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INSIDE

DELHI TEENAGER RAPED, HER FRIEND ASSAULTED BY MAN POSING AS COP

DOCUMENTARY ON DALIT WOMEN JOURNALISTS GETS OSCAR NOMINATION
PAGES 3, 8

WILL FOLLOW COURT ORDER, SHUTDOWN TO KEEP THE PEACE: CM

Hijab protests spread, Karnataka govt shuts colleges, high schools for 3 days

Students protest outside the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College in Karnataka's Udupi town on Tuesday. *PTI*

A tale of two colleges: One stands up for student, other shuts down

KIRAN PARASHAR & UMA VISHNU
BENGALURU, UDUPI, FEBRUARY 8

IN MANDYA, a hijab-wearing student braved a mob of slogan-shouting boys with saffron shawls, saying later that she had the support of her classmates across religious lines and of the college principal. In coastal Udupi, a surge of boys and girls wearing saffron shawls and headwear, and a heated confrontation with hijab-wearing protesters, prompted authorities at a junior college to quickly ask all students to leave.

Beyond the divisive images and crowds shouting at each other, these are two shades of the hijab row that played out in Karnataka Tuesday before the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Facing down hecklers, the girl enters Mandya's PES college.

Prohibitory orders in Shivamogga, police fire in the air in Davangere

KIRAN PARASHAR & LIZ MATHEW
BENGALURU, NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

WITH PROTESTS over the hijab ban in colleges appearing to spiral out of control in Karnataka, with incidents of stone-pelting and lathicharge reported from at least four districts, the state government scrambled to contain the situation by declaring a holiday in high schools and colleges for the next three days.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who is in Delhi, told *The Indian Express*: "I have given the order to close (high) schools and colleges to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE

PARLIAMENT: OPP PARTIES SEEK SHAH STATEMENT ON HIJAB ROW, WALK OUT

MADHYA PRADESH TALKS OF CODE ON UNIFORM, BIHAR AND TRIPURA STRIKE NOTE OF CAUTION
PAGES 6, 7

HC appeals for peace: Will go by Constitution

JOHNSON T A & APURVA VISHWANATH
BENGALURU, NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE KARNATAKA High Court Tuesday requested the student community and the public to "maintain peace and tranquility" as it decides on pleas from a group of students to allow them to attend classes in junior colleges in the state wearing the hijab.

Justice Krishna S Dixit made the request after being informed by state Advocate General Prabhuling Navadgi of several instances of disturbance in public

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PM sharpens attack: Urban Naxals captured Cong thought process

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

PM Narendra Modi in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. *PTI*

STEPPING UP his attack on the Congress a day after he called it the "leader of the *tukde tukde* gang", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Tuesday that the Opposition party's "thought process has been captured by urban Naxals", making it "destructive" and a "matter of concern" for the country.

Speaking in Rajya Sabha during the motion of thanks to the President's address, the Prime Minister, who had launched a blistering attack on the Congress in Lok Sabha a day earlier, said: "There was discussion here that we are trying to change the history of this country... The Congress, in a way, has been trapped by urban Naxals. Its entire thought process has been captured by urban Naxals. And

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE EDITORIAL PAGE: MOTION OF ATTACK
PAGE 10

Hyundai row: India expresses 'displeasure', S Korea 'regrets offence'

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

REACTING SHARPLY to social media posts by "Hyundai Pakistan Official" on Kashmir, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it summoned the South Korean envoy on Monday and expressed "strong displeasure". It said South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong also called up External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday morning and "regretted the offence".

Hyundai Motor also issued a statement on Tuesday, saying that the "unauthorised" social media posts by an independently-owned distributor in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

EXPLAINED

Clear signal to investors

THE CENTRE'S strong response is a signal to international investors in India to refrain from making political comments, even outside the country. It is a reflection of Delhi's clear red line on J&K.

EXPRESS NETWORK

GUJARAT BLASTS: 49 CONVICTED, 28 ACQUITTED PAGE 8

Kerala HC upholds ban on channel: Denial of security nod 'justified'

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEBRUARY 8

SAYING THAT the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) decision to deny security clearance to Malayalam news channel MediaOne TV was "justified", the Kerala High Court on Tuesday upheld the Centre's ban on its telecast.

On January 31, hours after the Union Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry barred the transmission of the channel citing "security reasons", the single-judge bench of Justice N Nagaresh had deferred the Centre's order for two days. This was later extended till February 8.

Dismissing the writ petitions — filed by the channel, its employees and journalists' union — challenging the Centre's decision,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Never had a Twitter account, conspiracy against me: JNU V-C

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit

A DAY after the controversy over tweets from an unverified Twitter handle in her name (@SantishreeD), newly appointed Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit said on Tuesday that she "never had" a Twitter account.

The handle, which had tweets calling Jamia Millia Islamia and St Stephen's College "communal campuses", used slurs for Indian Christians and described civil rights activists as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

On BharatPe Board table: Ouster of Grover, share buyback

BharatPe co-founder Ashneer Grover

PRANAV MUKUL & SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE BOARD of Directors of fintech company BharatPe is learnt to be setting the stage for terminating the employment of its co-founder and MD Ashneer Grover, who, along with his spouse, are under the scanner for alleged financial fraud.

The move by the Board will likely leverage provisions in the company's Articles of Association (AoA) to buy back certain restricted shares held by Grover at a lower fair market value, sources told *The Indian Express*.

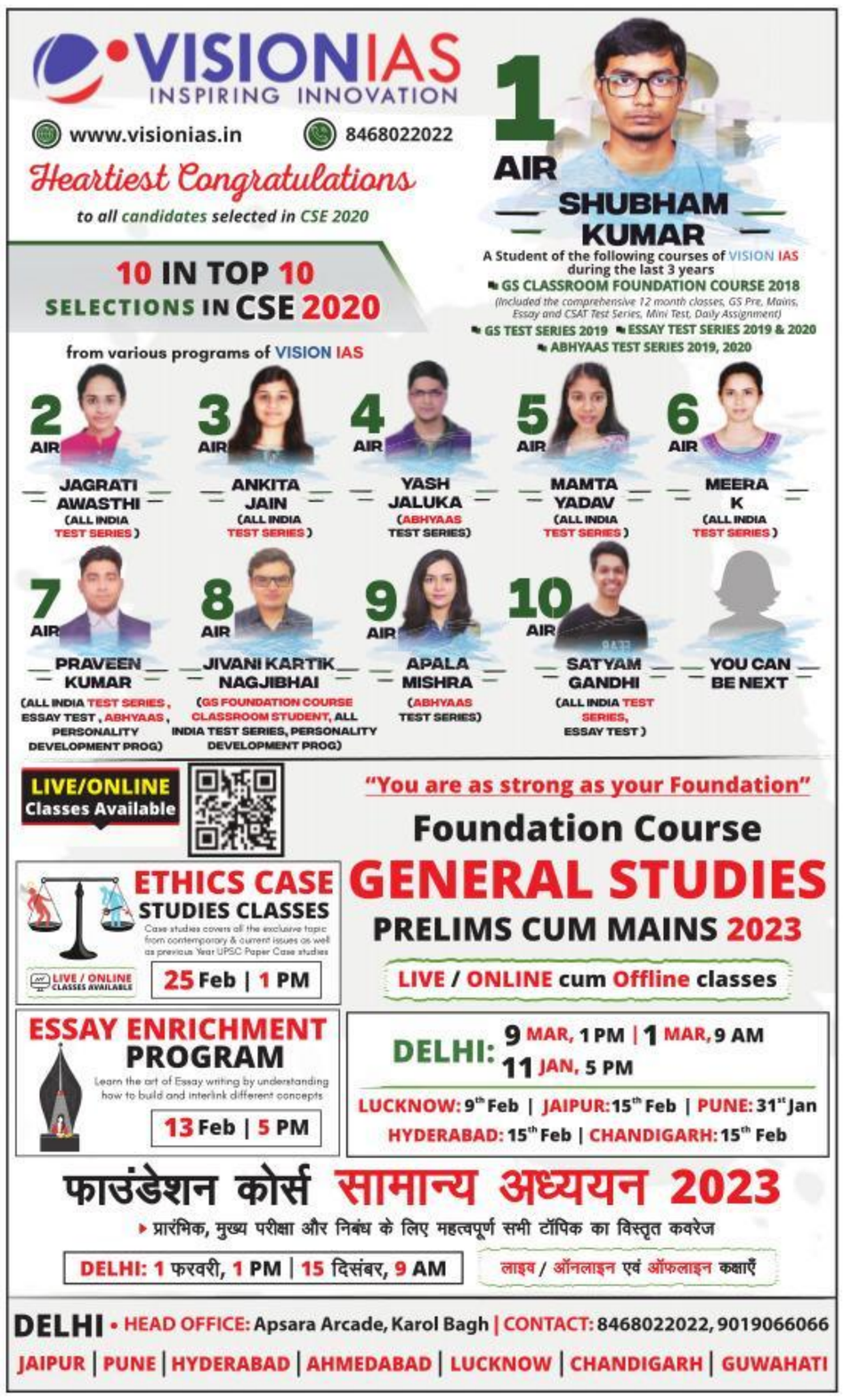
The Board has appointed Big 4 audit firm PwC to investigate these allegations.

The company's AoA provides for a founder's shares to bought back by the company if it has terminated the said founder's employment for "Cause".

The Indian Express reviewed the AoA of Resilient Innovations Pvt Ltd (parent company of BharatPe) that was filed with the Registrar of Companies (RoC) on September 3, 2021.

Among the seven scenarios that fall under the definition of "cause", is "gross negligence or wilful misconduct by such Founder, as determined by a Big 4 Firm, which does not have any

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



FROM PAGE ONE

Karnataka

maintain law and order, peace and harmony... I had appealed to students, management and teachers after which I gave the directive. I didn't want the situation to escalate or see the students being targeted." Bommai said the state will "follow the High Court's order" on the issue.

Official sources told *The Indian Express* that the decision was prompted by rising concerns over protests and confrontations between students wearing the hijab and large groups of boys and girls wearing saffron shawls in several colleges. In southern Karnataka, where the issue has rapidly widened communal faultlines, prohibitory orders were imposed in Shivamogga town while the police opened fire in the air in Davangere after a large number of students and pro-Hindutva activists gathered before a college.

In Bommai's home district of Haveri, four youths wearing saffron shawls were arrested for allegedly assaulting police personnel. The incident occurred while the youths were being taken into custody after one of them "tried to breach the peace" at the Hirekerur first grade college.

The state government's holiday decision covers classes 8-12 in schools, all first grade or junior colleges, and post-graduate and technical education institutions. It came after the Karnataka High Court began hearing pleas by a group of students from Udupi, where the issue first emerged last month, that the ban violates the right to freedom of religion.

According to official sources, stone-pelting by protesters and lathicharge by police were also reported on Tuesday from Bagalkot and Vijayapura in northern Karnataka. At the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College in Udupi, a large group of students wearing saffron shawls and headgear raised slogans in support of the ban and rushed towards hijab-wearing students who were staging a protest "demanding justice". The situation was contained after the police and college authorities intervened.

In Mandya, a hijab-wearing student confronted a group of saffron-shawl wearing boys, who tried to heckle her. She later blamed "outsiders" and said she had the support of her classmates and college authorities.

In Shivamogga, boys wearing saffron scarves gathered in front of a college in support of the hijab ban and demanded entry. The police resorted to a "mild lathicharge to defuse the situation" and later clamped prohibitory orders under CrPC 144 on Tuesday and Wednesday in the town.

In this district, a video of a saffron flag being hoisted inside a first-grade college by a boy clambering up the pole triggered a war of words between the BJP and Congress.

Two colleges

government shut down all high schools and colleges for three days in a bid to lower the rising heat.

At PES College in Mandya, second-year B.Com student Muskan was the face of defiance while confronting a crowd of young men, wearing saffron shawls, who heckled her and shouted religious slogans. Speaking to The Indian Express, she said her college allowed her to wear the burqa on campus and the hijab inside classrooms.

"My college administration and principal has never opposed us wearing the burqa. Some outsiders are forcing it. Who are these people to stop us? Why should I listen to them?" she said.

Recounting the day's event that was captured in a viral video, Muskan said: "I was going to submit my assignment. Even before I entered the college, there were a few Muslim students wearing the hijab who were being heckled. They were crying. I am here for education and my college allows me to wear the attire. In the crowd, there were only 10 per cent of students from our college, most of them were outsiders. I was disturbed by the way they were behaving, and I countered them." The video shows the college principal and other staff trying to control the situation.

"After I reached class, my principal stood by me and said, 'I have allowed you to come in the attire (burqa) and you do not have to worry about others'. In our college, we are allowed to wear the burqa till we reach class and can wear the hijab once the class starts. Nobody in this college had a problem until it was started by outsiders two days ago," Muskan said.

The principal, J Mahadeva, could not be reached for comment. Asked about the response of her classmates, Muskan said: "I received appreciation from my friends and classmates who are from other communities. They were also unhappy over the crowds polluting the college atmosphere, and appreciated me for taking them on."

But the video did spark concern at home. "My mother was worried but my father called me up and supported what I did. My college has always stood by me and we have followed whatever the rules are. I feel safe with my college, friends and parents standing with me," Muskan said.

Meanwhile, at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College in Udupi, the situation turned tense as a group of boys and girls wearing saffron scarves and headwear shouted religious slogans and roamed the campus.

"Around 9.30 am, I was outside the office, standing with a few lecturers. By then, a big group of these boys had started assembling in the ground and were distributing saffron turbans and scarves. Then they started raising religious slogans. As the situation seemed tense, our teachers asked us to leave," said Sana Kauser, 21, a first-year M.Sc Computer Science student. With more students turning up for their laboratory classes, authorities shut the gates and the tension spilled over to the other side, where a group of hijab-clad girls asked to be allowed inside while boys in saffron scarves continued with their sloganeering. "Our demand is the same as their demand. If they can wear their hijab and bring their religion to college, so can we," said one of the boys.

HC seeks peace

order in the state. The advocate general sought an order to prevent the protests when an issue is sub judice, citing Supreme Court observations over the farm protests in 2021.

"Having heard the parties and pending further hearing, which will be accomplished before long, the court requests the student community and public at large to maintain peace and tranquility...The court has full faith in the wisdom and virtue of the public at large," Justice Dixit said. The case was adjourned for further hearing Wednesday.

In the hearing that spanned over three hours, the Court heard senior advocate Devadutt Kamath on behalf of the petitioners on the state's lack of power to restrict wearing of a hijab.

"I am a Brahmin. My son goes to a school wearing a namam... Would that also not be permissible?" Kamath asked. The petitioners made four key arguments challenging the college's ban on hijab and the Karnataka government order validating that decision. Kamath cited the Supreme Court's landmark 2017 ruling on the right to privacy to argue that the choice to wear a piece of clothing is part of the fundamental right to privacy. Kamath argued that fundamental rights, from freedom of speech and expression, privacy to religious freedom, can only be restricted by a legislation on grounds prescribed by the Constitution.

The Karnataka government notification is a declaration of an administrative rule under the Karnataka Education Act, 1983. Kamath criticised the state's February 5 which justified a ban on hijabs, as being unconstitutional, premised on irrelevant judgments, and based on laws that do not give powers to dictate on uniforms.

Kamath argued that the ban is a violation of the right to freedom of religion as hijabs fall under "essential religious practices" in Islam. The ban also violates the right to freedom of expression and privacy, it was argued.

There has been no issue of public order over the hijab issue when the girls have been wearing the headscarves to college over the last two years, Kamath argued. The petitioners' advocate said "religious apartheid" was at play at the Kundapura college since girls who wore hijabs were segregated from other students on Monday.

Kamath also argued that the government does not have powers under section 7 of the Karnataka Education Act to issue orders on uniforms in colleges. He said that "The section a to h (under section 7 of the KEA) does not have anything to do with dress code." The Education department used clause 7 (2) (g) in the Act, which is meant to prescribe curriculum, to issue the order on dress codes that maintain equality and unity on pre-university college campuses.

At the start of Tuesday's hearing, the court asked advocates to set aside their passions. "We will go by reason, we will go by law. This is becoming a very emotive issue unfortunately. This is how things happen in a society like ours. Leave all emotions outside. We will go by what the Constitution says -- the Constitution is Bhagwad Gita for us, nothing else. It is a form of Bhagwad Gita for me because that is the oath I have taken. Keep all your emotions aside," Justice Dixit said. The High Court took up the petitions on a priority basis "to decide quickly on the issue in order to allow the students to get on with their education", even as students wearing hijabs were harassed in some parts of Karnataka and saffron shawl protests were organised in several colleges in the coastal region.

