ 347.03 Lakhs inclusive all taxes
Completion Period	24 Months
Earnest Money Deposit	₹ 3,73,512/- (through e-payment)
Cost of Tender Document	Nil
Tender Processing Fee (Non-refundable)	₹ 3,540/- (inclusive all taxes & duties through e-payment)
Date of Sale of Tender (online)	22.03.2024 (11:00 hrs.) to 12.04.2024 (upto 17:00 hrs.)
Date & Time of submission of Tender.	15.04.2024 upto 17:00 hrs.
Date & Time of Opening of Tender	16.04.2024 at 15:30 hrs.

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

Group General Manager (P&S)/A-II | Phone No.: 011- 41222500

NMDC Steel Limited
Nagarnar, Bastar Chhattisgarh - 494001
(CIN) - U27310CT2015GOI001618

CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT

Tender Enquiry No: HO(Contracts)/NSL/ZLD-BPP/2023/971/199 dated 22.03.2024

MSTC Event Ref. No: **NMDC/HO/61/23-24/ET/562** Estimated cost including GST is **Rs 23.18 Crore**

Bids are invited for domestic prospective bidders for the work of **"Installation of Zero Liquid Discharge Plant for By Product Plant & Effluent Treatment Plant for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagarnar near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State"** (PACKAGE NO-03 RPN 01).

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and /or downloaded from **22.03.2024** (Start Date) to **23.04.2024** (End Date) from following website links;

1. NMDC website - **https://nmdcportals.nmdc.co.in/nmdctender/**
2. Central Public Procurement portal - **https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app** and search tender through tender enquiry number
3. MSTC portal - **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/buyer_login.jsp** and search NMDC Tender Event No. **NMDC/HO/61/23-24/ET/562**

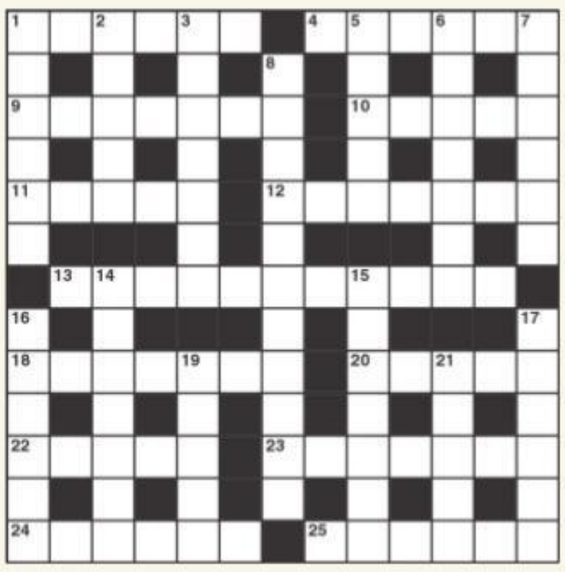
For further help refer to 'vendor guide' given in MSTC website. The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTC Limited / e-procurement websites. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT. The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website /CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted :

1. General Manager (Project, Contracts & Steel), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Tel No. +91-040-23533536, email: **contracts@nmdc.co.in**
2. Sr. General Manager I/c (NMDC Project), MECON Limited, Ranchi, Fax No. +91-651-2482214, Tel.No.+91-06512483508, email: **projnmdc@meconlimited.co.in**

For and on behalf of **NMDC Steel Ltd**
Executive Director (Works)

CROSSWORD 5319



ACROSS

1 Approaching resort of St Malo (6)
4 Parental couple taken round an international waterway (6)
9 Smart effort surrounds a city (7)
10 Chopper blade going to and fro (5)
11 People count on them to send them to sleep (5)
12 An empty form of recompense (7)
13 It is unbeatable at the card table (3, 2, 6)
18 It's a heap of use to gardeners (7)
20 Gymnastic animal (5)
22 Study French (5)
23 Return journeys to the Australian bush? (7)
24 It comes to the fore in the footwear industry (6)
25 What bleach will do when it is brought in (6)

DOWN

1 A way to gain admission (6)
2 Complex network holds one source of oil (5)
3 A set preliminary (7)
5 Right to go in a light dress (5)
6 New part ordered in Belgium (7)
7 Lend a certain sparkle (6)
8 Contest the capitalistic thesis (11)
14 Put income down or work it out electronically (7)
15 Remove all traces (7)
16 A sound characteristic of many foreigners (6)
17 An unpopular American in a jacket (6)
19 Work-time entertainment (5)
21 Cook a sort of stew (5)

Solutions Crossword 5318 Across: 1 Optical, 5 Capri, 8 Silent protest, 9 Tithe, 10 Evening, 11 Scouts, 12 Tidier, 15 Used car, 17 Psalm, 19 Prepossessing, 20 Rifle, 21 Oceanic **Down:** 1 Onset, 2 Talk to oneself, 3 Conceit, 4 Lapped, 5 Clove, 6 Precipitation, 7 Integer, 11 Scupper, 13 Impasse, 14 Fresco, 16 Clone, 18 Magic

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson

MARVIN by Tom Armstrong

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
There is bound to be an almighty row over finances, although if you're lucky, it will be delayed until next week by which time you'll have had a chance to put matters right. Overspending and unrealistic ambitions may be to blame but, then, unless you think big, you'll never get anywhere.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
It's good to stick to your principles but, as you know, you can be a little too obstinate. If recent events haven't taught you the value of flexibility and compromise, nothing will. At home, go for total change. The best advice comes from those in the know, so ask.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You may still be adjusting to the fact that, after a number of years, you are no longer the centre of attention. In many ways this change reflects a shift in your self-image rather than any real alteration in your circumstances. That will make it much easier to cope with.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Your famous Cancerian reserve stems not so much from a lack of feeling as from a failure to express those very considerable emotions that inhabit your unconscious. Try to be more direct in future. Because, if you're not, other people will be. That's for sure.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Venus, Mercury and Neptune, those three sensational planets, are still occupying significant positions. With any luck, the pressure and uncertainty which they have brought into your life should now be in their final stages.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
The Sun is decisively altering its relationship to Mercury, your ruling planet, but in many respects the heat may still be on. In particular, take into account just how desperate an acquaintance or business partner is to hear from you: sit down and listen.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
The week may be drawing to a close but there are indications of a last-minute panic at work, prompted by events for which you may or may not be responsible. You'll be required to deal with the consequences with your usual charm.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
Often, it's surprisingly difficult to cope with good fortune, if only because of the inevitable adjustments to a new routine which must follow. Don't let such considerations blind you to your current opportunities, or to an offer made by a relation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
It cannot be stressed too highly that Mercury, situated as it is in a realistic sector of your solar chart, is providing you with protection and guarantees that you'd be a fool to ignore. All areas of your life may benefit. And I honestly believe that they will.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Your current planetary patterns are bound to exacerbate certain irritations, yet it's at such times that you are driven to implement improvements in your circumstances and relationships that would otherwise inevitably be delayed indefinitely.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
After many ups and downs, you may now look forward to a period in which you'll be able to appreciate past achievements in an atmosphere of calm rather than one of strife and antagonism. On the other hand, if you accept that anything new is probably better than the life you're leaving behind, you'll get on so much better.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
You can afford to be pleased with all the prizes and rewards you've won in the past and, if you are fair to yourself, you must admit that these are considerable. There's every reason to rest on your laurels, and none to join in the problems created by partners.