The single-judge bench took up the hearing on three petitions filed on behalf of Muslim girl students from Udupi against restrictions placed on them attending classes wearing hijabs. Justice Dixit refused to delay the hearing by stating the "students are waiting for a decision". When advocates stated that more petitions are likely to be filed, the judge responded that "if one case is decided, that will take care of the rest of the cases". "We decide (the cases) on one principle -- this or that. The numerical strength of the cases will not have any relevance on the merits of the cases. One judgment should have relevance to all cases. One Bommai decided what should happen to the rest of the case. We need not wait," the court stated.

The court was referring to the landmark judgment by the Supreme Court in 1994 in the S R Bommai case, which laid down the law for the dissolution of state legislative assemblies by the Centre. "We cannot keep the cases generating hope. They should know whether they should wear (the hijab) or not," the High Court observed.

PM speech

this is why their thought process has become destructive. This is a matter of concern for the country, and has to be given serious thought."

"This is why they are repeatedly saying history is being changed. We only want to set right the memory of some people, increase their memory power. We are not changing history," he said.

He accused the Congress of destabilising state governments, corruption, putting "one family's interests" over that of everyone and not respecting freedom of speech, among others – Congress members staged a walkout during his speech.

Taking a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi who had underlined the importance of federalism and the Union of States in his Lok Sabha speech, Modi said it appeared that Congress had a problem with the word nation. He suggested that the party change its name from Indian National Congress to Indian Federation of Congress.

And the day after he quoted Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks on the Korea war contributing to price rise in an attempt to blunt Congress criticism on current prices, he again referred to Nehru, this time to accuse him of delaying the liberation of Goa by 15 years by not sending the Army to protect his global image.

Keeping the focus on Goa – it is headed to Assembly polls on February 14 – Modi said: "I am revealing the history of those who talk about individual freedom. Lata Mangeshkar's family was from Goa. But the country must know how the Congress behaved with her family. Her younger brother, Hridaynath Mangeshkar, was sacked from his job at All India Radio. His fault was that he had presented a poem on patriotism by Veer Savarkar. This is your freedom of expression. During Congress government, there were several injustices, not just against Hridaynathji, the list is quite long."

"The difficulty faced by Congress is that they never thought of anything else before the dynasty. We will have to accept that the biggest threat to India's democracy are the dynastic parties. When a family is supreme in any party, then the first casualty is that of talent," he said. Using *"agar Congress na hoti"* (had the Congress not been there) repeatedly, he tore into the party, saying even Mahatma Gandhi wanted the party to be disbanded after Independence.

If the Congress had not been there, he said, "democracy would have been free of dynastic culture. The country would have moved on indigenous resolutions." **FULL REPORTS ON www.indianexpress.com**

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EXPRESS AUDIO
The Hijab ban row and the politics of coastal Karnataka
NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY
How the Hijab ban controversy started, and how it is connected to the regional politics of Karnataka

मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारी, उत्तर प्रदेश
Chief Electoral Officer, Uttar Pradesh

वोट के लिये तैयार

उत्तर प्रदेश विधानसभा सामान्य निर्वाचन-2022

समावेशी, सुगम एवं सहभागी निर्वाचन की ओर अग्रसर

अगर आपके पास मतदाता पहचान पत्र नहीं है तो इन 12 दस्तावेजों में से कोई भी अपने साथ मतदान केंद्र लेकर जाएं और मतदान कर एक ज़िम्मेदार नागरिक का कर्तव्य निभायें

01 आधार कार्ड
02 मनरेगा जॉब कार्ड
03 पासबुक (फोटो सहित बैंक/डाकघर द्वारा जारी)
04 स्वास्थ्य बीमा स्मार्ट कार्ड (श्रम मंत्रालय की योजना के अंतर्गत जारी)
05 ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस
06 पैन कार्ड
07 स्मार्ट कार्ड (एनपीआर के अंतर्गत आरजीआई द्वारा जारी)
08 भारतीय पासपोर्ट
09 पेंशन दस्तावेज़ (फोटोग्राफ सहित)
10 सेवा पहचान पत्र (केन्द्र/राज्य सरकार/लोक उपक्रम/पब्लिक लिमिटेड कम्पनियों द्वारा जारी किए गए फोटोयुक्त सेवा पहचान-पत्र)
11 सरकारी पहचान पत्र (सांसदों/विधायकों/विधान परिषद् सदस्यों को जारी किए गए)
12 यूडीआईडी कार्ड (सामाजिक न्याय एवं अधिकारिता मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार द्वारा जारी)

मतदाता सूची में अपना नाम चेक करें और बनें जागरूक मतदाता

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2. मतदाता सूचना पर्ची आपके घर पर वितरित की गयी है, इसमें अपना नाम ज़रूर देखें।

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प्रथम चरण (58 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	10.02.2022
द्वितीय चरण (55 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	14.02.2022
तृतीय चरण (59 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	20.02.2022
चतुर्थ चरण (59 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	23.02.2022
पंचम चरण (61 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	27.02.2022
षष्ठम चरण (57 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	03.03.2022
सप्तम चरण (54 वि.स. क्षेत्र)	07.03.2022

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ANAND VIHAR	SIRIFORT	SHADIPUR	IHBAS
Very Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
363 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	297 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	231 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	284 AQI PM 10 (0–500)

0-50 Good | 51-100 Satisfactory | 101-200 Moderate | 201-300 Poor | 301-400 Very Poor | 401-500 Severe

SKYWATCH

FORECAST: Feb 9

Generally cloudy sky. Light rain/thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds

MAX: 22 — 1.2° C below normal

MIN: 13 — 3.8° C above normal

NO ARREST SO FAR

Teenager raped, her friend beaten by man posing as cop

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

A 19-YEAR-OLD woman has alleged that she was raped and her friend assaulted and robbed by a man claiming to be a Delhi Police officer.

The alleged incident took place on January 28 when the woman and her friend were at a park near her home in Dwarka. She alleged they were approached by a man in khaki uniform who claimed they were indulging in obscenity and threatened to file a complaint against them.

While an FIR under sections of rape was registered on February 4, no arrest has been made so far.

When contacted, DCP (Dwarka) Shankar Choudhary said, "We lodged an FIR after we received a complaint from the woman and a probe is on to nab the accused."

A senior police officer added: "We are specifically on the lookout for an Ertiga car, since we were tipped off about its presence in the area. The woman told police the man was wearing khaki pants, a khaki woollen cap, and a windcheater brown jacket."

The woman, in her complaint, said she and her friend were sitting in a park after a stroll at around 7.30 pm.

"The man came and slapped my friend thrice. He had a Hindi-Haryanvi accent and claimed he saw us behaving indecently. My friend explained that we were not doing anything. The man sat beside me and asked us for identity cards," she stated in her complaint.

When she showed a PDF of her Aadhaar card on her phone, he clicked a picture of it. Despite her objections, he refused to delete it and started assaulting her friend. "He asked us to come along with him to Dwarka Sector 23 police station, but we told him we had not done anything wrong. In the meantime, my friend pleaded and asked him to leave us."

The woman stated that he demanded Rs 11,000 as a "fine", but they said they could give Rs 6,000. "He asked him to withdraw the cash from a nearby mall, but he did not let me go. When I said I was not carrying my wallet, he said he would frisk me. He started touching me and when I resisted, he threatened me with a false case, saying he will destroy my career and tarnish my parents' reputation. He claimed he will file a false case, alleging that I was a sex worker."

The complaint further stated, "After collecting money from my friend, he asked him to go and said he will drop me. When my friend insisted on staying, he was again assaulted and forced to leave. He threatened that he would take me to a police station where other police personnel, including the SHO, would rape me. After the threats, he raped me. After some time, I heard some noise and screamed for help. I managed to escape from his clutches. He yelled at me, asking me not to inform anyone about this."

Police said the woman told her mother about the incident on January 29, who then informed her husband. "I am still depressed and traumatised. I have this question – why are women treated as objects," the woman wrote in her complaint.

Doctor shot in the face by assailants who tried to rob car

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

A 26-YEAR-OLD resident doctor at RTR Hospital was shot in the face on Monday night by men who tried to rob his car. Police said the incident took place outside the hospital gate, in Dwarka.

The doctor, Hemant Mudgal, is undergoing treatment. No arrest has been made so far. Police said they received a PCR call around 9 pm. The incident took place around 50 metres from the police station.

A senior doctor at RTR hospital said, "We were standing outside the building. Hemant had just come to the hospital and was having tea at a stall. When he entered his car, a Hyundai Verna, there were two men who tried to sit in the back seat. He started driving and took a sharp turn, and one of the men fell on the road. The other man managed to get inside and hit him with the pistol. Hemant drove towards the hospital's emergency department. The man forced him to stop and step out of the car. The assailants then fired at him and took the car. They rammed into a wall and the guards tried to block them off, but they broke through the gate. Hemant had a bullet injury on his jaw; we took him to the emergency department."

As the car was damaged, the men abandoned it and fled.

"We believe they were trying to steal his car but when he resisted, they hit him. They fired bullets to scare everyone. We tried to stop them but they had weapons. Hemant had come for the night shift when this happened," said another doctor.

Shankar Choudhary, DCP (Dwarka), said, "We have recovered the car and a country-made pistol. Several teams are working on the case and the accused will be nabbed soon. We are not clear about the carjacking; all angles are being probed."

Police said they are yet to record the doctor's statement.

Dr Amitabh Bhasin, Medical Superintendent (RTR), said, "Hemant is a junior resident doctor. He was shot in the face and came running towards the hospital. He said someone had fired at him. The accused took his car. The guards tried to stop the criminals but they were driving at at least 150 kmph and broke the gate."

Lab gave positive Covid reports to avail leave

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
FEBRUARY 8, GURGAON

A MAN working at a private lab was arrested for allegedly issuing fake Covid test reports in Gurgaon. A joint team of Haryana CM flying squad, health department and drug control department raided a private diagnostic laboratory, after being informed that they were involved in issuing fake Covid reports for Rs 2,000-5,000.

Officials said the lab director, Anuj Sharma, had taken a franchisee of SRL diagnostics lab on rent five months ago at DLF phase 3. The lab is registered as Good Health diagnostic. Officials said they were tipped off about a racket of fake Covid test reports operating from a property at DLF phase 3. Sanjeev (22), who hails from Agra and worked at the lab, was caught during the raid, while Sharma is absconding. Inspector Harish of the CM flying squad said the lab did not collect any swab samples and merely took money for providing Covid test reports through forgery. "We are probing how many reports were issued by the lab. Several people had taken fake positive reports to avail leave at offices, while others who needed a negative report to travel also paid. We have recovered false reports, a printer, a rubber stamp, a phone, and Rs 12,500 in cash," he said.

An SRL spokesperson said: "We have been made aware of the complaint against a franchisee. We're internally investigating. We have a zero-tolerance policy against unethical practices and will initiate appropriate action. SRL has the largest number of approved Covid testing labs. Our values of quality and ethical practices enabled us to deliver extensive services during pandemic."

Woman on ventilator after falling off e-rickshaw during snatching bid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

A 40-YEAR-OLD woman sustained severe injuries on her head while trying to resist a robbery bid at Shahdara, after two bike-borne men targeted her and tried to snatch her bag in the middle of the road, police said.

The woman fell from a moving e-rickshaw, police said, adding that the accused managed to steal the bag and fled the spot. No arrest has been made so far.

The woman's family said she is critical and on ventilator support at the hospital.

The woman has been identified as Ritu Kumar, a resident of Krishna Nagar. On Monday afternoon, Ritu and her relatives boarded an e-rickshaw to head to a wedding. They were on their way when two bike-borne men approached them and tried to snatch Ritu's handbag.

"She was resisting and they pulled her. She fell from the e-rickshaw and hit her head. They dragged her on the road and then fled with her bag. I was at my shop when I received a call about the accident. We are all worried. Ritu hasn't regained consciousness and doctors said she lost a lot of blood because of her head injuries," said Ritu's husband, Sunil, who works at a saree shop at Krishna Nagar.

According to police, the incident took place around 1.15 pm at Anand Vihar. Ritu's sister-in-law, Priya, picked her up with help of locals and rushed her to Hedgewar Hospital. Doctors later referred her to Max Hospital, Patparganj, where she is undergoing treatment. Priya told police the accused were wearing helmets so she couldn't see them.

DCP (Shahdara) R Sathiyasundaram said, "We received a call from Hedgewar Hospital where Ritu was admitted. We rushed to the hospital and found that around 1.15 pm, two unknown men snatched her bag. She fell from the vehicle and hit her head. The criminals managed to escape with her bag." A robbery case was registered on complaint of eyewitnesses.

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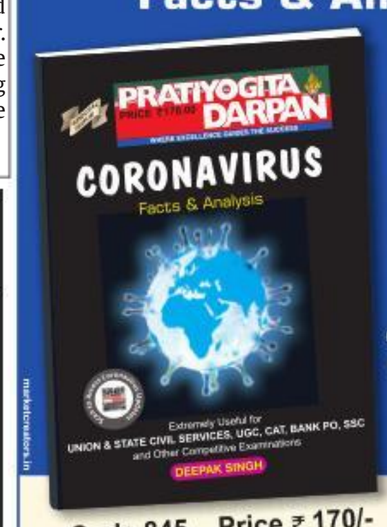
Sd/-,
REGISTRAR

Date: 31.01.2022

CORONAVIRUS
Facts & Analysis



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Delhi riots: HC says have to hear those being accused of hate speech

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN A matter related to the Northeast Delhi riots, the Delhi High Court Tuesday granted time to the petitioners to file applications to implead political leaders and activists, who they have accused of delivering hate speeches, as parties in the case.

Asking the petitioners whether the court can issue directions against whom the allegations have been made without them being arrayed as parties, the division bench of Justice Siddharth Mirdul and Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said, "If you make allegations against a person, are they not entitled to be afforded a hearing and an opportunity to defend themselves?"

The court also asked whether a PIL was maintainable in a criminal case and why the petitioners should not approach the magistrate instead. "You may have been wronged or you say that people have been wronged but then two wrongs don't make a right… so it does not mean that we should overreach ourselves and start doing things which the law does not permit," it observed.

One of the petitions filed by Shaikh Mujtaba Farooq and others seeks FIR against BJP leaders Kapil Mishra, Anurag Thakur, Parvesh Verma and Abhay Verma and action against police officials.

Arguing the petition, senior advocate Colin Gonsalves said there are several instances where the Supreme Court and high courts have intervened in matters relating to social crime and removed the local police from the investigation. Seeking an independent investigation into the hate speeches and stating that a magistrate cannot direct an independent investigation, Gonsalves submitted, "We don't expect Delhi Police to carry out a fair investigation. I have no faith in Delhi Police. What is the point of me going to the magistrate? It is a dead-end."

Visa racket busted, 6 held

New Delhi: Police have busted a fake visa racket and arrested six people. Equipment used for preparation of fake visas of different countries, particularly European nations, was recovered from their possession. A total of 225 passports were also recovered, police officers said. **ENS**

Indian Railway Catering And Tourism Corporation Limited
(A Govt. Of India Enterprise-Mini Ratna)
CIN: L74899DL1999GOI101707

DECLARATION OF INERIM DIVIDEND AND NOTICE OF RECORD DATE

Pursuant to Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, ("Listing Regulations"), notice is hereby given that Board of Directors of the Company at its meeting held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, has declared an interim dividend of Rs. 2/- (Rs.Two only) per share on equity shares of Rs. 2/- each. The Interim dividend will be paid to the equity shareholders of the company, whose name appears in the Register of Member of the Company or in the records of the depositaries as beneficial owners of the shares as on Friday, February 18, 2022, which is the Record Date fixed for the purpose of payment of Interim Dividend for the Financial Year 2021-22.

This information is also available on website of the Company at (www.irctc.com) and also on the website of Stock exchanges where the shares of the Company are listed at (www.bseindia.com) and (www.nseindia.com.)

For Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited
Sd/-
(Suman Kalra)
Company Secretary and Compliance Officer
Membership No.: F9199

Place: New Delhi
Date: February 8, 2022

Registered Office: 11thFloor, B-148, Statesman House, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi, 110001, India,
Website: www.irctc.com Email ID: investors@irctc.com, Telephone: 011-23311263/64 Fax: 011-23311259

INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING AND TOURISM CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Enterprise - Mini Ratna)
CIN : L74899DL1999GOI101707
Registered & Corp.office: 11th Floor, B-148 Statesman House, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2021

(Amount in Rs. Lakh)

Sl. No.	PARTICULARS	Quarter ended			Nine Months Ended		Year ended
		31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	30.09.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.12.2021 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.03.2021 (Audited)
1	Revenue from Operations	54,021.04	40,493.72	22,437.37	1,18,851.72	44,426.36	77,772.83
2	Other Income	1,630.08	1,612.13	2,086.06	4,699.26	6,617.21	8,563.65
3	Total Revenue	55,651.12	42,105.85	24,523.43	1,23,550.98	51,043.57	86,336.48
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax and exceptional items	28,154.36	21,368.80	10,449.27	60,630.92	7,941.33	21,636.10
5	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax and after exceptional items	28,154.36	21,368.80	10,438.93	60,630.92	12,168.89	25,575.91
6	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax	20,880.94	15,857.26	7,808.57	44,990.66	8,611.61	18,411.41
7	Total Comprehensive income (Comprising Profit/(Loss) (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)	20,936.08	15,482.78	7,753.43	45,140.71	8,643.91	18,734.30
8	Paid-up Equity Share Capital (Face value of Rs. 2/- each)	16,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00
9	Other Equity						1,30,847.67
10	Earning per share (EPS)*						
	Basic (Rs)	2.61	1.98	0.98	5.62	1.08	2.30
	Diluted (Rs)	2.61	1.98	0.98	5.62	1.08	2.30

*EPS for quarter and nine months period are not annualised. Number of shares used for calculation of EPS/DPS are 8000 lakhs. (Refer note no.8 below)

Notes:
1 The above results have been reviewed by Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 8th February, 2022. The Statutory Auditors have conducted limited review of the Financial Results.
2 The Financial Results of the Company have been prepared in accordance with the Indian Accounting Standards (Ind-AS) as prescribed under section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015, as amended from time to time.
3 The outbreak of corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic globally and in India is causing significant disturbance and slowdown of economic activity. However, the business activities of the Company is going gradually on track in line with the lifting of restrictions as were imposed by the state and central Governments.
4 The Company has requested Railway Board to reconsider waiving off the fixed charges (fixed haulage and Custody charges) amounting to Rs. 2,793 Lakhs upto 31st March, 2021 for non-operational period of three private trains considering it as a force majeure situation, as the lockdowns and restrictions imposed by Government of India due to COVID-19 pandemic were beyond control of the Company. However, the Company has made adequate provision for these charges in the Financial Year 2020-21.
5 "Catering contracts awarded before 22nd March, 2020 have been treated as zero period due to Pandemic and accordingly, no income as well as railways share payable has accrued during the year 2020-21 and for the period up to 26.11.2021. Railway Board order dated 23.02.2021 for termination of Standard Bid Document agreements due to change in scope of work, has been withdrawn on 19.11.2021 and appeal filed by Railway Board for annulment of order dated 23.02.2021 against Hon'able Madras High Court has now been withdrawn by Railway Board. Catering services has been started with cooked food from 27.11.2021 in a phased manner and income and railway share payable has been accrued accordingly. However, the effect of enhancement of License Fee for the period from 27.11.2021 to 31.12.2021 has not been ascertained & recognized on account of increase in catering tariff as per the CC-60 of 2019 issued by the Railway Board, since due to Pandemic, the sales assessment by the Company is pending.
6 In respect of PPP plants of Railneer, the management has decided that compensation in lieu of the commitment of minimum assured level of sales shall not be payable to the operators. But certain DCOs have not accepted the decision of the Company and the financial implication calculated net of License Fee waived off works out to Rs. 221.52 lakhs upto 31st March, 2021 and Rs. 156.26 lakhs for the nine months ended 31st December, 2021 which have not been provided in the books of accounts.
7 No provision has been made for charges for use of PRS of Indian Railways by the Company for Tejas Trains for the year ended 31st March, 2021 and for the nine months ended 31st December, 2021 as the same are yet to be decided between the Company and the party.
8 During the quarter, the Company has Sub-divided its 1600 Lakhs equity shares of face value of Rs. 10/- each fully paid up into 8000 Lakhs equity shares of face value of Rs. 2/- each fully paid up w.e.f. 29th October, 2021 as recommended by the Board of Directors and approved by the Shareholders of the Company. Earnings per Share have been calculated / restated, as applicable, for all the period(s) presented after considering the new number of equity shares post such sub-division in line with the provisions of the applicable Ind AS and to make figures of EPS comparable with previous periods/year.
9 The BOD have declared an Interim Dividend of Rs.2/- per share(Face value of Rs.2/- per share) for the financial year 2021-22 in their meeting held on 08th February 2022.
10 The figures for the previous periods have been regrouped/reclassified/restated, wherever considered necessary/required.

For & on behalf of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
Rajni Hasija
Chairperson & Managing Director
DIN:-08083674

Place: New Delhi
Dated: 8th February, 2022

pnb MetLife
Milkar life aage badhaein

PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited: Newspaper Publication
Registration Number: 117 dated August 6, 2001 with IRDAI
(Regulation 52 (8) read with Regulation 52 (4) of the Listing Regulations)

(₹ in Lakhs)

Sr.No.	Particulars	Quarter ending 31st December, 2021	Nine months ending 31st December, 2021	Quarter ending 31st December, 2020
1	Premium Income (Gross) (Refer note (c))	1,87,568	4,73,101	1,54,950
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	2,504	(7,559)	1,988
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items) (Refer note (e))	2,504	(7,559)	1,988
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	2,504	(7,559)	1,699
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	NA	NA	NA
6	Equity Share Capital (as at date)	2,01,288	2,01,288	2,01,288
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet (Refer note (f))	-	-	-
8	Earning per share (Face value of ₹ 10 each) a. Basic (Not annualized) (in ₹) b. Diluted (Not annualized) (in ₹)	0.12 0.12	(0.38) (0.38)	0.08 0.08
9	Debt-equity ratio (no. of times)	NA	NA	NA
10	Debt service coverage ratio (no. of times)	NA	NA	NA
11	Interest service coverage ratio (no. of times)	NA	NA	NA

Footnotes
a) This format is modified to reflect the terminology used in the Insurance Act IRDAI Regulations.
b) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/ Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.The full format of the Quarterly/ Annual Financial Results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange and the Company's website 'https://www.pnbmetlife.com'.
c) Premium income is gross of reinsurance and net of GST
d) Line Item No. 5 would be disclosed when Ind AS become applicable to Insurance companies
e) Net Profit/ (Loss) before tax, for the period is Profit before tax as appearing in Profit and Loss Account (Shareholders' account)
f) Reserves are excluding Revaluation reserve and fair value change account.
g) #-Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Policyholders' and Shareholders' account in accordance with Ind-AS Rules/AS Rules, whichever is applicable.
h) The Company has issued and allotted 4,000 unsecured, subordinated, listed, rated, redeemable, taxable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) in the nature of 'Subordinated Debt' in accordance with IRDAI (Other Forms of Capital) Regulations, 2015 of face value of ₹1,000 thousands (each at par) aggregating to ₹4,000,000 thousands through private placement on January 27, 2022. The NCDs are rated by CRISIL and ICRA and have been assigned rating of "CRISIL AA+/stable" and "ICRA AA+/ stable" respectively.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Ashish Kumar Srivastava
Managing Director and CEO
DIN No. 00355075

Place: Mumbai
Date: February 07, 2022

PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited, Registered office: Unit No. 701, 702 & 703, 7th Floor, West Wing, Raheja Towers, 26/27 M G Road, Bangalore -560001, Karnataka. IRDA of India Registration number 117 dated August 6, 2001 with IRDAI. (Regulation 52 (8) read with regulation 52 (4) of the Listing Regulations) CI No. U66010KA2001PLC028883. The marks "PNB" and "MetLife" are registered trademarks of Punjab National Bank and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, respectively. PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited is a licensed user of these marks. Call us Toll-free at 1-800-425-6969, Website: www.pnbmetlife.com Email: indiaservice@pnbmetlife.co.in or write to us at 1st Floor, Techniplex-1, Techniplex Complex, Off Veer Savarkar Flyover, Goregaon (West), Mumbai - 400062. Phone: +91-22-41790000, Fax: +91-22-41790203. AD-NF/2021-22/144.

CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS 1,00,659

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL:	875
OXYGEN SUPPORT	214
VENTILATOR SUPPORT	84

DELHI: TOTAL CASES 18,46,198

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	15,416	14,562
ICU BEDS	4,474	4,131

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Feb 7	1,151	2,120	15	43,991
Feb 8	1,114	2,079	12	48,792
Total	6.908	18,13,280	26,010	3,53,46,462

*Total active cases in Delhi

NOIDA	Feb 7	Feb 8
Cases	148	138
Deaths	1	0
GURGAON		
Cases	478	425
Deaths	1	2

STUDENT ACTIVIST DOUSES HIMSELF WITH PETROL, STOPPED BY POLICE

Frustration grows, protests escalate at Delhi University

Protesting students unnecessarily impatient: V-C

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

AS PROTESTS over the demand to reopen Delhi University intensified Tuesday, an activist of the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti (CYSS), the students' wing of the Aam Aadmi Party, doused himself with petrol while Left organisations held agitations on North Campus.

The ABVP too staged a protest on South Campus. They had on Monday submitted memorandums to principals of 55 DU colleges demanding reopening.

The second day of protests saw Left organisations – the Students' Federation of India (SFI), All India Students' Association (AISA) and the Krantikari Yuva Sangathan (KYS) – hold joint protests and a 'chakka jam' outside the Arts Faculty building on North Campus. The protesters marched from Patel Chest to the Arts Faculty building, before sitting down on the main Chhatra Marg road of the university amid heavy deployment of police and CISF personnel.

On Monday, students had protested outside the Vice-Chancellor's office. The chakka jam ended after four hours, with students promising to come back with greater numbers in the coming days.

Meanwhile, a separate group of around 20 CYSS activists came to the protest site around 1 pm. At 1.40 pm, Kamal Tiwari, a CYSS activist and first-year student of MA in Buddhist Studies, doused himself with petrol. He also produced a matchstick but was whisked away by police personnel, who poured water on him and took him to a hospital.

"One Kamal Tiwari tried to pour petrol over himself in order to torch himself. Immediately he was stopped by police present at the spot and was removed from there and taken to HRH hospital. It is learnt that the said liquid was a mix of petrol and water. Further antecedents are being verified," said DCP (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

He told reporters: "They have wasted three years of our lives. We have been sitting at home all this while." Later, speaking to *The Indian Express*, Tiwari said he was taken to Hindu Rao Hospital and left four hours later after receiving counselling.

"I am from Kanpur. During my graduation from Motilal Nehru College, I barely attended college and then everything went online. Now my MA is going the same way. My parents are calling me back home and asking what is the point of staying here. We are frustrated," he said.

The agitation by Left organisations ended around 4:30 pm. Slogans of "*dera daal* (occupy)", "*DU tumko kholna hoga* (you will have to open DU)", and "*DU humare aapka, nahi kisi ke baap ka* (DU belongs to you and me, not to anybody's father)" were raised as students protested with placards.

Addressing students, Abhishek Kumar, the SFI DU co-convenor, said, "The time for sending memoranda is over. The DU administration should know that now we will protest continuously, every day, until our demands are met."

Abhigyan from AISA said, "We demand that the vice-chancellor come out and speak with us… We will come back here tomorrow in greater numbers so that we can carry forward this agitation."

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

DELHI UNIVERSITY Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh Tuesday said the university would reopen after taking stock of the level of preparedness. He said protesting students were becoming "unnecessarily impatient" and that such a big decision required many factors to be considered.

Sources said the issue may come up in the Academic Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday, even though it is not on the agenda.

The AC meeting is primarily being called to discuss the undergraduate curriculum framework.

Universities in the capital like Jawaharlal Nehru University and Ambedkar University Delhi have already announced 100% reopening.

However, DU is yet to take such a decision.

"We are working on the modalities and preparedness in the various colleges of the university. Once we get any clarity on that, we will open the university. We have to reopen, there is no question of not reopening," Singh told *The Indian Express*.

Singh also said the comparison could not be made with JNU as the universities had completely different structures and number of students.

"See the size of the universities. Our challenges are very different. It is very easy to bring out a notice, it doesn't take any time. But if there is no preparedness how will it work? Students have to come from different states. There are many issues associated with it. If we take an emotional decision and bring out a notice, what will happen to them? There are a good number of girls among them who have to come from far off places," he said.

"We have to see the larger picture. We are working on it; as soon as we feel confident and comfortable we will open it. One of the main issues is hostel preparedness, but there is also sanitisation of classrooms. Furniture has to be cleaned, etc. We are going by whatever the principals are telling us," he added.

Singh said students' protests on re-opening could have been dealt with by issuing a notice to pacify them but that would not be correct.

"There is no question of not opening the university. The only thing is, students are unnecessarily becoming impatient. The Proctor told them we are opening the university, but they need to wait for it a little bit. We could have evaded responsibility by simply taking out a notice but that serves no purpose," he said.

Earlier, DU Registrar had said meetings were on with principals to decide on when to reopen.

"We are trying to see when we can open but we will not do it immediately because we don't want to panic students. We will give at least 7-10 days' notice. It is not fair to compare JNU with DU, because JNU's total student strength is around the strength of one DU college. We have around 65% students from outside. Where will they stay? We need to consider all these factors," he had said.

Police pouring water on Kamal Tiwari, a CYSS activist and first-year student of MA in Buddhist Studies, after he doused himself with petrol. *Abhinav Saha*

BRIEFLY

Days after man's suicide attempt, two arrested

New Delhi: Two days after a 26-year-old MBA student allegedly tried to kill himself after being blackmailed by his friends over a private video, police arrested two persons. On Saturday, the victim had allegedly consumed a toxic substance at his home. A probe revealed that a group of people had allegedly taken him to a room and recorded a video at gunpoint.

Faridabad: 2 held for posting misleading content

Gurgaon: Two people were arrested for allegedly posting misleading content on social media related to alleged cow slaughter. The accused, identified as Delhi resident Kamal Tanwar and Palwal-based Yogesh, run a YouTube channel, and claimed the remains of dead cows were lying in hills in the Surajkund area, allegedly to hurt religious sentiments, police said. **ENS**

SDMC to build 'Wall of Honour' at Sarita Vihar

New Delhi: To pay tribute to security force personnel, who sacrificed their lives for the country, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) is going to construct a "Wall of Honour" in Southeast Delhi's Sarita Vihar. The 40-feet-wide and 12-foot-tall wall will be inscribed with the names of more than 200 personnel of security forces. **ENS**

'Delay in noise pollution report due to transfers and Covid disruption'

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

FREQUENT TRANSFER of Delhi Police nodal officers, leave taken by a Sub-Divisional Magistrate for her marriage and disruption due to the pandemic are some of the reasons cited by a monitoring committee set up by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for not submitting its report on enforcement of noise pollution measures.

The letter citing the delay in submitting the report, written by Justice S P Garg, a former Delhi High Court judge, was reproduced in an order passed by Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel, Sudhir Agarwal and expert members, Dr Nagin Nanda and Afroz Ahmad. The NGT has given the committee time till April 30, 2022, to complete its work and file the report. The application was filed on behalf of an organisation, Akhand Bharat Morcha, before the NGT for deliberation on the failure of the statutory authorities in Delhi in controlling noise pollution in the capital.

Observing the "repeated failures in the last several years" to enforce noise pollution measures, the tribunal had on August 11, 2020, set up a monitoring committee headed by Justice Garg, noting that in spite of directions, there remained "grievances against compliance and continued violation of norms".

On February 3, 2022, the committee sought more time to file a report on the matter owing to various reasons. It stated that "within a short span, there was frequent change/transfer of nodal officers from the Delhi Police".

The letter stated that initially a DCP (PCR) "joined belatedly after the transfer of previous nodal officer". It lists the immediate transfer of another DCP (PCR) officer and an Additional DCP rank officer. A DCP (operation) rank officer is currently the nodal officer.

"The newly designated nodal officers took their own time to be familiar with the functioning of the committee and the activities carried out by the former nodal officers," the letter read.

The letter further said a nodal officer was transferred and a new officer was posted. An SDM was on a long leave for her marriage and the "pandemic disrupted the functioning of the committee".

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

People take shelter from a sudden downpour, in Old Delhi on Tuesday. *Tashi Tobgyal*

Met dept predicts thundershowers today

New Delhi: Parts of Delhi recorded rainfall Tuesday evening, while thundershowers and strong winds are on the forecast for Wednesday.

The rainfall is on account of a western disturbance affecting northwest India. The maximum temperature settled at 26 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, three degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature was 11.5 degrees Celsius.

On Wednesday, the maximum temperature is likely to be 22 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature could be 13 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

The AQI on Tuesday was 270, in the 'poor' category. It has remained in the 'poor' category for four consecutive days. With the rainfall on the forecast for Wednesday, the air quality is likely to improve to be in the 'moderate' to 'satisfactory' category, according to the SAFAR forecasting system. From February 10 onwards, high wind speed is likely to help with the dispersion of pollutants, the forecast indicates. **ENS**

Engage in transparent decision-making: JNUTA to new V-C

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE JAWAHARLAL Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) Tuesday called upon the new Vice-Chancellor, Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, to "restore the sanctity of statutory bodies" and engage in transparent decision making.

The tenure of the outgoing V-C M Jagadesh Kumar was marked by tension with teachers and students. Among other things, the teachers pushed back on the alleged violation of JNU statutes in the appointment of deans, chairpersons and faculty members as well as on the allegedly improper conduct of meetings of the Academic Council and Executive Council.