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.

Just because a man lacks the use of his __ doesn't mean he lacks __. - Stevie Wonder (4,,6)

BSEEO

FNIIS

EETYNS

AILNVY

SOLUTION: OBESE, FINIS, TEENSY, VAINLY
Answer: Just because a man lacks the use of his **eyes** doesn't mean he lacks **vision**. - Stevie Wonder

SUDOKU 5509

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5508

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

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified Male (depicted in the photo) name **unknown** residence and family is **unknown** about **35 years** of age was found dead at **Footpath, Opposite Metro Gate No. 5, Lajpat Nagar-II, New Delhi on 21.02.2024 at 09:35 AM.** In this regard a DD No. **29-A, Dated 21.02.2024** has been registered at **PS Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi.** The dead body was preserved for 72 Hrs in Safdarjung Hospital Mortuary. His physical description is as under:-

Sex: Male, **Age:** About 35 years, **Height:** 5' 4" ft., **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Badami colour Sweater and Black colour pant.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or Telephone Numbers:-

SHO
PS: Lajpat Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-29832456
Mob.: 8750870927

Website: http://cbi.nic.in
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Tel. No.: 011-24368638/24368641
Fax No.: 011-24368639

DP/2941/SE/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Where as complaint has been made before me that one accused **Jyoti @ Shiva,** R/o Nayika of Kotha No. 57, First Floor, GB Road, Delhi have Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 94/2015 u/s 366/367/370/376/323/344 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Jyoti @ Shiva** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Jyoti @ Shiva** has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Jyoti @ Shiva** of **FIR No. 94/2015 u/s 366/367/370/376/323/344 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **29.04.2024.**

By Order
Ms. Priyanka Bhagat
Additional Sessions Judge,
Central District,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/3346/Crime/2024 (Court Matter)

Appeal for Identification

General Public is hereby informed that a Female dead body **Name:** Unknown, **D/o** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** Approx. 50-55 years, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing :** Pink Color Sweater and Blue Jeans and bear feet found Unconscious under PF No. 2/3, FOB-1, Near Pillar No. 12, New Delhi Railway Station and admitted at LHMC Hospital vide on MLC No.524/2024 where she was declared dead by the doctor during treatment. In this regard, **DD No. 04A dated 17.03.2024** has been lodged at PS: New Delhi Railway Station, Delhi. Dead body preserved for identification in LHMC Hospital Mortuary for 72 Hours.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this female but no clue has come to light so far. Any, person having any information or clue about this female may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S., New Delhi Rly. Station, Delhi
Ph. : 011-23363622, 8750871305

DP/3337/RLY/2024

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking
(OF THE BRIHANMUMBAI MAHANAGARPALIKA)

TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders are Re-invited for the supply of following items.

(1) 78260, (2) 77912, (3) 78030, (4) 78073.

Note: For more details, log on to website **https://mahatenders.gov.in**

PRO/AAM(M)/161/2024 **GENERAL MANAGER**

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport Mumbai

1st floor, Terminal 1, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400 099.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), the concessionaire of CSMIA, Mumbai is inviting accredited agencies to submit their EOI for Construction of New Aviation Division (NAD) Colony project (Buildings – B1, B2, B3, B4, D1 & E1) CSMIA, Mumbai.

Interested agencies are requested to visit the website, **www.csmia.adaniairports.com** and obtain the EOI documents.

EOI documents shall be available for download from 22nd March 2024 till 5:00 pm IST on 30th March 2024.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Procurement Tender Notice No.-E.T.D/C.N.B./2023-24/36 **Date : 19.03.2024**

E-Procurement Tender Notice

On behalf of the President of India. The Senior Materials Manager, E.T.D./Kanpur invites the following e-procurement tender.

Tender No.	Description :	Qty.
57245035	Supply installation & commissioning of 2500 Bars high pressure hydraulic system for pinion mounting & extraction for 3 phase traction motor as per technical specification no. SA/RS/ED/Spec/HPM&E/001 dtd 25.03.2017.	01 Nos.
57245045	Set of loop boxes for 3 phase locomotives as per CLW specification No. CLW/ES/3/0538, Alt-A or latest. Details as per Annexure-1 and Annexure-2 attached.	01 Set.

Tender Opening Date : For each Tender No.: 09.04.24, EMD : For each Tender No. NIL. Note : 1. The Complete information of above E-Procurement Tender are available on IREPS website i.e. **http://www.ireps.gov.in 2.** Bids other than in the form of E bids shall not be accepted against above tenders for this purpose venders are required to get themselves registered with IREPS Website along with class III digital signature certificate issued by CCA and IT act 2000. **3.** Rules entered into financial rate page is duly signed digitally signature shall only be considered rates and any other financial entry in any other form/letter had if attached by vender shall be original straight way ignore and shall not be considered.

544/24 (D)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @northcentralrailway @CPRONCR

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Where as complaint has been made before me that accused **Shobar @ Rohit S/o Sh. Shefard, R/o- H. No. 770, Gulabi Bagh, Administration Flat, Delhi** has committed (or suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide **FIR No. 138/2019 U/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act P.S. Model Town, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Shobar @ Rohit** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Shobar @ Rohit** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Shobar @ Rohit** of case **FIR No. 138/2019 U/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act P.S. Model Town, Delhi** is required to appear before this court (or before me) to answer the complaint on or before the day of **20.04.2024.**

By Order,
Sh. Himanshu Sehloth
Metropolitan Magistrate-03
North Distt., Court No. 213,
Rohini Court, Delhi.

DP/3378/NW/2024 (Court Matter)

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि0
कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, चित्रकूट

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

अद्योहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित विवरणानुसार दो भागों में दिनांक 07.04.2024 को समय 18:00 बजे तक प्रतिष्ठित एवं योग्य ठेकेदारों/निविदादाताओं से निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है एवं दिनांक 08.04.2024 को समय - 13:00 बजे खोला जायेगा। विस्तृत जानकारी उ0प्र0 शासन की आधिकारिक ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट पोर्टल **https://etender.up.nic.in** एवं दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि0, आगरा के पोर्टल **https://www.dvvnl.org** पर उपलब्ध है:- **1 .ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण संख्या-62/SE/EDCCKT/2023-24:** कार्य - विद्युत वितरण खण्ड - राजापुर के अधीन बिजनेस प्लान वर्ष 2023-24 (अतिरिक्त 20.00 करोड़) के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों के तहत 11 केवी लाइन निर्माण / विस्तारीकरण एवं सुदृढीकरण कराये जाने का कार्य एवं 100 के0वी0ए0 परिवर्तक सरधुवा के एल0टी0 लाइन पर अतिरिक्त पोल लगाकर लाइन का विस्तारीकरण कार्य। **2 ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण संख्या - 63 / SE /EDCCKT/2023-24:** कार्य - विद्युत वितरण खण्ड - राजापुर के अधीन बिजनेस प्लान वर्ष 2023–24 (अतिरिक्त 20.00 करोड़) के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न 33 केवी लाइनों के नवीनीकरण / सुदृढीकरण कराये जाने का कार्य। **3.ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण संख्या - 64/SE/EDCCKT/2023-24:** कार्य - विद्युत वितरण खण्ड - राजापुर के अधीन बिजनेस प्लान वर्ष 2023-24 (अतिरिक्त 20.00 करोड़) के अन्तर्गत वितरण परिवर्तकों की 34 नग अर्थिंग का कार्य। **4. ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण संख्या - 65/SE/EDCCKT/2023-24:** आपूर्ति-विद्युत वितरण खण्ड - कर्वी चित्रकूट के अन्तर्गत प्रिवेन्टिव मेंटेनेन्स कार्यों को कराये जाने हेतु विभिन्न प्रकार के 11 केवी केबिल बॉक्स की आपूर्ति।

पत्र संख्या:- 1905/ वि0वि0मं0चि0/2023-24 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
निविदा प्रकाशन, दिनांक- 21.03.2024 विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, चित्रकूट

"सुनहरा भविष्य बनायें, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाएं"

मुख्य प्रशासी पदाधिकारी का कार्यालय
झारखण्ड भवन, झारखण्ड सरकार
वसंत विहार, नई दिल्ली–110057

सूचना

झारखण्ड भवन, (वसंत विहार) नई दिल्ली में हाउसकीपिंग, कैटरिंग एवं स्वागत डेस्क से संबंधित, दिनांक–22.03.2024 को खुलने वाली निविदा को भारत निर्वाचन आयोग द्वारा अधिरोपित आदर्श आचार संहिता के आलोक में स्थगित किया जाता है।

निर्वाचन प्रक्रिया पूर्ण होने के उपरांत उपरोक्त निविदा के संबंध में विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों के माध्यम से सूचित किया जायेगा।

PR.NO.323221 Cabinet(23-24):D मुख्य प्रशासी पदाधिकारी

झारखण्ड सरकार, जल संसाधन विभाग,
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय जलपथ प्रमंडल, चाईबासा
Email Address :- eewwdchai-cer-jhr@nic.in

: : शुद्धि पत्र : :

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक 240 दिनांक 15.03.2024 के द्वारा अति अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना–02/WRD/WWD/CBSA/SBD/02/23-24, जिसका पी०आर०संख्या– 322835 (West Singhbhum) 23-24* है, के कंडिका संख्या–6, 7, 8 एवं 9 में अपरिहार्य कारणवश आंशिक सुधार की जाती है। जो निम्नवत् है :–

6.	Date of Publication of Tender on website	08-04-2024 at 10.00 Hrs.
7.	Start Date / Time to Last Date/ Time for Bidding & Upload of bid documents	08-04-2024 at 10.00 Hrs. to 15-04-2024 at 11.00 Hrs.
8.	Last Date & Time for Upload for Bid Security and other Document in online form.	**15.04.2024 at 11.00 Hrs**. Through e-Tender Portal www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in (As per SOP Issued by Information Technology & E-Governance Deprtment, Government of Jharkhand vide Letter No. 120 dated 03.10.2023)
9.	Date/Place of Bid Opening	16-04-2024 at 11.30 Hrs. in Executive Engineer, Waterways Division, Chaibasa.

निविदा की अन्य शर्तें यथावत् रहेंगी।

PR 323240 (West Singhbhum)23-24*D कार्यपालक अभियंता,जलपथ प्रमंडल, चाईबासा

FORM NO. 1
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW
(Area of Jurisdiction-Uttar Pradesh)
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Temple, Lucknow-226007
DRC No. 52/2021/LKO

NOTICE UNDER RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH SECTION 29 OF RDDB & FI ACT, 1993

Union Bank of India Vs. Sri Rajendra Singh and another.

To,

J.D. No.1 Sri Rajendra Singh son of Sri Veer Singh, R/o House No.357/6, Jail Road, Civil Lines, District- Bareilly.

J.D. No.2 Sri Sudhir Kumar son of Sri Ram Asray, R/o House No.205, Madho Bari, District- Bareilly.

1- This is to notify that a sum of **Rs. 11,72,193=51 (Rupees Eleven Lacs Seventy Two Thousand One Hundred Ninety Three and Paise Fifty One Only)** together with pendentlite and future interest @ 9% per annum from the date of filing of the original application i.e. **19.12.2018** till full realization, has become due from you as per the certificate bearing **No. 52/2021 dated 24.02.2020** in **O.A. No.1578/2018**, passed against you by DRT, Lucknow.

2- You are hereby directed to pay the sum within **15 days** of this Notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993.

3- You are hereby ordered to declare on Affidavit the particulars of assets on or before **21.05.2024**

4- You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on **21.05.2024 at 11:00 A.M.**

5- In addition to the sum aforesaid you will also be liable to pay:

Details of Cost:

Application Fee	Rs 14000=00
Advocate Fee	Rs 11000=00
Publication charges	Rs 4000=00
Misc. Charges	Rs 2500=00
Clerical Charges	Rs 505=00

Given under my hand and Seal on this 27st Day of February, 2024.