In a statement Tuesday, the JNUTA said, "The long wait for a new V-C for JNU is finally over with the appointment of Prof Santishree D Pandit to the post."

"As the head of the university, JNUTA specifically calls upon her to restore the sanctity of statutory bodies, engage in transparent dialogic processes of decision making, observe the principle of seniority by rotation in matters of appointments of deans and chairpersons, maintain rigorous financial scrutiny in all administrative matters and ensure implementation of robust regulatory mechanisms to maintain checks and balances, such that the next five years of her tenure are productive and academically enabling for the diverse spectrum of opinions that a university like JNU produces," it added. The JNUTA said it will "present to the new administration demands for ensuring a non-partisan administration" and "restoring teaching-learning activities as per statutes and ordinances of the university".

Teachers also called on the new V-C to "restore the sanctity of statutory bodies"

"As the elected body of teachers, JNUTA will continue to exercise critical vigilance over all related matters to the wellbeing of the university," it said.

AMID BLAME GAME

As exodus debate takes political turn, migrants recall: No one told us to leave, we went home as money and ration ran out

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

NAZR MOHAMMAD, 22, is busy stitching jeans at a manufacturing unit in Old Seelampur, alongside five-six co-workers.

Away from the politics over the first pandemic-induced migrant exodus, Mohammad remembers one thing distinctly – the desire to return home. A day after the Prime Minister said the Delhi government had encouraged migrants to head back to their states, and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hit back saying this was untrue, Mohammad said all he knows is that weeks after the announcement of the lockdown in March 2020, news had spread of buses being made available at Delhi's Badarpur to head to Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh.

"I went there along with several people from the area, and got on a bus. I reached my village in Ramgarh by bus, auto, rickshaws – whatever we got," he said.

Mohammad, who earns around Rs 12,000 a month, said the reason he decided to return was that he wanted to be with his family and since work had come to a standstill in the capital. "Everyone working here had just one thing in mind – that they wanted to go back. Though the factory owner had allowed us to stay, he also said that if we get a chance, we should try to leave for home." He said he came back after nine months.

Nazr Mohammad, 22, stitching jeans at a manufacturing unit at Old Seelampur. *Tashi Tobgyal*

Most of the workers *The Indian Express* spoke to in areas such as Seelampur, Kanti Nagar and Khari Baoli, where labourers work and reside in large numbers, said key reasons for leaving at the time include work coming to a stop, shortage of ration, fear of being infected with an unknown disease and missing their families during a crisis. None of them said they were encouraged by the Delhi government to leave.

A resident of Hardoi in western Uttar Pradesh, Zameel Hussain, who works at a cloth manufacturing unit, said he took a bus from Moti Nagar a week after the first lockdown was announced. He said the bus dropped him at Shahjahanpur, from where he used other private transport to reach home.

He said the bus was arranged by "some private people", though he does not know who they are. "Every day the number of migrants around us were decreasing – people kept leaving on foot, by taking lifts, on cycles. So I also had just one thing in mind – that I have to go," he said.

Ausaf Khan, a 60-year-old mason, said he left Delhi around two weeks after the lockdown, catching a bus from Lal Kuan. "It was a private bus that dropped us till Badaun. People were saying that buses have been arranged at Lal Kuan, so I went there."

At Old Delhi's Khari Baoli, several labourers said they waited in Delhi for months hoping that things would improve and work would resume, but left when the lockdown continued longer than expected.

Ranjeet Kumar, who lives in Bihar's Triveniganj, said he waited two months before heading home. "I wasn't earning, the food shortage was immense; we ate once a day for weeks," he recalled. "We workers arranged a bus by putting Rs 2,000 each."

Minimum 10 years in jail, Rs 1 lakh fine: BJP promises to tighten 'love jihad' law in UP

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 8

IF IT retains power in Uttar Pradesh, the Bharatiya Janata Party has promised to increase the punishment in 'love jihad' cases to a minimum 10 years with a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

The BJP promise, which comes two days ahead of the first phase of polling in the state, will be an upgrade to the existing law on 'love jihad', which refers to interfaith marriages, particularly of Muslim men and Hindu women.

At present, those convicted for forcible conversions are sentenced to jail for a term ranging between one to five years, and a minimum fine of Rs 15,000.

For converting a minor or a woman from SC/ST community, the term can stretch up to 10 years with a fine of Rs 25,000.

For mass conversions, the punishment goes up to a maximum of 10 years in jail and a minimum fine of Rs 50,000.

In its manifesto – Lok Kapyan Sankalp Patra 2022 – released on Tuesday, the BJP has also promised to set up a Ramayan University for research on culture, shastras and religious facts associated with Lord Ram, besides a string of benefits for farmers and women.

Flanked by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the party had fulfilled "92 per cent" of the 212 's promises the party had made ahead of the 2017 state polls.

"We have an elaborate manifesto. The BJP government has ended appeasement, nepotism and corruption from UP politics and laid a strong foundation to make UP safe and developed. We will restore the glory of UP," he said.

For farmers, besides free electricity for irrigation and grants to set up bore and tube wells, the party has also promised a price stability fund to ensure minimum price for crops such as potato, tomato and onion.

It has also promised to strengthen procurement of wheat and paddy on Minimum Support Price (MSP), besides ensuring cane growers are paid within 14 days of procurement or paid interest.

Apart from setting up of six mega food parks in the state, the party has promised to launch the Rs 25,000-crore 'Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Agri-infrastructure Mission' to develop grading units, cold chain chambers.

With the Nishad community in mind, the BJP has also promised to launch the 'Nishadraj Boat Subsidy Scheme', which will provide 40 per cent subsidy to fishermen, apart from offering 25 per cent subsidy for setting up of fish seed production units. The boatmen community is a significant base of the Nishad party, a BJP ally in the state.

For women, the party has announced 'Mission Pink Toilet', a plan to build public toilets at an estimated cost of Rs 1,000 crore, besides installing CCTV cameras at public places, particularly near educational institutions, and setting up of 3,000 'pink police booths'.

The manifesto also promises two, free LPG cylinders on Holi and Deepawali each to beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, besides free travel for women above the age of 60 years.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Releasing the party manifesto in Lucknow on Tuesday. *Vishal Srivastav*

No case decided by court in 1 year of anti-conversion law

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 8

IN ITS manifesto released on Tuesday, the BJP promised it would strengthen the anti-conversion law, with a minimum punishment of 10 years and fine of Rs lakh for 'love jihad'.

It was in November 2020 that the Yogi Adityanath government brought in the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, with the intention to check "unlawful religious conversions", and "inter-faith marriages with the sole intention of changing a girl's religion", what the BJP calls 'love jihad'. The BJP government had later brought in a Bill to replace the ordinance, and it was passed by both Houses.

Under the law, those found guilty of conversion done though "misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means" face a jail term of 1 to 5 years, and a minimum fine of Rs 15,000, with the same higher in case a minor or an SC/ST woman is involved. For conversion "in contravention of the law" at a mass level, the guilty could face jail term from 3 to 10 years, with a minimum fine of Rs 50,000.

As per UP Police records, in one year of the ordinance being implemented, that is between November 2020 and November 2021, 148 cases were lodged in various police stations of the state with 359 people, including women, booked. Of them, no evidence was found against 72 people, and "clean chit" was given to them, said a police officer. Eighty-seven others not named in the FIR were found "involved" and a probe is on against them, he said.

Of the 148 cases, in nearly half (63), the alleged victim did not back the prosecution claims. Closure reports were filed in 13 cases after no evidence could be found against the accused.

Police claim to have completed investigation in 113 cases. An officer said chargesheet had been filed in 90. In 38 cases, the alleged victims were reportedly minors.

As per the records, the maximum such cases, 29 each, were lodged in Bareilly and Meerut zones, followed by 18 in Gorakhpur zone and 16 in Prayagraj zone.

Asked about the status of the cases, Additional Director General, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar said: "We work as per the evidence collected."

No case under the anti-conversion law has been decided by courts so far.

I HEREBY DECLARE

SADAF JAFAR
Congress, Lucknow Central

TOTAL ASSETS: ₹31.4 LAKH
MOVABLE ASSETS: Total: ₹6.4 lakh (includes a Wagon R)
IMMOVABLE ASSETS: Total: ₹25 lakh
Pending government dues: ₹64 lakh
(for damage to properties during anti-CAA protests in 2020. The case against 28 accused is sub-judice)
LOANS FROM BANKS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: NIL
CRIMINAL CASES: 4
SOURCES OF EARNING: None
EDUCATION: B.Ed from Lucknow University (2010)

RAGHURAJ PRATAP SINGH a.k.a RAJA BHAIYA
Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik), Kunda (Pratapgarh)

TOTAL ASSETS: ₹23.1 crore
MOVABLE ASSETS: Self: ₹9.1 crore (includes a revolver, a rifle, a gun and a Land Cruiser)
Wife: ₹3.1 crore (includes a revolver, a rifle and a gun)
Undivided family: ₹42.4 lakh
Four Children: ₹3 crore
IMMOVABLE ASSETS: Self: ₹4.4 crore
Wife: ₹2.9 crore
LOANS FROM BANKS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: Nil
CRIMINAL CASE: 1
SOURCES OF EARNING: Agriculture and MLA salary
EDUCATION: Graduate (1989)

BALLOTIN

SC refuses bail to Azam Khan for campaigning in UP polls

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Tuesday turned down a plea filed by Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan seeking interim bail for campaigning in the UP assembly polls. A bench comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and B R Gavai, however, granted liberty to Khan to approach the concerned court and request for expeditious disposal of bail pleas. "How can you file 32 petitions to seek bail? Don't bring politics in court," the bench said. Khan is presently lodged in Sitapur jail in connection with a number of cases, including that of land grabbing. **PTI**

Swept by BJP in 2017, but Covid, AMU anger could spell change in Aligarh

AMIL BHATNAGAR
ALIGARH, FEBRUARY 8

ON DECEMBER 15, 2019, a group of Aligarh Muslim University students gathered to express solidarity with students at Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia who had faced police action during the anti-CAA protests. The gathering swelled and the protests turned violent, with police officials firing tear gas shells and lathicharging the students.

As per the students, police also entered hostels and lobbed shells, while officials maintained that force was used only as reaction to a violent crowd.

For many students, the violence at AMU still feels fresh. As Aligarh district heads for polls in the first phase on February 10, that plus the "persecution" of students that followed, the missing jobs and the second wave when Covid ran through the area are uppermost in their minds.

Bringing the issues into sharp focus are the three AMU graduates contesting across two constituencies, looking to unseat the BJP, which won all the seven Assembly seats in Aligarh district in 2017.

"We have nothing but *nafrat* (hatred) for the present government. It is hard to forget what happened that night. Since then something or the other has been happening at the university and there is an attempt to portray us in a certain way. We want to vote for a stable future," says Inamul Hassan, an LLM student.

The campus falls in the Aligarh Koil seat, which was won by the BJP's Anil Parashar, who has been renominated by the party. The six other seats are Khair (SC), Barauli, Atrauli, Charra, Aligarh City and Iglas (SC). While Aligarh district has a substantial Muslim population, the Congress has fielded only one candidate from the community in the seven seats, and the SP-RLD two. The BJP has renominated five of its sitting MLAs.

The Congress candidate from Aligarh Koil is Vivek Bansal, an AMU graduate and former MLA who has contested twice on the same seat, unsuccessfully. The SP-RLD's nominee is Shaz Ishaq, another AMU product, who lost in 2017. With four other candidates in the fray, both the Congress and SP are hoping that the 1.4 lakh Muslim votes do not get split, ending up benefiting the BJP. Last time, the BJP had won by decent margins, amidst a wave for the party.

Zaid Sherwani, the cabinet member of the AMU students' union, says this time the SP-RLD has a good chance from Aligarh Koil. Students are rooting for Ishaq not only because he is from the university, "but also because the alliance has emerged as a credible option", he says. "There is no doubt that the violence is etched in the memory of students. Besides that, everyone saw that people could not get oxygen cylinders during Covid."

In Aligarh City, the Congress has fielded former AMU students' union president, Salman Imtiaz, who led the anti-CAA-NRC protests. Salman says the Congress has a lot to offer, and that will be a deciding factor.

The fear among most in Aligarh though is that the discourse will continue to remain about religion, and not issues that matter. "From temple to development, everything is justified on the basis of religion. This is the first time I am witnessing an election where everything is about faith. We have to go beyond divisiveness," says Ajay Bisariya, AMU Hindi Department Professor. "The country didn't gain Independence in 2014, a lot happened before that as well."

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Priyanka campaigns for party candidate in Aligarh Koil. *PTI*

ALIGARH DISTRICT — Total 7 seats

2017: BJP 7
2012: SP 4, RLD 3
2007: BJP 1, RLD 2, BSP 2, SP 1
(6 seats, Charra was formed in 2008)

'BJP is contesting under my leadership. I have faith party will give me chance as CM again'

THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW
WITH PRAMOD SAWANT
GOA CHIEF MINISTER

LEADING THE BJP campaign for the February 14 Assembly polls, there is a lot at stake for Goa **Chief Minister Pramod Sawant**. The BJP formed the government in the state after last-minute manoeuvring – followed by a series of defections — and Sawant, who took over after the death of the popular Manohar Parrikar, is up against not just the lingering Covid effects, anti-incumbency and internal dissension, but also high-voltage campaigns by new entrants AAP and TMC. Involved in campaigning across the state's 40 constituencies, Sawant spoke to **Mayura Janwalkar** at his residence in Altinho, Panaji:

Is it right to say that Goa is immune to politics of religion or caste?

Politics of religion has never worked here. We believe in *Sarva Dharma Samabhaav* (All religions are equal), and that is how we have run the government. People have the same view here. We are the only state following a Uniform Civil Code. No one here has ever placed weightage on religion or caste. Votes are given for development.

The Congress made its candidates take an oath promising not to defect, at a temple, church and dargah. Is the BJP planning this?

They have done this only to get votes... for votes from these religions. But people are wise... There is nothing more shameful than making a candidate take such a pledge. This shows the party has no faith in them. How are people expected to trust them? We don't need to take any pledge. We are not going to split anybody's MLAs. We will get a full majority.

The BJP has now been in power for a decade in Goa. How worried are you about anti-incumbency?

After ruling for 10 years, any party will face anti-incumbency. But our work, development, and PM Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat, which we have converted to Swayampurna Goa, has helped us reach every village in Goa. We will definitely beat anti-incumbency and go two steps ahead.

The Opposition has repeatedly attacked you over Covid management in the second wave and shortage of oxygen at the Goa Medical College.

The quantity of oxygen that needed to be supplied at the time was supplied. The Opposition makes allegations because that is all they know to do.

Manohar Parrikar's son Utpal and former CM Laxmikant Parsekar are contesting independently. How do you see their decision to leave the BJP?

They will be able to answer this question better, but I think for a leader like Parsekar to take such a decision is wrong. And Utpal Parrikar's decision is unfortunate. He should not have taken it for his political career.

The Opposition space is crowded this election. Who is your main opponent, and what difference will players like AAP and TMC make?

We have different opponents in different constituencies. AAP and TMC are here because they want to become national parties. They will make no difference to us.

If the BJP returns, are you certain you will be CM again?

The party is contesting this election under my leadership. I have faith that my party will give me the opportunity to serve as the Chief Minister once again and the party has declared that too.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

TRACKING COVID IN ELECTION-BOUND STATES

	UTTAR PRADESH	PUNJAB	UTTARAKHAND	GOA	MANIPUR
Deaths	23,343	17,495	7,628	3,754	2,072
Deaths Today	13	26	8	6	6
Cases	1,921	489	772	469	160
Jan 30	8,078	2,780	2,184	826	329
Feb 8					

PUNJAB COMMUNITIES

Dalit or Christian? Caught between two identities, left without a voice

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
GURDASPUR, FEBRUARY 8

"HALLELUJAH!", "*Bole So Nihal*". Both slogans have often been raised together at gatherings during the ongoing election campaign in Gurdaspur, the district with the largest Christian population in the state.

However, acknowledgment at campaigns aside, the Christian community in Punjab, which has a significant presence in pockets and among party rank and file, has again failed to get tickets from any mainstream political party in the state.

As per the 2011 Census, Christians number 1.26% of the state's population, and there has been no MLA from the community in the Punjab Assembly in recent times.

Christians in Punjab fall into three distinct categories. The first whose ancestors adopted Christianity at the time of the British; the second, generally the most poor and illiterate, who are influenced more by the deras they follow and their gurus; and the third, and the largest group, the Dalits who practise Christianity but have not converted officially.

No single big leader or church has a sway on the entire community.

Christian leader Rohit Khokhar, a former BSP general secretary who is now in the Aam Aadmi Party, said almost 98% in the community have a Dalit background. While they may have taken up Christianity, many are not rid of caste, he said. "Caste stays irrespective of whether one's religion is Sikh or Christian." Such groups are entitled to reservation, which is one reason why many do not want to officially convert.

Khokhar believes that at the time of voting, what they decide would be simple. "If there is some issue of religious persecution, a person would vote as a Christian. If there is some Dalit rights issue, they may vote as Dalit."

Roshan Joseph, who was the Gurdaspur district Congress president till two months ago and is now in the Akali Dal, said the community has been gradually turning away from the Congress. "As chief minister, (Akali Dal veteran) Parkash Singh Badal started celebrating Christmas as a state-level function in 1997," Joseph said, adding it had gone a long way in cementing the community's support.

In another overture towards the community, the Akali government in 2014 appointed Anwar Masih, a loyalist of Bikram Singh Majithia, to the Subordinate Service Selection Board, which does recruitment for government.

However, in 2020, Masih was booked over recovery of 197 kg heroin from a residential building he owned. And as per Khokhar, Christians now feel betrayed by the Akalis, for letting down one of their own.

Claiming an 'AAP wave' in the state, including among Dalits, he said what might cause a small dent is the Congress naming Dalit leader Charanjit Singh Channi as Punjab CM and now its CM face. However, Channi's rally for the Christian community in Gurdaspur on December 18, 2021, was considered a flop show. Joseph said it was because people were angry over his removal as president of the District Congress Committee.

Salamat Masih, the Chairman of the Christian Welfare Board, and one of the organisers of a rally held for Channi on December 16, also expressed unhappiness with the Congress. "The Congress had promised a seat to the community before the 2017 elections, but didn't give any. It is on test in these elections," Salamat Masih said.

Having failed to get a ticket, some Christian leaders are contesting as Independents. Among them is Domnic Mattu, who is contesting from Dera Baba Nanak.

Sonu Jaffar, contesting from Ajnala as an Independent, said he was also denied a ticket.

Khokhar said Christians in the state were caught in a vicious circle. For fear of losing reservations, denying them the few opportunities they have, many do not officially register as Christian. "This is why the exact representation of the Christian community doesn't reflect in government data. It is also why parties do not give us tickets," he said.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Express

Denied a ticket, Sonu Jaffar is fighting as Independent.

FROM THE GALLERY

FROM THE CHAIR

RAJYA SABHA

"Whatever is permitted by the Chair will go on record. No comment, no noise, no demonstration will go on record. Sit down, please. The Prime Minister is intervening. I have permitted it."

RAJYA SABHA CHAIRMAN M VENKAIAH NAIDU,
when Congress members protested during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address and walked out of the Upper House.

LOK SABHA

"There are 22 supplementary questions on this. If you do not reply to this well, every one will have questions and the entire time of the House would be spent on this."

SPEAKER OM BIRLA,
asks Union Minister Giriraj Singh to reply to a question on the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in detail.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The Prime Minister is very fond of radio, and Maan Ki Baat comes on radio. So you should make more efforts to ensure that a lot of modernisation takes place in this department."

DAYANIDHI MARAN,
DMK lawmaker during the Question Hour in Lok Sabha on Tuesday

5 QUESTIONS

CONGRESS'S RAJYA SABHA MP FROM KARNATAKA, **L HANUMANTHAIAH**, SPEAKS TO **MANOG C G** ABOUT THE CONTROVERSY OVER STUDENTS WEARING HIJAB NOT BEING ALLOWED TO ENTER EDUCATION INSTITUTES IN THE STATE

Today, you tried to raise the issue of prohibiting Muslim students from wearing hijab in Karnataka's pre-university colleges...

In Karnataka, Muslim girls had been wearing hijab along with the uniform fixed by the schools for so many years. But now suddenly, people are stopping them... And Hindu boys have started wearing saffron shawls and saying that if they (Muslim girl) wear hijab, we will also wear saffron shawls... Sangh Parivar organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Hindu Jagarana Vedike... are instigating these boys to wear saffron shawls and stop Muslim girls from wearing hijab.

What was your demand?

My demand is that Articles 14 and 25 of the Constitution give the freedom to practice your religion without disturbing others. This has been going on for many years... how can you stop this suddenly? Tomorrow, you may say that Sikhs wearing turbans and other minorities wearing something else, even Hindu women wearing mangal sutras, bangles…you may not allow that, which is a violation of constitutional rights.

What can the Centre do?

The Centre should direct the state government to maintain status quo and take action to ensure that the law and order situation does not go out of hand.

What do you want the government of Karnataka to do?

The government of Karnataka has not taken any action. This has started spreading to other districts of the state as well. It was confined to the coastal belt where the Right wing is very active. The government should ask college managements to allow hijab along with uniform. And people who are making statements instigating others should be booked.

Why do you think the issue has suddenly come up?

...Because Assembly elections in Karnataka are due next year. I think they want to polarise the society and make electoral benefits.

REPORT ON MGNREGS TABLED IN LOK SABHA

Raise guaranteed days of work: House panel

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

OBSERVING THAT the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a last "fall-back" option for many in the rural areas, a Parliamentary committee has recommended increase in guaranteed days of work from 100 to 150 under the rural job guarantee scheme.

The recommendation comes at a time when the job scheme has become a safety net for migrant workers who returned to their villages during Covid-19, and the demand for work under it reached an all-time high in the last financial year.

In its report, which was tabled in Lok Sabha on Tuesday, the Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, headed by Shiv Sena member Prataprao Jadhav, also said that the budgetary allocation of a scheme of "such enormous magnitude" should be done in a more "pragmatic manner" so that there is no dearth of funds in mid-year and flow of funds for payment of wages and material share is maintained seamlessly.

In Union Budget 2022-23, there was no increase in the allocation for MGNREGS, with the Finance Ministry retaining it at Rs 73,000 crore for the next fiscal year.

On the demand for increase in the number of guaranteed days of work under the MGNREGS, the panel said, "The committee take note of this existing provision and are of the view that MGNREGA is a last 'fall back' option for numerous rural people and the amount of expenditure under it also elicits a keen interest in the scheme by the poor and marginalised."

The panel also recommended raising budgetary allocation for MGNREGS.

"It is high time that the scheme be revamped keeping in view the changing times and emerging challenges particularly in wake of the Covid pandemic... In view of such background, the committee are of firm opinion that the 'need of the hour' is to further diversify the nature of works under MGNREGA in such manner and through such mechanisms which could also propel the number of guaranteed working days under MGNREGA to at least 150 days from the current 100 days," it said in its report, "Critical Evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act".

"Therefore, the committee strongly recommend the Department of Rural Development to review the scheme of MGNREGA in such a way which could ensure an increase of guaranteed days of work from 100 to 150 days," it said.

The committee also recommended the Rural Development Department to "review its budgetary demand pertaining to MGNREGA and ensure that 'agreed to labour budget' is made at concerned level keeping in view the expenditure of previous years".

"The committee find that since its inception and particularly during the last 4-5 financial years, it has been seen through the analysis of its Budget Estimate (BE) that each time there has been a substantial hike at the Revised Estimate (RE) stage, further augmenting the budgetary allocation of the scheme," the panel said. Citing NREGS allocation figures for recent years, it said, "In the financial year 2018-19, the BE was hiked from Rs 55,000 crore to Rs 61,830.09 crore, from Rs 60,000 crore to Rs 71,001.81 crore in 2019-20, from Rs 61,500 crore to Rs 1,11,500 crore in 2020-21, while during the ongoing financial year 2021-22, from the allocated BE of Rs 73,000 crore, Rs 52,228.84 crore have already been spent by 01.09.2021 i.e. in only six months."

"Thus, the committee are of the view that the scheme is definitely showing an increase in demand... Moreover, it is also quite perplexing as to the rationale behind keeping the BE for 2021-22 at Rs 73,000 crore while in the previous financial year, the expenditure was to the tune of Rs 1,11,170.86 crore," it said.

"Even after acknowledging the fact that the last financial year 2020-21 witnessed a surge in demand due to reverse migration of workers from urban areas back to rural locations and their dependence on MGNREGA as a last resort of solace and also taking note that MGNREGA is a demand driven scheme, the committee are still of the view that Budgetary Allocation of a scheme of such enormous magnitude should be done in a more pragmatic manner so that there is no dearth of funds in mid-year and flow of funds for payment of wages, material share, etc. is maintained seamlessly," the panel said.

EXPLAINED

Job scheme in demand

THE STANDING committee has reviewed the implementation of the MGNREGA at a time when the scheme has seen unprecedented demand for work. In the last financial year, 389.1 crore persondays were generated and 7.55 crore households (11.19 crore individuals) availed the scheme. Besides the budgetary allocation, the scheme faces several issues such as demand for linking of wage increase with Consumer Price Index (CPI) instead of CPI-AL (Agricultural Labour), which has a very old base. In addition to this, there have been demands for allowing agricultural work under MGNREGA.

Opp demands Shah statement on hijab row, walks out of LS

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE HIJAB row in Karnataka found an echo in Lok Sabha for the second consecutive day on Tuesday with opposition parties staging a walkout demanding a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

With the opposition protesting over the issue, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, who is the MP from Karnataka's Dharwad, told reporters outside the House: "All students must follow the dress code prescribed by the schools and administration. Law and order must be maintained in the state. We need to see who are these people instigating the students."

Opposition Congress raised the issue during Zero Hour, seeking a statement from Shah "on the atrocities being committed on Muslim girls in Karnataka in the name of hijab". But the BJP members protested, saying the matter is sub judice as it is pending in Karnataka High Court. Pointing out that wearing hijab is not a crime, the opposition parties – Congress, DMK, CPI(M), CPI, VCK, MDMK, Muslim League and JMM – staged a walkout.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said: "Inside the House, we talk about lofty ideas – sabka saath sabka vikas... and we talk about equality. Lot of people follow different religions. People have different identities linked with their religion. Hindus wear tilak on their forehead. Muslim women wear hijab. Wearing a hijab is not a crime." "There is an attempt to force the girls to take off their hijabs," Chowdhury said, adding that the Union Home Minister should make a statement on the matter in the House.

But BJP's Shivakumar Udasi alleged that the Congress was making unnecessary hue and cry. "All the courts have said that public interest should prevail... It is a state matter also," he said. Udasi said the matter was pending in Karnataka High Court.

Congress MP from Kerala Hibi Eden has given a notice for an adjournment motion on the issue. "Several educational institutions in Karnataka have started to bar students from wearing the hijab, though there is no government-mandated rule against the same. Wearing hijab is a fundamental right of the students, violation of Article 25 of Indian Constitution by the Karnataka government shows its negligence of Constitution of India," the notice said.

However, the Speaker rejected an adjournment motion on the issue.

Outside the House, Sumalatha Ambareesh, Independent MP from Mandya in Karnataka, said the issue was being politicised.

PM BLAMED OPPOSITION STATES

Safety net torn, as migrants hit the road, state govts flagged challenge to Centre

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN HIS remarks in Lok Sabha Monday, Prime Minister Narendra accused Opposition governments of instigating migrants to leave and escalating the spread of the Covid infection during the first wave of the pandemic, even using the word "paap" (sin). This drew angry responses from the Congress in Maharashtra and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who called it an "outright lie".

An examination of the sequence of events and efforts by the Centre and the states during the first wave shows that little thought had gone into what a national lockdown could precipitate for migrant workers.

At first, states appealed to migrants to stay but the lockdown that rendered many jobless coupled with the lack of a safety net and fear of the unknown forced countless to hit the road home. On March 28, 2020, four days into the lockdown, amid chaos on the streets as thousands set out on foot for their homes in UP and Bihar, Kejriwal appealed to migrant workers not to leave the city. That same night, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said: "The UP government has arranged 1,000 buses for labourers..." Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray made a similar appeal on April 19, promising to send migrant workers home once the pandemic was over.

Statements issued by the Centre in the month after the lockdown, show that it was only on April 24 that the PM first referred in public to migrant workers. During an online interaction on Panchayati Raj Diwas, he asked a sarpanch from Bihar about "migrant friends from your panchayat" who "might have returned home from other cities and those who could not return yet would also want to come".

Earlier, in a Mann Ki Baat address on March 29, the PM had apologised to the nation for putting the "poor in difficulty".

Statements available on the website of the Press Information Bureau show that the issue of "migrant workers" was flagged by states as early as April 2, 10 days after the lockdown, when the Prime Minister held an interaction with CMs on Covid-19. The issue of "difficulties faced by migrant labour" was again flagged on April 6 -- this time Union ministers briefed the PM.

That the Union Home Ministry was aware of what was unfolding on the streets was evident on March 27 -- a day before Kejriwal and Adityanath reached out to migrant workers -- when Home Minister Amit Shah held a virtual meeting with CMs and asked them to provide help to migrants. That same day, the MHA issued an advisory to all states to ensure accommodation and food for out-of-work migrant labour.

But this did not stop the exodus.

On March 28, the MHA modified its 2015 notification and allowed states to use SDRF funds to help migrants. Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote to Chief Secretaries, asking them "to set up Relief Camps along the Highways".

Confusion marked the efforts of the Centre and the states. Delhi and UP brought out buses to assist migrants, and by evening, thousands had thronged the Anand Vihar bus terminus on the border.

On March 29, the Centre asked states to seal inter-state and inter-district borders and issued orders to quarantine migrants workers in the nearest shelter. On March 31, the Supreme Court intervened and directed that adequate facilities be ensured for migrant workers at relief camps. The government had submitted in the SC then that the mass migration was a result of "panic created by fake news". On the backfoot, the Centre maintained silence even on April 24 when UP began extracting migrant workers in buses in violation of MHA guidelines. Five days later, the MHA allowed inter-state movement of migrant workers. On May 1, the Centre started Shramik Special Trains. But it could never meet the demand.

PM Modi in Rajya Sabha (above); Congress MPs Mallikarjun Kharge and Anand Sharma after walking out of Upper House on Tuesday. *PTI*

PM misused Parliament to give campaign speech: Opp

MANOJ C G
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi "misused" Parliament and lowered the dignity of his office and that of the two Houses by delivering "political" speeches with an eye on the Assembly elections in five states while replying to the discussion on the President's Address, opposition parties said on Tuesday. Most of the opposition leaders said Modi spoke as a BJP leader on "campaign" and not as Prime Minister.

In his back-to-back speeches in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on Monday and Tuesday, the Prime Minister focused his attention on targeting Congress, citing past instances to mainly argue that the main opposition party has no political and moral right to question him and his government on issues, including federalism, freedom of speech and Covid management.

While the Congress was upset with the Prime Minister's speech, many of the other parties such as the CPI(M), which had been at the receiving end of "highhandedness" of Congress governments in the past, too, were unimpressed. In fact, the Left was scathing on the Prime Minister. In Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, the Prime Minister spoke about how Congress governments at the Centre had dismissed opposition state governments, including the first elected Communist government of Kerala in 1959.

Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said the debate in Parliament was not about Congress, its history and its governance record. "The debate was... on what his government has done and what it plans to do. Instead, he targeted Congress. Because there are elections in five states. And he gave an election speech," he said. "We had raised several issues in both Houses – be it on economy, unemployment, inflation, Covid management, Chinese aggression, achievement of various government schemes like the one on housing. He did not reply to any of those."

Most opposition leaders argued it was unbecoming of a PM to have rendered such a "political" speech on the President's Address. "The Prime Minister misused Parliament to give a campaign speech…for instance he spoke about Goa's liberation today…what was the need," Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut told *The Indian Express*.

TMC MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray agreed. "He went out of the way to attack the opposition on flimsy grounds." Incidentally, the BJD, which is seen as a fence sitter, too agreed it was a political speech. "It was a strong political speech," said BJD's Prasanna Acharya.

High taxes on digital assets to dissuade people from investing: Sushil Modi in RS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE CENTRAL government has announced imposition of taxes in the "highest slab" for digital assets such as cryptocurrencies and NFTs to "dissuade" people from investing in them because they are "highly speculative and volatile", Rajya Sabha lawmaker and BJP leader Sushil Modi said in Parliament on Tuesday. The BJP leader also raised concerns over the use of cryptocurrencies and urged the government to impose GST on the entire transaction for such digital assets.

The BJP leader brought up the issue during the Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha and referred to the Budget announcement of 30 per cent taxes on digital assets.

The MP said: "Nobody knows who the owner of crypto is. There is no intrinsic value, no underlying value. It is neither security, nor commodity; so, it is not an asset and even if it is an asset, it should be treated like gold."

NDA a 'No Data Available' govt, says Chidambaram during debate on Budget

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

TAKING A dig at the Centre for not furnishing information on deaths due to oxygen shortage during the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, or data on members of the purported "tukde-tukde" gang, Congress Rajya Sabha MP P Chidambaram on Tuesday said the NDA stands for "No Data Available" government.

"I am a member of the 'tukde-tukde' gang, which means 'disruption'," he said. "I am worried because in this Parliament a question was asked: 'who are members of the tukde-tukde gang. The honourable minister said, 'we have no data available on tukde-tukde gang'."