Recovery Officer-II
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 81/2023-24 dated 05.01.2024 (S.No.11)
ii) Tender No. 08235705 due on 11.03.2024

In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 11.03.2024 to 15.04.2024 all other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

The corrigendum has been published on website **www.ireps.gov.in.**

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"IMPORTANT"

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ROBINHO GETS 9 YEARS FOR RAPE

A Brazilian high court ruled that former football star Robinho must serve his nine-year prison sentence in his home nation as a result of his 2017 rape conviction in Italy. **AP**

IPL's old jungle rule: Six-hitting teams make it to the finals

The 17th edition of the IPL is bringing along a trimester of big-hitting. The tournament is expected to gain extensive interest this year with the marquee T20 World Cup commencing shortly after the tournament in June. Six-hitting is paramount and one of the most foolproof methods to make the IPL final, exemplified by the finalists over the years. Barring the inaugural season in 2008, at least one of the two teams in every final has invariably finished in the top-two of most sixes hit in that particular edition.

MOST SIXES IN EACH EDITION

2008	KXIP: 95	Deccan : 92
2009	Deccan: 99 (W)	CSK: 73
2010	CSK: 97 (W)	Deccan: 84
2011	RCB: 94 (F)	CSK: 91 (W)
2012	RCB: 117	CSK: 102 (F)
2013	MI:117 (W)	RCB: 103
2014	PBKS: 127 (F)	CSK: 112
2015	MI: 120 (W)	RCB:105
2016	RCB:142 (F)	MI: 92
2017	MI: 117 (W)	GL: 92
2018	CSK: 145 (W)	KKR: 130
2019	KKR: 143	MI: 115 (W)
2020	MI: 137 (W)	RR: 105
2021	CSK: 115 (W)	KKR: 98 (F)
2022	RR:137 (F)	LSG:115
2023	MI:140	CSK:133 (W)

W:Winner; F:Finalist

POWER OF SIXES: STARRING DHONI, GAYLE, RUSSELL

1,548 The Mumbai Indians lead the six-hitting charts in the history of the IPL, striking a maximum of every 18.48 balls they have faced in the tournament.

357 Chris Gayle remains the leading six-hitter in the tournament, with the second-best Rohit Sharma still 100 sixes away. The West Indian struck a six every 9.34 deliveries across his 142-match career.

6.74 Caribbean powerhouse Andre Russell possesses the best balls-per-six ratio in the tournament (min. 100 runs). Russell has clobbered 193 sixes in only 96 innings in the league.

51.19% Russell is the only batter in the IPL to aggregate at least 50 percent of his career runs (min. 500) through sixes, with his 96 maximums generating a chunk of his 2262 runs.

218 MS Dhoni is the only batter to record 200-plus sixes as captain in the tournament.

138 Gayle is the only batter to hit 100-plus sixes in the PowerPlay.

162 Dhoni is the highest six-hitter in the death overs (17-20), with 67.7 percent of his career sixes coming in the last four overs. Kieron Pollard and AB de Villiers are the only other batters to have struck 100-plus sixes in the death.

98 Glenn Maxwell is two sixes short of becoming the first batter to strike 100 maximums against spin in the league.

59 Gayle holds the record for smashing most sixes in a season, slamming 59 in 14 innings in 2012. Gayle also piled up 51 maximums in the 2013 season.

1,124 The IPL 2023 witnessed the most sixes in an edition of the IPL from 147 innings, 62 ahead of the second-best 2022 season.

79 The sixes hit by Gujarat Titans during their title-winning run in their inaugural season in 2022 - the least for a victorious side across 16 editions.

145 CSK hold the record for most sixes hit by a team in a season. In their title-winning season in 2018, CSK struck 145 maximums in 16 games.

17 Gayle is the only batter to hit 12 or more sixes in an innings thrice in the IPL. He struck a record 17 sixes in his unbeaten 175 against Pune Warriors India, in 2013.

21 On the might of Gayle's 17-six onslaught, RCB totalled 21 maximums against PWI in the 2013 clash in Bengaluru — the most by a team in a match.

33 The highest number of sixes aggregated in a match. The mark was touched thrice in the IPL by RCB-CSK in 2018 and 2023, and RR-CSK in 2020.

LALITH KALIDAS

LEADERSHIP GROUP

IPL captains with the trophy during the photoshoot in Chennai. With MS Dhoni (226 matches) handing over reins of CSK to Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shreyas Iyer (55) becomes the captain with most matches led in the IPL. Next on the list is KL Rahul (51). Punjab's Jitesh Sharma (3rd from left) stood in for captain Shikhar Dhawan. *Sportzpics*

T2024: New beginnings

Four teams have new captains while IPL's two most successful skippers no longer in charge

VENKATA KRISHNA B
CHENNAI, MARCH 21

THE STAGE was set. One player who hasn't played a game since the last Indian Premier League season, and is the darling of the masses. Another, who the whole of India is waiting to return to action, with questions still lingering in the air as to how he would use the IPL to confirm his spot in the T20 World Cup squad.

MS Dhoni vs Virat Kohli. Chennai Super Kings vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru. It seemed to be the ideal curtain-raiser for a party that would go on for two months.

But courtesy of a last-minute decision, the spotlight will now be trained on Ruturaj Gaikwad, CSK's new captain.

At the end of the player auctions, as Chennai put together a solid outfit that looked stronger than last season when they won the title, all things pointed to the franchise wanting to give their 'Thala' one final shot at the title. A record sixth title would have been hard to overtake for anyone. It was rolled out on a platter.

But here we are, like in 2022, just a day before a new IPL season begins, there is a change of guard that's gotten everyone talking. When Gaikwad leads the side on Friday against RCB, it would be the first instance of Dhoni playing an IPL game at Chepauk under a different captain. And for the first time since the league began, none of Dhoni, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli will be leading any of the franchises. The next generation has taken over.

RCB captain Faf du Plessis during practice on the eve of the game against CSK in Chennai on Friday. *PTI*

Like he did with India all things point out to Dhoni once again acing his timing. Having won their fifth title with an inexperienced bowling unit, Gaikwad now gets a chance to carry forward a proud legacy with arguably the best-ever unit assembled by the franchise. "Feels good. It's a privilege, but more than that, it is a huge responsibility," Gaikwad said about his promotion. "I have Mahi (Dhoni) bhai in the team, Jaddu (Jadeja) bhai, and Ajju (Rahane) bhai, who have been great captains to guide me. So nothing much to worry about and just looking forward to enjoy."

There is every reason for Gaikwad to feel excited about the challenge. To start off, he doesn't have much headache in terms of identifying who the best XI is.

For the earlier part of the season, Chennai will miss the services of Devon Conway and Matheesha Pathirana — two players who played a stellar role in their victorious campaign last season – to injuries. While it may have affected other sides, Chennai are not fretting over it. In Rachin Ravindra, they have a ready-made opener who can also bowl four overs of left-arm spin in their ranks. With Shardul Thakur back in the team, and Deepak Chahar fit and available, the Super Kings have their bases covered.