"No data is also available on oxygen shortage deaths, corpses floating in rivers, migrants walking back to their homes, and doubling farmers income, which was supposed to happen in 2022," he said. This, Chidambaram then said, is a 'no data available government'..." Initiating the discussion on the Union Budget, he said, "I am happy (that) I am speaking in the council of states, otherwise known as the Rajya Sabha under the Constitution. Had the Congress not been there, this (Rajya Sabha) would still (have been) under the Government of India…the council of the princes; and instead of us, it would have been bejewelled rulers sitting…"

Congress's P Chidambaram initiated the discussion on Union Budget in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. *PTI*

"Thank God for the Congress, we have a Rajya Sabha and I am able to speak to you," he said, addressing the Deputy Chairman.

Stating that unemployment is on the rise in the country, Chidambaram said Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of employment but left out key statistics. Chidambaram spoke immediately after Prime Modi's reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address.

The Congress leader said: "Before we were obliged to walk out, the Prime Minister was speaking eloquently about jobs and employment. I want to humbly submit to him a statistic which he should use in his next speech. As on March 31, 2021, there were 8.72 lakh vacancies in the central government. And the almighty Government of India recruited 78,264 persons to fill vacancies, leaving nearly 8 lakh vacancies vacant..."

He said, "The thing I liked about the Finance Minister's Budget speech is that it was the shortest speech of 90 minutes. I will also keep my reply very short."

Last year, he said, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman projected 2021-22 fiscal deficit at 6.8 per cent. "I had cautioned and said it will not be contained at 6.8 per cent and said we would do better than it," he said. "They have done better than 6.8 per cent — they have done 6.9 per cent."

Criticise Cong, Nehru but do your job: Rahul hits out at PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

HITTING BACK at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his fusillade against the Congress and India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said he doesn't need a certificate from anyone for his great grandfather. The Prime Minister, Gandhi said, can "abuse" the Congress and Nehru as much as he wants but he should also "do his job".

While replying to the debate in Lok Sabha on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address on Monday, the Prime Minister had attacked the Congress and the Nehru-Gandhi family. "My great grandfather served this country. He gave his entire life to this country. So, I don't need anyone's certificate for my great grandfather," Gandhi told reporters outside the Parliament on Tuesday.

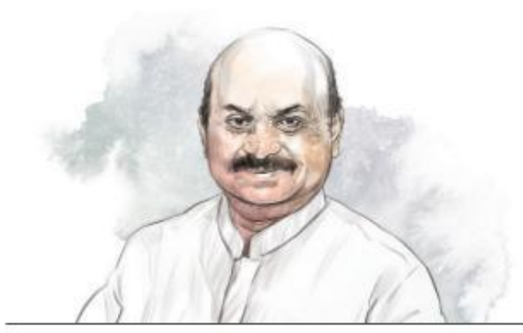
Asked about the Prime Minister's blistering attack on his party, Gandhi said the Prime Minister is afraid of the Congress. "He is a little scared. Because the Congress speaks the truth. His entire business is about marketing. He has relations…he has friends…lies have been spread…so he must be afraid from inside. And that showed in Parliament. I mean the entire speech was on Congress, what Congress did not do, Jawaharlal Nehru …But the Prime Minister was silent on what BJP has done, the promises that it had made...so, there is fear."

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi outside Parliament on Tuesday *UNI*

Gandhi said the PM's attack on the Congress and Nehru does not bother him.

"What the Prime Minister is doing…it doesn't really matter if he attacks the Congress party or attacks Jawaharlal Nehru…anybody else. It is important that the people of India understand what the Prime Minister is doing. And I stated that in my speech…there are three things that he is doing... he is creating two Indias: one an extremely rich India... and an India for a vast majority of people..."

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



WAIT CONTINUES

WHEN KARNATAKA Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai left for Delhi on a three-day visit, it sent hopes soaring among a number of leaders in the state BJP unit, who are aspiring to find a place in his Cabinet. But it appears that Bommai, who met central ministers and took up with them unfinished state projects, could not discuss political issues with the party leadership, which has been busy with the assembly elections in five states. Sources said Union Home Minister Amit Shah could spend barely a few minutes with the Chief Minister while BJP president J P Nadda could only speak to him on telephone as he was in Goa busy in election campaigning. The national leadership has given a clear message to the state leaders that any discussion on Cabinet expansion could take place only after March first week.

UNITY SIGNAL

OVER THE years, Congress's Tripura unit had become synonymous with factionalism. So on Tuesday, when two senior BJP leaders – Sudip Roy Barman and Ashish Saha – rejoined Congress in the presence of the Gandhi siblings, the grand old party ensured that party state unit chief Birajit Sinha was also in attendance. The party felt that his absence would have sent out a message that the Congress remains a divided house in Tripura. It is learnt that during the joining, two other dissident BJP MLAs of the state also met Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, who assured that the "party will not be found wanting in extending resources to the state unit like in the past".

CHANGING ROLES

INDIAN AMBASSADOR in Romania Rahul Shrivastava held an online meeting with Jagadish 'Jaggi' Vasudev, popularly known as Sadhguru, earlier this month. Shrivastava's meeting was interestingly facilitated by an advisor to former External Affairs Minister S M Krishna. The former aide, Raghvendra Shastry, who is now associated with Isha Foundation, is trying to set up a visit by Sadhguru to Romania in spring this yeart.

HIJAB ROW

MP talks of code on uniform, Bihar, and Tripura strike note of caution

Ally Janata Dal (United) says no need for new rules, Opposition states see election politics

IRAM SIDDIQUI, SANTOSH SINGH, DEBRAJ DEB & PALLAVI SMART
BHOPAL/PATNA/AGARTALA/MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

AS THE controversy over the hijab escalated in Karnataka Tuesday, it found an echo in Madhya Pradesh where the government said it was working on a uniform dress code, but at least two states, where the BJP is ruling in alliance, struck notes of concern.

On Tuesday, even as Madhya Pradesh School Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar called for a hijab ban, his counterpart in Bihar, Education Minister and senior JD(U) leader Vijay Kumar Choudhary told *The Indian Express*: "We have no such problem (Karnataka-like) in Bihar."

Asked about the government's response if there were demands as in Karnataka, he said: "Please pray that no such situation arises".

In a state where girls' education has been Nitish Kumar's key election plank, his colleague and national spokesperson KC Tyagi was more forthright. "Religious practices and rituals should not be hurt. Sikh students keep a beard, will one ban that? The status quo on dress code should be maintained and there is no need for new rules which can cause contradictions in society. Our party has always been in support of communal harmony"

Said Tyagi's ally BJP national spokesman Guru Prakash Paswan: "Educational institutions are meant for the development of one's own mind…Veil is not part of our culture."

However, in Tripura, state Education Minister and BJP leader Ratan Lal Nath said there are no plans for a uniform dress code. "This might be an issue in some states, but for our state this (wearing hijab) is not...Our government is committed to offering quality education to students. This is not directly related to that. We are not interested at all to give importance to this", he said. Nath added that the Tripura government works after taking consent from all stakeholders and doesn't believe in raking up a controversy on an issue which doesn't exist.

The education minister of BJP-ruled Himachal Pradesh, Govind Singh Thakur, said nothing is being actively considered on introducing a uniform dress code in schools so far.

Education ministers of Opposition-ruled states Maharashtra and West Bengal criticised the BJP for "politicising" school uniform.

"The Constitution gives each Indian a right to follow any religion. But bringing such discussions to educational institutions is a sad state of politics," said Maharashtra School Education minister Varsha Gaikwad. "This makes one wonder if this politicisation is for Uttar Pradesh elections just because there is nothing else to talk about. The video that went viral today where a mob of boys charged at a hijab-wearing girl was really disturbing. It is the government's responsibility to ensure all students are safe in educational institutions."

West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu linked it to what he called the BJP's bid to "saffronise" education. "We strive to ensure religious harmony among people and respect every religion. This kind of ban (on hijab) can go on in Karnataka or Madhya Pradesh but never in West Bengal."

Rajasthan Education Minister BD Kalla said the state government does not impose any restrictions on women wearing hijab in educational institutions. "The BJP always tries to make issues out of non-issues," he said.

Earlier in the day, in Bhopal, Parmar announced: "Hijab is not a part of uniform and, therefore, I feel it should be banned. There is no objection to people wearing the hijab while stepping out of their homes. But in schools, there should be a sense of equality and so a uniform dress code is required."

(WITH INPUTS FROM SANTANU CHOWDHURY IN KOLKATA AND DEEP MUKHERJEE IN JAIPUR)

Students donning saffron shawls against those dressed in hijabs outside the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College campus in Udupi district on Tuesday. *PTI*

Haryana Cabinet nod for draft anti-conversion Bill; burden of proof on accused

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 8

THE HARYANA Cabinet Tuesday approved the draft of The Haryana Prevention of Unlawful Conversion of Religious Bill, 2022, aimed at prohibiting religious conversions "effected through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement" or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage by making it an offence.

The draft, approved in the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, will now be tabled in the Vidhan Sabha during the Budget Session beginning March 2.

As per the the draft Bill's statements of objectives and reasons the right to freedom of religion is guaranteed under Articles 255, 26, 27 and 28 of the Constitution. It adds that the objective of this right is to sustain the principle of secularism. According to the Constitution, "state has no religion, all religions are equal, and no religion shall be given preference over the other"," it reads, adding that the citizens are free to preach, practice and propagate any religion of their choice.

The draft also mentions that "the burden of proof as to whether a conversion was not affected through misrepresentation, use of force, under threat, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or for marriage for the purpose of carrying out conversion lies on the accused."

Every individual converting from one religion to another will have to submit a declaration that it was not being done through misrepresentation, use of force, under threat, or undue influence.

Sec 498A being used to settle personal scores against husband, his kin: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

WITH FRICTION rising in marriages, there is "increased tendency to employ provisions such as 498A IPC", which was "aimed at preventing cruelty committed upon a woman by her husband and her in-laws by facilitating rapid state intervention..., as instruments to settle personal scores against the husband and his relatives", Supreme Court said Tuesday.

A bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari said this while quashing an FIR against the in-laws of a woman who had accused them and her husband of cruelty and harassment for dowry.

Deciding their appeal against the November 13, 2019 order of Patna High Court, which had dismissed their plea against the FIR dated April 1, 2019, the bench said that "the allegations made against them being general and omnibus, do not warrant prosecution".

The judgment said that "upon a perusal of the contents of the FIR... it is revealed that general allegations are levelled" against the appellants. The complainant had alleged that the accused harassed her mentally and threatened her of terminating her pregnancy.

The court also said that the complaint "fails to establish specific allegations against the in-laws".

"Allowing prosecution in the absence of clear allegations against the in-laws appellants would simply result in an abuse of the process of law," it said.

"It becomes pertinent to mention that incorporation of Section 498A of IPC was aimed at preventing cruelty committed upon a woman by her husband and her in-laws by facilitating rapid state intervention," the judgment said.

However, it is equally true, that in recent times, matrimonial litigation in the country has also increased significantly and there is a greater disaffection and friction surrounding the institution of marriage, now, more than ever."

"This has resulted in an increased tendency to employ provisions such as 498A IPC as instruments to settle personal scores against the husband and his relatives."

UNANIMOUSLY IN ASSEMBLY

TN re-adopts Bill against NEET sent back by governor

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 8

A SPECIAL Assembly session of Tamil Nadu Assembly on Tuesday unanimously re-adopted the anti-NEET Bill, which Governor R N Ravi had last week returned to the government.

Ravi's decision to return the Bill, which seeks to dispense with NEET for admission to undergraduate medical degree courses in the state, was considered confrontational by the state government, as he had disagreed with the Bill and remarks of a state-appointed expert committee about NEET, which is backed by the Union government. By re-adopting the Bill, and sending it again to the Governor, the Raj Bhavan is expected to forward it to the President for his assent.

At Tuesday's special Assembly session, Chief Minister M K Stalin moved the Bill and Speaker M Appavu declared it adopted unanimously following a voice vote of support from all members, including those from main opposition AIADMK.

The previous AIADMK government had also passed two similar pieces of legislation in this regard. They were sent back by the President in September 2017.

The latest Bill was returned by Governor Ravi last week, without sending it to the President, citing that it was "against interests of students, especially (those from) rural and economically poor students of the state".

Ruling DMK and its allies criticised the Governor's stand. The AIADMK extended full support to the Bill, even though its MLAs stayed away from critical remarks against the Governor. Members of BJP, part of the AIADMK-led alliance, staged a walkout before the Bill was moved in the Assembly.

Speaking on the Bill and the Governor's views, Stalin said Ravi had failed to discharge his Constitutional duty by returning it. He called it an attack on Constitutional values. "It was against the interests of the state; it was an attack on the state powers," said Stalin, expressing concerns at Ravi's decision to challenge a collective decision taken by ruling and opposition parties in the House. "A Governor challenging the decisions of an elected government is nothing but a move against democracy itself, isn't it," Stalin asked.

"If this is how things work in an elected democracy, why should people cast their vote? This is the situation that is leading to the re-adoption of this Bill. I hope the Governor will forward it to the President soon," he said.

Chief Minister M K Stalin said R N Ravi had failed to discharge his Constitutional duty by returning the Bill

INTERNSHIP PLEA

Top court asks NEET-PG aspirants to approach govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday asked NEET-PG aspirants who had approached it seeking extension of deadline for internship for admission to postgraduate (PG) programmes to instead give a representation to the government.

A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud declined to intervene further in the matter. The bench said the court will enter policy domain if it were to delve into issues raised by the petitioners.

The bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Vikram Nath, said that "since issues raised will involve determination of facts and entering policy domain, ends of justice will be met by making a representation to the Health Ministry, showing the hardship being faced by students".

The court asked the government to consider the representation expeditiously, within one week of its submission.

Appearing for the petitioners, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said many of them are on Covid-19 duty, due to which they could not start their internships early. Different institutes in different states are prescribing different dates to start internship, he submitted and urged the court to extend the cut-off date by three months.

But the court said, "Entering this will become entering a policy domain".

Congress MLAs with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Tuesday. *Twitter/Conrad Sangma*

MEGHALAYA

5 Cong MLAs join BJP-backed alliance

TORA AGARWALA,
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 8

ALL FIVE Congress legislators in Meghalaya Tuesday joined the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) government, saying that it was for the "benefit" of the people of the state and their individual constituencies. The MDA is led by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma's National People's Party (NPP), and backed by the BJP.

Till last November, the Congress was the principal opposition in the 60-member state Assembly, but after former chief minister Mukul Sangma and 11 other MLAs jumped ship to the Trinamool Congress, theCongress was left with only five MLAs.

With Tuesday's development, the TMC, now, occupies the opposition bench in the Meghalaya assembly.

The five MLAs -- M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, PT Sawkmie, Mayralborn Syiem, Kimfa Marbaniang and Mohendro Rapsang -- met the Sangma and handed over a letter that stated: "We wish to support you and the MDA to strengthen the Government's arms and decision-making, so as to ensure that our joined efforts will take the State forward, in the general interest of its citizens."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Lyngdoh said, "Despite the crisis, no one from the central leadership came forward to speak to us, guide us or even tell us the way forward." Lyngdoh added that they were still part of the Congress.

Following the meeting, Sangma tweeted: "We are happy to welcome members of the Congress Legislature Party who have pledged their support to the MDA Government officially today. We will work together under the banner of MDA to strengthen the Government in the interest of the people & the State."

Nagaland: Ex-CM named UDA chairman

Former Nagaland CM and Naga People's Front Legislature Party leader TR Zeliang was on Tuesday appointed as the chairman of state's 'Opposition-less' United UDA government. The swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday morning.

HNLC says ready for peace talks, without pre-conditions

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 8

THE OUTLAWED Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC), which was behind a low-intensity IED blast in Shillong last month, has offered to sit for talks with the Meghalaya government and the Centre, without pre-conditions and within the "ambit of the Indian Constitution".

According to a statement released on Tuesday evening, signed by the HNLC general secretary-cum-publicity secretary, Saiñkupar Nongtraw, the group decided to "give peace a chance" on the request of "elders and some social organisations." "After much consultation with some elders recently we have decided to come into a peaceful agreement with the GOM [Government of Meghalaya] and the GOI [Government of India]. As of now, we are ready to talk within the ambit of the Indian Constitution and we are ready to have talks without any pre-conditions..." the statement read.

"Now the ball is in the government's court to decide whether it wants to give peace a chance or to continue this conflict," it added.

The HNLC, which demands a sovereign Khasi homeland in Meghalaya, is a breakaway faction of the Hynniewtrep Achik Liberation Council, the first militant tribal outfit of the state.

SP promises job scheme for urban poor, says will end farm debt burden by 2025

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 8

THE SAMAJWADI Party (SP) on Tuesday released its election manifesto, promising, among other things, an Urban Employment Guarantee Act on the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to boost employment, 33 per cent reservation for women in government jobs, and make farmers "loan-free" by 2025.

The Opposition party has promised to provide two free LPG cylinders to poor families every year, a litre of free petrol a month to motorcycle owners, and three litres of free petrol or six kilograms of compressed natural gas (CNG) to autorickshaw owners to tackle inflation.

For farmers, the Akhilesh Yadav-led party has said all farm produce will be bought at minimum support price (MSP) and sugarcane growers will be reimbursed for their produce within 15 days. "Small farmers with fewer than two acres of land will be given two sacks of DAP (Diammonium Phosphate fertiliser) and five sacks of urea," reads the manifesto. Promising to make farmers debt-free by 2025, Akhilesh Yadav said an SP government would enact a debt relief law for the benefit of extremely poor farmers. Farmers will also receive free electricity for irrigation.

PTI

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and his wife Dimple Yadav in Lucknow.

Meet India's newest mammal: White Cheeked Macaque

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

SCIENTISTS FROM the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a new mammal species in the country — the White Cheeked Macaque.

While the Macaque was first discovered in China in 2015, its existence was not known in India before this — it is only now that Indian scientists have discovered its presence in the remote Anjaw district in central Arunachal Pradesh. That is barely 200 km aerial distance from where it was first spotted in China — in Modog in Southeastern Tibet.

The discovery has been published in the February 3 issue of international journal 'Animal Gene'.

"The discovery was entirely accidental. We were not looking for the White Cheeked Macaque; we had received a grant of Rs 10 crore for a project to study Himalayan species — this involved exploring biodiversity of the Himalayas and studying large threatened species in the region," ZSI scientist Dr Mukesh Thakur, also the lead author of the study carried out under recently retired director of ZSI, Dr Kailash Chandra.

Thakur said they were tracking the Red Panda and the Arunachal macaque in the eastern Himalayas. "One of my students, Avijit Ghosh, was tracking the Arunachal macaque that we have been studying. He collected faecal and skin samples of the macaque and when we carried out DNA sequencing at ZSI lab, expecting it to be the Arunachal macaque, we realised it was actually the White Cheeked Macaque."

Taken aback by the results, Thakur said the team carried out DNA sequencing a second time around. Only to reconfirm that the ZSI had indeed stumbled upon the White Cheeked Macaque in India.

Since then, ZSI has carried out several confirmations — through more testing and camera trapping of the animal. They even discovered a juvenile White Cheeked Macaque, which had been captured and held in the house of a local villager — the tribespeople inhabiting Anjaw are traditional hunters.

Thakur called the discovery in both China and India as "breakthrough discoveries".

"It is very rare nowadays to discover new mammal species," he said. "As taxonomy scientists, we do describe new species of smaller animals, amphibians and insects. But large animals are very rare."

The latest discovery, Thakur said, takes India's mammal count from 437 to 438.

The White Cheeked Macaque has distinct white cheeks, long and thick hair on the neck and a longer tail than other Macaque species. It is the last mammal to have been discovered in Southeast Asia.

Both the Arunachal macaque as well as the White Cheeked Macaque exist in the same biodiversity hotspot in the eastern Himalayas.

Indian scientists have discovered the mammal's presence in the remote Anjaw district in central Arunachal Pradesh. *Express*

C Raja Mohan to discuss Ukraine crisis at online Explained session today

EXPRESS explained.Live
Associate Partner
YOJNA IAS

DATE: 9 February 2022
TIME: 6 pm
TO REGISTER:
SMS - IEEXP <space> PD <space> Your name and email ID to 56161. Confirmation SMS will be your registration

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE ONGOING tension between Russia and the West — led by the US — over Ukraine has raised the possibility of a conflict breaking out between the two sides.

It's been tense for more than one-and-a-half months, and estimates suggest that about 100,000 Russian troops have been mobilised near Ukraine's border.

As Russia and the West-led by the US up the rhetoric, a worried international community is watching the situation with concern.

Delhi is caught in between, as it has strategic stakes on both sides of the divide.

Hectic diplomacy is playing out in capitals in Russia, Europe and the US, as leaders are talking to each other and trying to find a solution to the crisis.

As a new Cold War is being played out, what are the risks involved, will it escalate, what are the windows of opportunity for de-escalation and what are its implications for India? These questions and more will come up for discussion on Wednesday at the e-Explained event on "Russia vs the West on Ukraine: what it means for the world and India", with Dr C Raja Mohan, one of India's leading commentators on India's foreign policy and Contributing Editor at *The Indian Express*. Dr Raja Mohan, who is Visiting Research Professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), was the Director of ISAS, from May 2018 to December 2021.

He will be in conversation with Shubhajit Roy, Associate Editor at *The Indian Express*.

OSCARS CALLING — FIRST FOR AN INDIAN DOCUMENTARY

Docu on Dalit women journalists wins nomination

TANUSHREE GHOSH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

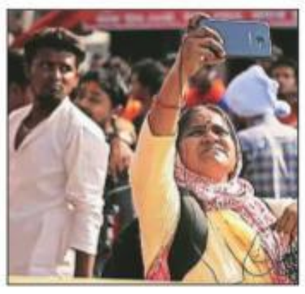
DELHI-BASED filmmakers Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh's documentary, 'Writing with Fire', has won an Oscar nomination. It has made it to the final-five list to compete for the 94th Academy Award in the Best Documentary Feature category.

'Writing with Fire' is perhaps the first all-India independent production to make it to the final nomination in this category. In December, it had made it to the Oscars shortlist — among 15 films from a pool of 138.

After the venue was shifted last year in view of Covid-19, the Academy Award ceremony will return to its long-time home at Los Angeles' Dolby Theatre on March 27.

Ghosh told *The Indian Express*, "We are beyond delighted. This is a massive moment for us and for Indian cinema. This is the first time an Indian documentary has been nominated for an Academy Award, so it has made history. This film is about fearless Dalit women journalists who are redefining what being powerful means, quintessentially the story of the modern Indian woman."

The other four finalists in the category are Chinese-American Jessica Kingdon's film 'Ascension' on the Chinese



A still from *Writing with Fire*

Dream; Traci A Curry and Stanley Nelson's 'Attica' about the 1971 uprising at Attica prison in New York State; Jonas Poher Rasmussen's Danish animated Afghan refugee story 'Flee'; and Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson's 'Summer of the Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not be Televised)' on the 1969 Harlem cultural festival.

The documentary film, whose journey began six years ago, and which spotlights the Dalit women-run newspaper in Bundelkhand, 'Khabar Lahariya', mapping its print-to-digital transition, has been making headlines since it won the Special Jury (Impact for Change) and Audience awards at the Sundance Film Festival in January last year. It has bagged 28 international awards since.

Sundance is also where another Indian documentary feature, Shaunak Sen's 'All That Breathes', picked up the 2022 Grand Jury Prize in the World Cinema Documentary Competition category last month.

The accolades have reiterated to the filmmakers "that when we tell our stories, they have the power to ignite new imaginations and possibilities," Thomas had said earlier. She and Ghosh have written, directed, produced, edited the film; and Ghosh and Karan Thapliyal have manned its cinematography.

Thomas-Ghosh's film production agency, Black Ticket Films, "is invested in the power of non-fiction storytelling. As filmmakers, Rintu and I have always been interested in amplifying stories of resilience and hope," Ghosh had said earlier.

In the past, Fali Bilimoria's 'The House that Ananda Built' in 1969 and K K Kapil and Vidhu Vinod Chopra's 'An Encounter with Faces' in 1979 were nominated for Best Documentary (Short Subject), and British filmmaker of Indian origin Asif Kapadia's 'Amy' won the Best Documentary Feature in 2016.

This year is, however, not the first time a story about Indian women has travelled to the Academy Award stage. In 2019, Iranian-American filmmaker Rayka Zehtabchi won the Best Documentary (Short Subject) for her film 'Period.

2008 AHMEDABAD SERIAL BLASTS CASE

49 accused convicted; benefit of doubt for rest

Outside sessions court in Ahmedabad on Tuesday as verdict was pronounced. *Nirmal Harindran*

SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 8

A SPECIAL court on Tuesday convicted 49 of the 77 accused in the 2008 serial bomb blasts in Ahmedabad that claimed 56 lives and left around 200 injured, and acquitted 28 others, giving them benefit of doubt, even as one accused turned approver.

Special judge AR Patel pronounced the verdict virtually, heard by the undertrials at the respective jails, while only prosecutors remained in the courtroom amid high security on the premises, as all the accused, booked mainly under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), were placed under section 268 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) that restricts the movement of undertrials.

The sentencing is expected to be pronounced on Wednesday, according to public prosecutor Amit Patel.

The accused were produced before the court via video-conference from various jails across the country — 49 of them from Ahmedabad, 10 from Madhya Pradesh, four from Mumbai's Taloja jail, two from Delhi, five from Bengaluru, two from Viyyur jail in Kerala, two from Jaipur and two from Bihar. One accused Naved Kadri, who was on extended temporary bail since 2018 after being diagnosed with schizophrenia, was on court premises.

As many as 22 bombs went off in Ahmedabad on July 26, 2008, at various spots, including the state government-run civil hospital, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation-run LG Hospital, on buses, parked bicycles, in cars and other places, killing 56 persons and leaving around 200 injured. Of the 24 bombs, one each at Kalol and Naroda, did not go off.

The explosions, allegedly carried out by the Indian Mujahideen, believed to be a regrouping of the banned organisation SIMI, used bombs combining ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO). Fourteen of the accused in the serial blasts case were booked for attempting to break out of Sabarmati Central Jail where they were lodged, in 2013, of which three got acquitted in the serial blast case.

The trial culminated based on a total of 35 cases registered — 20 at Ahmedabad and 15 in Surat, where similar bombs that did not go off were found after the Ahmedabad bombings.

Of the total 78 accused on trial, one accused — Ayaz Saiyed — who turned approver in the case, had allegedly planted bombs in bicycles and AMTS bus in Naroda area of Ahmedabad city with the bus blowing up near Sarkhej.

The special court acquitted 28 accused and ordered for their release from judicial custody if they are not wanted in any other case, upon payment of Rs 25,000 as bail bond. Among them is Naved Kadri and 16 others acquitted on the ground of benefit of doubt for "insufficient evidence", the operative part of the court's order states.

Twelve other acquitted were given the benefit of doubt as no other evidence apart from "statements by investigating officials" were presented before the court, the order records. Of the 28 acquitted, 25 are from outside Gujarat — four from MP, seven from Karnataka, four from Hyderabad, three from Maharashtra, two from Kerala, and two from Azamgarh in UP.

The prosecution examined 1,163 witnesses over the course of the trial and submitted approximately 6,000 documentary proof. As many as 547 chargesheets were filed in the trial.

Some of the accused also stood accused of serial bomb blasts in Jaipur, Bhopal, Indore, Belgaum, Alipore, 24 Paraganas, South Kolkata, Ujjain, greater Bombay, Mangalore, Hyderabad, New Delhi and Madhya Pradesh.

Nine judges presided over the trial at different times.

4,844 foreigners granted Indian citizenship in 5 yrs

New Delhi: As many as 4,844 foreigners have been granted Indian citizenship in the last five years, the government told Lok Sabha on Tuesday. In 2021, the government granted almost three times the number of Indian citizenships compared to 2020, the House was informed.

According to data, 817 foreigners were granted Indian citizenship in 2017; 628 in 2018; 987 in 2019; 639 in 2020; and 1,773 in 2021, MoS (Home) Nityanand Rai said in reply to a question.

While rules for Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are yet to be framed, data, earlier presented by the government in Parliament, shows a significant majority of those granted Indian citizenship since 2018 were minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and belonged to Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Christian faiths. **ENS**

SINCE JAN 28

Facebook, Insta handles of Chinar Corps blocked

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

FACEBOOK AND Instagram handles of Army's Srinagar-based XV Corps, also known as Chinar Corps, have been blocked for the past 10 days. Officials aware of the matter said the handles were blocked soon after Republic Day celebrations.

The Facebook handle @ChinarCorpsIA had over 24,000 followers, and over 23,000 likes, and is even tagged as a "government organisation". The Instagram account had around 43,300 followers, and is named ChinarCorpsIA. It clearly identified itself, saying, "Welcome to the Official Account of Chinar Corps, Indian Army".

Both platforms are owned by FB's parent company, Meta Platforms. Officials said the handles were blocked from January 28, and no reason was provided. They wrote to Facebook immediately after but the issue is yet to be resolved, the officials said.

It appears to be a "coordinated campaign", an official said, as there was no unusual activity.

Sources called it part of information warfare, stating that this has happened earlier as well – some social media accounts were blocked last year for a few days. Hinting at Pakistan, they said sometimes the pages might be reported by a large group of people as part of a "coordinated" campaign, which can result in the page being suspended.

Sources said neither Facebook nor Instagram had mentioned any specific post by Chinar Corps that violated their rules. Officials said the content on these two platforms was similar to what they post on Twitter, and was in line with how official content is shared.

Yati gets bail in hate speech case, will stay in jail over 2nd FIR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
ALMORA, FEBRUARY 8

Yati Narsinghanand

A HARIDWAR court granted bail to Dasna Devi temple chief priest Yati Narsinghanand in the controversial Haridwar Dharma Sansad hate speech case of December last year.

Narsinghanand will, however, stay in jail in connection to another FIR registered against him for allegedly making derogatory comments on women from a particular community.

General secretary of Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati Foundation Trust, Udita Tyagi, on Tuesday, said while bail applications in both the hate speech case and the objectionable comments case were denied last month by the CJM court, the Additional District and Sessions judge Bharat Bhushan Pandey granted bail to Narsinghanand after a virtual hearing on Monday.

On January 15, the Haridwar Police had arrested Narsinghanand from Sarvanand Ghat where he was sitting on a hunger strike to protest against the arrest of Waseem Rizvi alias Jitendra Narayan Tyagi since January 13. Tyagi too was named in the hate speech case.

Yati was the key organiser of the three-day conclave 'Dharam Sansad' held from December 17 to December 19 in Haridwar where several hate speeches were made targeting Muslims.

SL FOREIGN MINISTER'S INDIA VISIT

Lanka interests best served by peace for Tamils: Jaishankar

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

RECALLING THE positive impact of India's developmental and rehabilitation support, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told his visiting Sri Lankan counterpart G L Peiris that Colombo's interests are best served by ensuring equality, justice, peace and respect for Tamil people within a united Sri Lanka.

"Devolution of power is an important aspect of this process," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in its official statement after two days of meetings between Peiris and top Indian officials.

Besides meeting Jaishankar, Peiris also met NSA Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla. The Sri Lankan statement did not mention anything about these Indian concerns.

But the Indian statement said, "The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister expressed gratitude for India's recent assistance and updated External Affairs Minister on steps taken by Government of Sri Lanka on human rights and reconciliation."

During the talks, the Lankan statement said, Peiris raised the fisheries issue with Jaishankar. "Terming it as a 'flashpoint', the Foreign Minister pointed out that it has become a recurring issue, assuming a different complexion. The two sides agreed on urgent need to convene all bilateral mechanisms in this regard," it stated.

The Indian statement said that "both sides reiterated the long-standing consensus to handle fishermen issue through humanitarian approach and refrain from the use of violence in dealing with incidents along the IMBL". It stated, "They agreed that bilateral mechanisms should meet early, starting with the Joint Working Group on Fisheries."

Peiris extended an invitation to Jaishankar to undertake an official visit to Sri Lanka in March. He also stated that Sri Lanka is looking forward for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the island-nation for the forthcoming BIMSTEC Summit in March 2022, the Lankan statement said.

With a view to maintaining the momentum of the trajectory of India-Lanka relationship, the ministers agreed on early finalisation of several agreements and MoUs in areas of defence, culture and education, which are pending between the two countries.

Jaishankar underscored priority accorded to Sri Lanka by India under Modi's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision and the 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

"He called for expeditiously taking forward mutually beneficial projects, including proposals to enhance air and sea connectivity between India and Sri Lanka to reinforce people-to-people linkages and economic and investment initiatives," the MEA stated.

Foreign funds registration of PHFI restored: Govt in LS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE GOVERNMENT on Tuesday told Lok Sabha it had renewed the FCRA registration of two NGOs since November last year. These NGOs are Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), New Delhi and Missionaries of Charity (MoC), Kolkata.

The government had cancelled PHFI's registration in 2017 over alleged violations of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010. It had refused to renew MoC's registration on December 25 owing to "adverse inputs" before renewing it after around two weeks.

On Tuesday, the government also said it had refused to renew the registration of 6,000 NGOs as 5,800 of them "did not apply" for the same. "Since November, 2021 the FCRA certificate of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), New Delhi and Missionaries of Charity (MoC), Kolkata was renewed by way of revision," MoS Home Nityanand Rai told Lok Sabha in a written reply to a question.