In the middle-order, in place of now-retired Ambati Rayudu, Chennai have acquired the services of Daryl Mitchell to provide the fireworks. An excellent player against spin, with his ability to hit the ball in the 'V', Mitchell is crucial to CSK's plans this season.

The main question on the eve of their opening fixture is who will make up the rest of their overseas slot in the XI. For the two remaining spots, CSK have to choose between Mooen Ali, Maheesh Theekshana, and Mustafizur Rahman.

While Moeen would definitely provide Chennai with all-round options, the conditions could ultimately decide who among Theekshana and Mustafizur get the nod. Though Chennai have mostly preferred turning conditions in the past, last season they drifted away from the template, mixing things up depending on the opponents.

A day before the opener, there was a slight tinge of grass on the playing surface. Whether it stays so on Friday evening is a different question, but either way Chennai have no reasons to worry. Be it batting or bowling, Chennai's depth looks staggering.

With all-round options in place, they have Chahar, a capable hitter, coming in at No 10. In the bowling front, they have at least seven bowling options. Add the Impact Player in place, Gaikwad couldn't have asked for a more rounded team that is well-balanced to start off his captaincy journey. It is a luxury that Ravindra Jadeja missed badly in 2022 and was left exposed.

RCB searching for answers

If CSK have most bases covered, their opponents RCB are searching for answers. Unsurprisingly. they have plenty of firepower in the batting unit. In what should hearten their fans, RCB's Director of Cricket Mo Bobat said Kohli has hit the ground running after his break. "Virat's in a good place. He's at a stage of his career where most of what he does is pretty hardwired into him. He's coming in fresh, which is what we're excited about," Bobat said.

"He's had a few hits with us over the last few days and he's hitting the ball brilliantly."

But as has always been the case, there are holes that opposition can expose as well. The most problematic of them all lies in their bowling unit, which has room for only one of Lockie Ferguson and Alzarri Joseph.

With Faf du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell and Cameron Green needed in the batting front, Bengaluru have to make do with Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Yash Dayal, Himanshu Sharma, Karn Sharma and Mayank Dagar from the domestic front. On a potentially spin-friendly surface against a Super Kings side, they are short of experienced slower bowlers. And that alone could determine the outcome of the game.

S.W.O.T

Which team has best spin attack; is there a hidden gem of an all-rounder?

LALITH KALIDAS
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

CAN NEW Zealand's Daryl Mitchell be the batting atlas for CSK? Are Delhi Capitals over reliant on Rishabh Pant in the middle order? And who will fill the Mohammad Shami void at Gujarat Titans?

A look at the strengths and weaknesses of IPL teams

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS:

LACK OF RELIABLE PACE BOWLING OPTIONS

Strengths: Carrying flavours from their successful past, CSK have retained a solid core and maintained the style of players that have worked best for them. CSK have released England Test captain Ben Stokes, but have acquired upcoming star opener Rachin Ravindra and Daryl Mitchell, a batsman capable of clearing the fence and with the knack of knowing when to move up a gear. Ravindra is set to replace an injured Devon Conway at the top and could be the one to watch out for.

Weaknesses: A mercurial pace attack comprising Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur and Tushar Deshpande. Left-armer Mukesh Choudhary is untested having last played in 2022 and death-overs specialist Matheesha Pathirana will be missed partially due to injury.

Opportunities: All-rounder Shivam Dube could become the middle-overs differentiator with the bat in an order comprising several accumulators.

Threats: Lack of reliable pace bowling options in their ranks.

DELHI CAPITALS

A SOLID SPIN ATTACK

Strengths: An in-form spin attack comprising Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav form the core of their bowling plans.

Weaknesses: Their batting stocks limited largely to the top, the Capitals lack proven IPL batters in the middle-order besides Rishabh Pant.

Opportunities: A fit again Pant has his stage to take the fast lane back to the Indian side.

Threats: The Capitals may struggle to find balance with their batting order in the absence of quality finishers.

GUJARAT TITANS

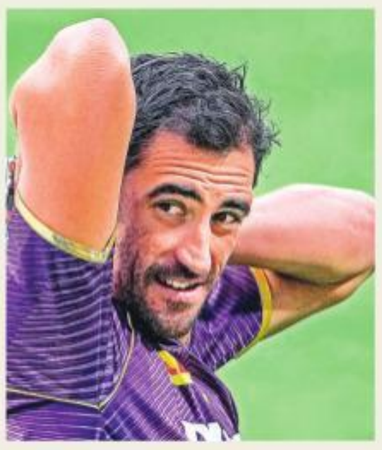
THE MOHAMMAD SHAMI VOID

Strengths: The middle-order muscle comprising David Miller, Rahul Tewatia, Abhinav Manohar and fresh recruits Shahrukh Khan, and Azmatullah Omarzai are enticing on paper. GT also boasts a promising spin attack.

Weaknesses: Mohammad Shami's absence affects the sting of their pace attack.

Opportunities: Shubman Gill's first stint as leader provides him with the opportunity to showcase another facet of his game and strengthen his credentials as a first-choice for India in T20Is.

Threats: Form of wicketkeepers Wriddhiman Saha and Matthew Wade.



CAN STARC DELIVER FOR KKR?

Strengths: Attacking options with the bat in Rinku Singh, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, and Phil Salt. Spin bowling has variety.

Weaknesses: The fitness and form of captain Shreyas Iyer and all-rounder Andre Russell will be lingering concerns.

Opportunities: Phil Salt has a chance to end KKR's opening woes.

Threats: A pace bowling unit reliant heavily on Mitchell Starc, who is returning to the league after nine seasons.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

NEEDED, A RELIABLE FAST BOWLER

Strengths: With a host of proven match-winners like KL Rahul, Quinton de Kock, Nicholas Pooran and all-rounder Marcus Stoinis in their arsenal, the Super Giants possess a well-rounded batting lineup.

Weaknesses: The pace attack brims with talent, but with England fast bowler Mark Wood skipping the IPL to manage workload, it remains short on a reliable spearhead.

Opportunities: Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi could emerge as a key figure with the ball and cement his place in the Indian team with the T20 World Cup around the corner.

Threats: Fitness and KL Rahul's probable change in role and the form of key bowlers returning from injuries (Shivam Mavi, Mohsin Khan) are areas of concern.

MUMBAI INDIANS

OVERDEPENDENCE ON JASPRIT BUMRAH

Strengths: An enviable batting core comprising some of the best talents from the international stage - Rohit Sharma, Suraykumar Yadav, Tim David and Ishan Kishan.

Weaknesses: Piyush Chawla, Mohammad Nabi and Shreyas Gopal have experience but with uncapped Kumar Karthikeya, Naman Dhir and Shivalik Sharma in the ranks, MI's spin bowling back-up options remain thin on paper.

Opportunities: Free from the leadership shackles, this IPL season could help Rohit Sharma unleash his free-flowing best with the bat.

Threats: The additions of Gerald Coetzee and Nuwan Thushara have brought new ammunition but Mumbai's bowling success relies heavily on the shoulders of Jasprit Bumrah.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU

WATCH OUT FOR ALL-ROUNDER MANOJ BHANDAGE

Strengths: The quality of the established batters -- Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis -- forms a vaunted top order with a few more local options to round up the depth of their batting.

Weaknesses: Minimal options in the spin department emerge as a major chink.

Opportunities: Karnataka all-rounder Manoj Bhandage could be the player to watch out for as a potential answer to RCB's lack of capable finishers.

Threats: There's serious pace within their ranks in Mohammed Siraj, Lockie Ferguson and Alzarri Joseph, but the unit will be underscored by the consistency factor.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

CAN THE MIDDLE-ORDER FIRE?

Strengths: A batting unit exuding plenty of firepower and the experienced spin trio of R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal and Adam Zampa are positives.

Weaknesses: Middle-order batters Shimron Hetmyer, Riyan Parag and Rovman Powell can be lethal on their day but start with an inconsistent tag.

Opportunities: Captain Sanju Samson and Chahal have a chance to shine and perhaps bolt into the Indian side for the T20 World Cup.

Threats: Lack of solid batting backups could prove costly if a couple of their lead cast misfires.

PUNJAB KINGS

LACKING AN EXPERIENCED INDIAN BATSMEN

Strengths: The batting department contains explosive players besides quality overseas all-round options.

Weaknesses: Barring skipper Shikhar Dhawan, the batting department does not bear established Indian players.

Opportunities: Arshdeep Singh will aim to lead the PBKS attack and fortify his position in India's T20 World Cup squad.

Threats: Shikhar Dhawan's form and the overreliance on aggressive batting could be key pointers in Punjab's journey.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

A TEST FOR PAT CUMMINS

Strengths: A near-complete squad with arguably the best pool of overseas players and bowlers in the league.

Weaknesses: The team could be heavily reliant on its overseas batters to fire.

Opportunities: A fresh challenge awaits Pat Cummins in his first stint as captain, with his bowling credentials in the league still under a cloud.

Threats: Having named Cummins as the leader, SRH may struggle to attain balance in terms of its overseas quartet in the XI.

BRIEFLY

Kamal to be India's flag bearer; Mary Kom to be chef de mission

New Delhi: Sharath Kamal will be India's flag bearer at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games while legendary boxer MC Mary Kom was on Thursday appointed the chef de mission of the country's contingent. Sharath Kamal symbolises "the unity and spirit of our contingent as they compete on the Olympic stage", the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) said in a statement while making the announcement. Six-time World Champion Mary Kom, bronze medallist at the 2012 London Olympics, will be assisted by luger Shiva Keshavan, who has been appointed the deputy chef de mission. "Mary Kom's unparalleled dedication to sports and inspiring journey makes her a natural choice to guide and mentor our athletes at the Olympics," IOA said. **PTI**

Eventing National C'ship to begin

New Delhi: Close to 200 riders will compete in the Eventing National Championship, the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) announced on Thursday. The first leg of the competition began today and the second and final leg will commence on March 28. The Eventing competition, also known as Horse Trial, comprises three disciplines --Dressage, Cross Country and Show Jumping. In Eventing, Show Jumping competition unfolds on day three. "We will have around 36 teams and close to 200 riders competing over three days. Competition will be in Pre-Novice, Novice and CCN categories. **PTI**

Verstappen plans to fulfil Red Bull contract

Melbourne: Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen wants to stay with Red Bull until the end of his contract in 2028 amid rumours of a switch to Mercedes, even as he admits to actively avoiding knowing any more than he does about the ongoing turmoil at the team. Verstappen said on Thursday he was flattered by comments at the last race in Saudi Arabia by Mercedes boss Toto Wolff, who said he'd "love" to have the Dutch star as a driver. Verstappen said he wants to stay with his Red Bull "family.' "As I've said before, I'm happy within the team and, of course, it's very important that we try to keep the key players in the team (together) for a longer period of time because that's, of course, where the performance is as well — and at the end of the day, it's a performance business." **AP**

German football ends Adidas partnership

Berlin: German football and Adidas are breaking up. American sportswear giant Nike will supply all of Germany's national teams with its apparel and equipment from 2027, the German football federation (DFB) announced Thursday. The new deal extends to 2034 and ends Germany's long-standing association with Adidas, which goes back some 70 years. "We're looking forward to working with Nike and the trust they've placed in us," federation president Bernd Neuendorf said in a statement. "The future partnership will enable the DFB to continue to carry out key tasks in the coming decade of soccer in Germany." **AP**

Dhoni passes the baton... again

Ever since the Ravindra Jadeja experiment backfired, Gaikwad was earmarked as one to lead CSK when curtains came down on this era

VENKATA KRISHNA B
CHENNAI, MARCH 21

IT WAS sometime on Thursday morning that MS Dhoni, in his typical style, broke the news to the Chennai Super Kings management after shocking his teammates and support staff over the breakfast table. Post that meeting, Dhoni is understood to have dialled the franchise management, informing of his decision to hand over the captaincy to Ruturaj Gaikwad, a player CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan said was being groomed for the role for the last two years.

Though the decision came out of the blue, the franchise seems to be far better placed to handle the transition, unlike in 2022 when Ravindra Jadeja took over the reins before stepping aside midway through the IPL. Back then, the franchise seemed to have been taken aback by Dhoni's decision, but this time head coach Stephen Fleming said they were far better placed.

"Well, the big thing about a couple of years ago was that we probably weren't ready for MS to move aside. What that did was probably shake us up as a leadership group and make the coaches look at the possibility when he does go. Up until that stage, it was almost unthinkable, but it sowed the seed. So, we've worked pretty hard on making sure that any mistakes that were made then aren't made again," Fleming said.

In a team that has a big star cast and players of international repute, the decision to hand the captaincy to Gaikwad, a player familiar with the set-up and management, fits their philosophy. A very calm person, he has admirers for the way he deals with high-pressure situations. The 27-year-old joined the franchise ahead of the 2019 season at a base price of Rs 20 lakh and since then, has impressed those in the dressing room as well as at the India Cements headquarters. After winning the Orange Cap in 2022, ahead of a big auction, Gaikwad was one of the four players retained by CSK for Rs 6 crore. That makes him the captain with the lowest price tag.

The Indian Express understands that Gaikwad was well aware that he will be the successor to Dhoni.

But according to those close to the player, even when he left Pune to join the pre-season camp on March 3, Gaikwad was only expecting to take charge next season after Dhoni hung up his boots. But it is understood that Dhoni wanted to groom Gaikwad in the role while he was still around as a player.

"He informed us of the decision this morning before the captain's meeting after talking to the head coach," Viswanathan told The Indian Express. "Mr N Srinivasan has given the charge to Dhoni and whatever decision he takes, will always be in the best interest of the franchise. And he has been grooming Gaikwad for the last couple of years on the field as well as outside. Dhoni felt this is the right time to hand over to him as he felt Gaikwad is also ready," Viswanathan said.

Fleming concurred. "It was MS' call with a lot of consideration and with a view to the future on the back of a good season last year. The timing was good. Behind the scenes, Rutu and others have been on a captaincy grooming process, looking forward to days like this and the opportunities coming up, but MS is the best judge and he felt the time was right," he said.

Ever since the decision to hand Jadeja the captaincy didn't go according to plans, it is understood that Dhoni had earmarked Gaikwad as the future captain. Though they brought in Ben Stokes as an alternate option, the feeling in the franchise has been that Gaikwad would take charge at some point. During the 2022/2023 edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy, with Maharashtra playing their league matches in Ranchi, Gaikwad had spent each evening in Dhoni's company. And it was in those meetings that Dhoni informed Gaikwad about how the franchise was looking at him as a successor.

Gaikwad used the tournament to test himself for the role as well.

"From gameplans to deciding our practice sessions, we saw a different Rutu that year. He basically ran the team. We haven't seen anyone do that before or after. This time when he left for Chennai, he knew he would be the successor, but never thought this would be the season," Azim Kazi, Gaikwad's close friend and teammate at Maharashtra, said.

Apart from being a self-assured player, the management has also noticed Gaikwad's leadership qualities in the captaincy skills programme that Fleming conducts throughout every season. Over the last few years, the New Zealander has been handling this programme, with several domestic players showing active interest to attend these sessions which are not mandatory. These sessions, apart from talking about on-field strategies, also delve into communication and decision-making skills by sticking to philosophies that the team adheres to.

"There's always opportunities to talk about leadership with players and I guess that having the opportunity to captain New Zealand puts me in a position where I can speak with some authority. So I've really enjoyed talking with not only Rutu but others about captaincy skills and leadership and how you go about it. So, it's part of the two months that we enjoy. And it's for opportunities like this that you see a young player come through and now get the opportunity to lead our franchise. We're very proud of it," Fleming said.

Almost 50 years back, a certain Gaikwad (Shivaji Rao Gaikwad) born in Maharashtra came to Chennai and ruled the hearts as Rajinikanth. Chennai surely won't mind a repeat.

CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad with MS Dhoni during a training session on Thursday. *PTI*

"He has been grooming Gaikwad for the last couple of years on the field as well as outside. Dhoni felt this is the right time to hand over to him as he felt Gaikwad is also ready."

-KASI VISWANATHAN
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS CEO

"From gameplans to deciding our practice sessions, we saw a different Rutu that year. He basically ran the team. We haven't seen anyone do that before or after."

-AZIM KAZI
GAIKWAD'S TEAMMATE ON HOW VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY WAS USED AS A TEST RUN

NUMBER PLATE

MS Dhoni led CSK in 235 matches across all competitions and captained them to a total of five IPL titles (2010, 2011, 2018, 2021, 2023) and two CL T20 titles.

Picked by Gopi, speed of Ginting: Priyanshu continues upwards trajectory

SHIVANI NAIK
MARCH 21

PRIYANSHU RAJAWAT has been like a blur on the badminton courts of Basel these last two days.

Picked out by Pullela Gopichand at a scouting camp in Madhya Pradesh well before he turned 10, and solely for his foot and hand-speed, the 22-year-old from Dhar is making his sheer pace count. On Thursday, he packed off Chinese Lan Xi Lei 21-14, 21-13 to make the Swiss Open quarterfinals. But the youngster, known for his conventional stick smashes, has been increasingly using the cross-angles on the backhand, with whiplash speed, to hurry opponents.

Indonesian Anthony Ginting arrived on the scene a decade ago, and everyone was talking about his incredible speed. Loh Kean Yew even went on to win a World Championship title with freakish pace on his court movements. The Singaporean has mellowed down a tad, and Ginting doesn't need to rely just on speed. So Rajawat has taken over the mantle of a streaking, dashing, whizzing bullet game on the circuit with a breathless repertoire of shots.

Of particular blink-and-miss significance is his inverted 'K-shot', which doesn't rely so much on power as timing - that's after he hurriedly gets into position to deliver it, like a fast-forwarded reel. Firstly, he gets under the shuttle as if he's on roller-blades. The striding is precise, and the right knee goes across the left leg as the stroke is played mid-motion. The right arm then goes across the body for a K-shaped backswing silhouette. The shuttle is struck at a high point, and Rajawat gets such an incredible angle on the backhand and a whipping connect, that it lands within bounds steeply, but at giddy speed.

The K-shot is bound to become the talk of the town because of how stable Rajawat remains despite operating at very high acceleration, fuelling speed into the shuttle. What a spectator sees is the player dashing to the left of the court, and the shuttle fired to the right in the blink of an eye.

Unique style

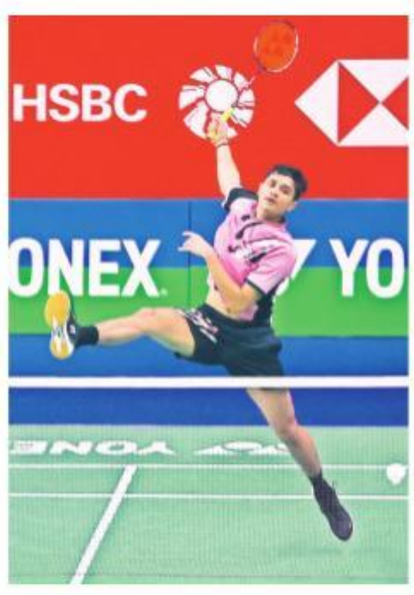
Rajawat has often been compared to Kidambi Srikanth, who boasts of some exquisite strokes and technical proficiency. But the smooth seamless execution of Rajawat's K-shot owes a lot to his coaches in Hyderabad, who have taught him to harness his natural speed for some sensational shot-making. The backhand and its prologue is more HS Prannoy than Srikanth, though Rajawat doesn't have the same power in his across-the-body smashes yet.

While Lakshya Sen, who's most likely headed to the Olympics, has speed in his defence and in that explosive hop at the net, Rajawat is bringing raw pace to the exchanges that will likely trouble most on the circuit. He also has a lean, mean across- the-body parallel flank defence which sees the shuttle travel quite speedily over the net.

While he raced to take the opener, Rajawat's pace only got crisper in the second game. Very early in the second, Rajawat played a lightning fast rally. He chased a shuttle on the right flank that was most likely dropping out, dragging it back into play at the last second. But even under defensive duress as the Chinese went a little bonkers hitting, Rajawat zipped across the court to end the exchange with his speed-kill. There were variations of the aerial acceleration at 6-3 and 7-4 as the Chinese realised rather slowly that his opponent was too fast for his liking.

Rajawat has the conventionally-pretty strokes too. And they are becoming some sort of a trademark in his typical candy pink gear. But it is in the speed that he brings to the court in both defence, anticipation and attack that he's proving to be deceptive. Unlike most of his opponents, he is unlikely to trade in power strokes. Unlike Sen, he won't scramble for the round- the-head whip either. But his pace can crunch reaction times for opponents, who have to simultaneously handle his fairly error-free blitzes.

Indian men's singles boasts a great variety and brains amongst its top names and talent in stroke-making. But the one name that has drifted to the sidelines is Sameer Verma, also from Dhar. It is from Verma that Rajawat picked his love for speed, and honed it with humility. Coaches at the Gopichand academy have had to teach him to master speed because he invariably hared around and rushed his strokes without heeding to balance. But this year, the blur-from-Dhar is operating at optimum speed.



Priyanshu Rajawat defeated Chinese Lan Xi Lei 21-14, 21-13 on Thursday at the Swiss Open. *File*

USA'S BADMINTON STORY

How Indian coaches hope to make badminton thrive in the States

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
MARCH 21

A 31-YEAR-OLD who won a singles World Championship medal. A 29-year-old who played at the top level in doubles, reaching a career best of World No 32 before retiring at 26. A veteran coach who has been an integral part of India's recent badminton history, having a front-row seat at Pullela Gopichand's famed academy as one of the mentors from the very start.

What is common among them? The United States of America.

B Sai Praneeth, recently retired, and coach Mohammed Siyadath Ullah will now be part of USA's badminton story. Shlok Ramchandran has already made a name for himself in the States in recent years, making the move Stateside to explore a coaching career.

USA's badminton scene

From a well-established badminton structure in India, Sai and Siyadath are entering a vastly different – yet increasingly vibrant – scene in the USA. For starters, badminton is not even close to being a top sport in the country at any level. Be it professional leagues, collegiate level, or Olympic disciplines. Unlike India, the concept of a national team set-up doesn't exist, because it is entirely club-driven and largely self-funded. It's like professional tennis but without the financial returns.

"USA badminton has close to zero funding from the US Olympic Committee because they work on a dollar-to-medal basis. So there is no funding," Shlok tells *The Indian Express*. "So the circuit is entirely driven by clubs. A lot of our business revenue is earned through offering coaching services and renting out courts."

Shlok has been mentoring teenagers Allison Lee and Francesca Corbett, who won a historic silver medal at the BWF World Junior Championships 2023, a first for the Pan-Am region.

It is not for lack of trying, but badminton simply isn't high on the USOC's target list. World No.10 Beiwen Zhang, the flagbearer of the sport in the country for so long, took on PV Sindhu recently, Prakash Padukone and Vimal Kumar by the Indian's side. But Zhang was by herself during coaching breaks, as she was at the India Open too, because she still can't afford to bring her coach to all the tournaments she plays around the world.

There is also a significant problem of talented youngsters not transitioning. While Allison and Corbett have taken a gap year from their studies to focus on badminton, it's more common to see players drop out of the sport when they reach college.

The Indian presence

The recent good results could well be attributed to the hiring of high-quality coaching staff across the country, where there is now going to be a significant Indian presence.

While Shlok first moved to North Carolina – where Sai will be based – he has since moved to the Bay Area on the West Coast. Having retired at 26, Shlok dabbled in a few things in India (including working briefly with Chirag Shetty in Goregaon) before the USA coaching offer came. Things might be a bit different now, but back then, Shlok felt Indian coaches wouldn't be valued as much in the system and took up the Stateside challenge.

His work in North Carolina got noticed by Ben Lee, an Olympian for USA in 1992 who heads Synergy Badminton Academy where the Indian is now the Coaching Director. Shlok's experience in a high-performance set-up like India has proved valuable as the rise of Allison and Francesca through the world rankings has proved.

While Shlok assisted the USA juniors at their historic World Championships campaign last year, there's another Indian who has been around longer. Abhishek Ahlawat, now Coaching Director at Frisco Badminton in Texas, became the first Indian to be a national Head Coach when he took charge of the USA men's team at the Pan-Am championships.

Ahlawat travelled to the USA in 2014 to play a couple of doubles events, took a holiday for a few months, and realised there was a potential career for him there. "I liked to be connected with the sport as a coach because I had six knee injuries in the past, multiple ACL knee surgeries. I knew that I could not continue my playing career," he says.

Ahlawat reckons the big reason for the enhanced reputation of Indian coaches in the USA has been India's success in the sport in the recent past, pointing to the likes of Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy. "The major breakthrough was when India beat Indonesia in the Thomas Cup final. And we got our doubles recognition as well," Ahlawat says.

For Siyadath, who has been ingrained in the Indian set-up for a long time, it will be a whole new challenge as he starts from scratch. "All my life, I've watched Gopi *bhaiyya* change and adapt and not stay with fixed ideas. Now I hope to bring all that I learnt into setting this up for beginners as well as hoping to train some to elite levels," Siyadath says about his move to the Portland Academy in Oregon.

Indeed, this recent push in hiring overseas coaches is gearing USA towards the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, which Shlok hopes could be a game-changer. "Our goal is to create an Olympian for 2028 from our club's existing programme. People ask me why did I quit so early as everything was so comfortable? I told them it wasn't good enough for me. So for me, creating the next Olympian is not good enough. It's creating a potential top-10 player, who can go on to get a podium finish. That is what I want."

(With reporting inputs from Shivani Naik)

Shlok Ramchandran has already made a name for himself in the States in recent years, making the move Stateside to explore a coaching career. *Special arrangement*

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