On the question of whether the Government has denied renewal of licences to about 6,000 organisations, Rai said, "No, Sir. In fact, about 5800 FCRA registered associations had not submitted their applications for renewal within stipulated time in accordance with the provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010. FCRA registration of these associations has thus deemed to have ceased."

ASSAM JOURNALIST THRASHED BY COPS OVER HELMET

Guwahati: A 47-year-old journalist was beaten up by two constables of the Assam Police Monday after he questioned them for not wearing helmets while on a two-wheeler. Several local press clubs Tuesday expressed outrage over the incident that took place in Chirang district. Monday, Jayanta Debnath, who works with a regional news channel, Pratidin Times, was beaten up in Basugaon area. The video of the incident has gone viral on social media. **ENS**

Kerala trekker trapped on hill, state calls in Army, Air Force

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEBRUARY 8

A KERALA trekker has been trapped without water and food in a precarious niche on a hill in Palakkad district since Monday after he slipped and fell during his descent.

With multiple teams — volunteers, disaster personnel and a Navy chopper — failing to rescue Cherattil Babu, 23, for over 30 hours, the Kerala government on Tuesday sought the help of the Army and the Air Force.

The Malampuzha resident had trekked up the 1,000-ft Kurumbachi hill Monday along with two friends. While descending from the summit, he slipped and fell into a rock niche, where he got trapped. His friends tried to rescue him, in vain.

They returned to Malampuzha and sought the help of the authorities. On Monday night, revenue officials and volunteer members of the District Disaster Management Authority trekked up the steep hill, but could not reach the man.

The local authorities resumed rescue operations on Tuesday but Babu remained inaccessible. The topography proved too challenging for a unit from the National Disaster Response Force as well.

Subsequently, the district administration sought the Navy's help. A Navy chopper made several sorties in the area, but returned as an airlift plan failed.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the government has sought help from the Army and the Air Force. "A team of Army commandos from Bengaluru will reach Malampuzha soon to join the rescue operation. Also, Air Force paratroopers from Sulur in Coimbatore will join the mission. Both units are expected to reach Malampuzha on Tuesday night," Palakkad district collector Mrunmai Joshi said.

Palakkad legislator Shafi Parambil said, "Till Tuesday noon he had responded to the rescue operators by raising hands. It is really sad; the state machinery could not ensure food and water for the youth. We hope he will return safe."

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD
E-TENDER NOTICE :TANGEDCO/SHORT/ PP-18/2022
TANGEDCO invites E-Tender for procurement of 1000 MW RTC power and 1000 MW power during evening peak hours from 1st March 2022 to 20th May 2022. Bidding will be done as per the revised guidelines for short term procurement of power notified by the Ministry of Power vide resolution dated 30.03.2016, through e-Bidding portal (DEEP) only. The link for the e-Bidding portal is www.mstcecommerce.com, and is also available on the website of Ministry of Power (www.powermin.nic.in) and PFC Consulting Ltd (www.pfcclindia.com). Specification is available in TANGEDCO website and MSTC DEEP E-Bidding portal. Chief Engineer/PPP/TANGEDCO
DIPR/658/TENDER/2022

G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment
Kosi-Katarmal, Almora-263 643, Uttarakhand
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (referred to as GBPNIHE hereafter) invited Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputed Firms/organizations to handmade paper making from Pine needles (Pirul) at Rural Technology Complex, GBPNIHE, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora in PPP Mode as per details given in EOI Document available on Institute's website: http://gbpihed.gov.in.
The EOI applications complete in all respect and duly attested by the authorized signatory supported by all prescribed documents, placed in a sealed envelope superscribed as EOI for handmade paper making from Pine needles (Pirul) at Rural Technology Complex, GBPNIHE, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora in PPP Mode, should reach to The Office Superintendent, G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora-263643 up to 1500 Hrs on 25.02.2022
The Director, GBPNIHE reserves the right to accept or reject any of EOIs either in part or full or split the order without assigning any reasons thereof. Office Superintendent
E-mail: os@gbpihed.nic.in

IRCON INTERNATIONAL LTD.
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Website: www.ircon.org, CIN- L45203DL1976GOI008171
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE (NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)
e-Tender No.: IRCON/5017/NELS.DD/e-TENDER/CIVIL WORKS/OT/35 Dated : 08.02.2022
e-Tender is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work:
"Execution of Balance Finishing works of Service buildings, Administrative building, Electrical substation, including earthwork & Misc. balance Civil works for setting up of New Electric Loco Shed at Daund Pune (Maharashtra)"

Estimated cost of the work	INR 3,02,95,295.19 (inclusive of all applicable taxes and GST)
Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission	01.03.2022 up to 15:00 Hrs IST

For further details, visit website https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app. Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website.
Chief General Manager/Electrical,
C-4 District Centre, Saket, New Delhi-110017

IRCON INTERNATIONAL LTD.
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
CIN: L45203DL1976GOI008171, Web: www.ircon.org
E-Procurement Notice (National Competitive Bidding)
e-Tender No.: IRCON/2059/CGRP/e-TENDER/21-22/KHS-DHARAM/BSP-51 Dated: 07.02.2022
e-Tender for and on behalf of Chhattisgarh East Railway Limited is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work of "Manufacturing, supply and fixing of Standard as well as short height steel channel sleepers, insertion/respacing of new channel sleepers between the existing sleepers to maintain the spacing within 600mm and other items related to USSOR for CRS inspection over steel bridges for New BG Electrified Double Railway line over South East Central Railway between Kharsia (Km 0) to Dharamjaygarh (Km 74) in the State of Chhattisgarh."

Estimated Cost of the work	₹ 2,23,34,653.65
Last Date & Time of Bid Submission	28.02.2022 up to 15.00 Hrs.(IST)

For further details, visit website https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app. Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website.
Project Director/CGRP, IRCON
1st Floor, North Avenue, Takhatpur Road, Uslapur, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh-495001

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No. 219-S/1/TMC/05/2022-23 Dated : 07.02.2022
Chief Engineer/TMC, Northern Railway, Headquarters office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites 01 Nos tenders through E-Procurement system for supply of the following Items:

S. N.	E-Tender No.	Description of Item	Qty.	Due date Time
01	A11P90TMC 2022	Wear Resistant Wear Plates for BCM/FRM, one set consisting of 30 different types of Wear Plates for different qty.	01 Set	03.03.2022 at 11:30 hours.

Note:- The complete information of above E-Procurement tenders are available on website "www.ireps.gov.in". The firms, who desire to participate against E-Tenders, are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would be required to have a class-III digital certificate from certifying agencies authorized under IT Act 2000, by Govt. of India. Manual offers against E-Tenders will not be accepted.
278/22
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

RAJASTHAN HOUSING BOARD
No. 1166 Date: 04.02.2022
Notice Inviting Bid - 04/2021-22
Bid for 1. Repair & Maintenance of drains, roads, street light and other development works for one year (Yr. 2022) at South Ext., Udaipur to Rs.16.38 lakh, 2. Remattalling & carpeting work and Construction of Drain at Shastri Nagar, Banswara to Rs.45.95 lakh, 3. Construction of WBM Road at Shivaji Nagar, Dungarpur to Rs.25.00 lakh, 4. Providing & Fixing of LED Lights, Cleaning of Drain and Nallah and Repairing of Roads at Partapur, Banswara to Rs.16.24 lakh, 5. Const. of shops (plinth) and providing and laying interlocking tiles at Mahi Sarovar ext. Banswara to Rs. 10.15 lakh, 6. Const. of Drains and Ramp Work at Shahpura Residential Scheme, Shahpura, Distt. Bhilwara to Rs. 41.25 lakh & 7. Construction of Park Boundary Wall at Shahpura Scheme, Shahpura Distt.- Bhilwara to Rs. 21.97 lakh of subject matter(s) of (Procurement) are invited from interested bidders from 10.02.2022 to 23.02.2022 upto 6:00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the state and Rajasthan Hosing Board Department https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and https://urban.rajasthan.gov.in/rhb websites.
UBN No. - RHB2122WSOB00246, RHB2122WSOB00247, RHB2122WSOB00248, RHB2122WSOB00249, RHB2122WSOB00250, RHB2122WSOB00251 & RHB2122WSOB00252
Raj.Samwad/C/2021-22/11452 Dy. H.C., Circle, Udaipur

EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS)
POLYCLINIC, BULANDSHAHR
EMPLOYMENT NOTICE
1. Stn HQ, Babugarh (Distt-Hapur) invites applications to engage following staff on contractual basis for ECHS Polyclinic, Bulandshahr for a period of eleven/twelve months, renewable for additional period as per policy:-

Post	Vacancies	Salary	Max Age
Medical Specialist	01	1st year Rs. 87,500/- 2nd year Rs. 1,00,000/-	70 Years
Medical Officer	01	75,000/-	68 Years
Nursing Assistant	01	28,100/-	58 Years

2. For terms & conditions, kindly visit our website www.echs.gov.in. For any other query, please contact tele No. 0122-2338002 (Extn 2311) / 7977857535 between 0900–1300h. Last date of receipt of application is 24 Feb 2022 at Stn HQ, Babugarh, Distt-Hapur (UP), Pin Code-245201. Interview will be conducted on 28 Feb 2022 at 1000 hrs. Candidates should bring original certificates at the time of interview. All Medical Officers and Medical Specialists should produce a certificate stating that "I will not do any private practice after selection in ECHS Polyclinic, Bulandshahr".
3. Candidates should enclose experience & salary certificates if any alongwith application and two passport size photographs. Medical/Para Medical candidates should have working knowledge of computers.
4. Medical fitness certificate from SEMO/CMO should be attached with the application.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice
E-tender Notice No.68 of 2021-22 (Open)-Engg/DDU
On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by DRM/Engg/DDU for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and Financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings: 1. (A) Name of work with its location: Tender No.41-DDU-DEN-HQ-21-22 Construction of 14 Nos. type-II Qtrs. coming in DFCCIL alignment in DDU yard under ADEN/HQ/DDU. (B) Approx. cost of work: Rs.2,71,92,586.18, (C) Earnest Money: Rs.2,86,000.00, 2. (A) Name of work with its location: Tender No.42-DDU-DEN-HQ-21-22 Provision of RCC cover for existing pucca drain of European colony under ADEN/HQ/DDU (B) Approx. cost of work: Rs.14,98,917.77, (C) Earnest Money: Rs. 30,000.00, 3. Closing Date & time of submission of e-tender: 04.03.2022, Up-to 12:00 hrs. 4. Website particulars of e-tendering: www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway Manager
ECR, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhaya Division
PR/01636/DDU/ENGG/T/21-22/36

Arunachal avalanche: Bodies of seven soldiers found

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE INDIAN Army has recovered the bodies of seven Indian Army personnel who were reported missing in an avalanche in Arunachal Pradesh's Kameng sector on Sunday, the force said on Tuesday.

The bodies are being brought back to the nearest Army facility.

The Army said that the seven personnel were on a patrol in the high-altitude area of Kameng when an avalanche struck on February 6.

The "search and rescue operations were launched immediately, including airlifting of specialised teams", it said in a statement, adding that the operations have now concluded and the "bodies of all seven individuals have been recovered from the avalanche site".

"Unfortunately… despite the best efforts of everyone involved, all seven have been confirmed deceased," the Army said without releasing the soldiers' names.

The area where the avalanche struck is located at an altitude of 14,500 feet, and had been witnessing bad weather with heavy snowfall for the last few days, according to the force. "The bodies of the soldiers are currently being transferred from the avalanche site to the nearest Army medical facility for further formalities," it said.

High-altitude patrols can be perilous. The last such incident occurred in May 2020, when two Army soldiers who were part of a patrol-cum-snow clearing party died after they were caught in an avalanche in Sikkim.

According to the data shared by the government in Parliament in February 2020, the Army lost six personnel to avalanches and snow-slides in Siachen Glacier in 2019, and 11 others in other parts of the country.

The government had said that all personnel of the armed forces inducted into "High Altitude regions are provided adequate training in mountain craft, ice craft and survival in glaciated terrain in mountain coping with any eventuality like avalanches" and are also "taught to handle medical emergencies".

They are "suitably equipped to undertake the operational challenges" and modern equipment like helicopters, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, snow scooters, avalanches detectors, and mountain clothing and equipment are used by them.

Suspected Ansar operative held for 'planning blasts' in UP

Lucknow: The NIA Monday arrested a 22-year-old man from J&K with alleged links to al Qaeda-linked Ansar Ghazwat-ul Hind that was allegedly planning to carry out blasts in Lucknow and scout recruits for the terror module. The police said the accused, Tawheed Ahmed Shah, from J&K's Budgam district, was also planning to carry out suicide bombings in crowded places.

Government counsel Mithlesh Singh said Shah was produced before a court that sent him to judicial custody. He added they would seek Shah's police custody remand to question him. **ENS**

FROM PAGE ONE

Hyundai row

Pakistan were "clearly against" its policy, and it "deeply regrets" any offence caused.

"We had seen a social media post on the so-called Kashmir Solidarity Day was made by Hyundai Pakistan. Immediately after this social media post on Sunday, 6th February 2022, our Ambassador in Seoul contacted the Hyundai Headquarters and sought an explanation. The offending post had been removed subsequently. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea was summoned by the Ministry of External Affairs yesterday," the MEA's official spokesperson, Arindam Bagchi, said in a statement.

"The strong displeasure of the government on the unacceptable social media post by Hyundai Pakistan was conveyed to him. It was highlighted that this matter concerned India's territorial integrity on which there could be no compromise. We expected the company to take appropriate action to properly address these issues," he said.

"South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong called the External Affairs Minister this morning. While they discussed several issues, the South Korean Foreign Minister also conveyed that they regretted the offence caused to the people and Government of India by the social media post," he said.

Jaishankar also tweeted: "Received a call from ROK FM Chung Eui-yong today. Discussed bilateral and multilateral issues as also the Hyundai matter."

On February 5, "Hyundai Pakistan Official" sent out a tweet which called for "remembering the sacrifices" of people in Kashmir and sought support for their "struggle for freedom". The same post was also shared on Facebook.

Both the tweet and the Facebook post were later deleted. Pakistan observes February 5 as "Kashmir Solidarity Day". A day later, Hyundai Motor India issued a statement in which it said the "unsolicited social media post" was "offending" the company's "unparalleled commitment" to the country. On Tuesday, its parent company, Hyundai Motor, said it does not comment on "political or religious issues in any specific region", and it "deeply regrets" any offence caused.

BharatPe

relation with the Company, after which the Board shall, through a simple majority, take a decision on such Cause event based on the report shared by the appointed Big 4 Firm after following principles of natural justice". The AoA defines "Big 4" as any of: KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young or Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, or their respective affiliates in India. Separately, effective April 1, 2019, BharatPe had onboarded Deloitte Haskins & Sells LLP as its statutory auditor until March 31, 2024.

PwC was roped in by the company's Board late last month to investigate aspects such as accounting, approval processes, expenses and hiring. As a part of this process, PwC is also involving its forensic team, which is likely to study the findings submitted by independent advisory firm Alvarez & Marsal (A&M). A&M was appointed by BharatPe through its legal firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas to look into internal governance issues — specifically assessing if senior executives were making proper internal disclosures about personal investments and check for conflicts. According to some of the early findings by the advisory firm, payments were allegedly made into "dubious" recruitment firms with expenses running into crores of rupees spent on "non-existing" vendors and "questionable invoices" created to substantiate such spends.

The other scenarios where a 'Cause' can be established includes the founder being chargesheeted for any offence involving "moral turpitude or fraud in relation to the affairs of the company" that is not quashed, stayed or set aside within 60 days. However, through this clause that allows the buy back of a founder's shares — the company can only buy back the founder's restricted shares.

The AoA defines restricted shares as 75% of the shares held by founders on September 5, 2019 (the closing date of the BharatPe's Series C fundraising round), and follow-on shares issued at the closing of Series E funding round.

Queries sent to BharatPe and Grover did not receive a response.

Grover currently owns 9.5% stake in BharatPe, while his co-founder Shashwat Nakrani owns 7.8%. VC investor Sequoia Capital India is the largest shareholder in BharatPe with 19.6%, followed by Coatue at 12.4% and Ribbit Capital at 11%. In addition to these three, Tiger Global, Steadview Capital and Beenext have also backed BharatPe, and together these marquee investors hold 60.4% stake, as of August last year.

To activate the buyback clause, in addition to approval from the Board, consent of 51% of the investors is also needed.

All anomalies allegedly involve Ashneer Grover's wife and the company's head of controls, Madhuri Jain Grover. The initial findings of A&M's independent audit came just weeks after the controversy involving Ashneer and Madhuri Grover erupted in the wake of a leaked audio clip, where the former was allegedly hurling abuses at a Kotak Mahindra Bank employee for presumably not being able to secure shares of e-commerce company Nykaa during its IPO.

Kerala HC

Justice Nagaresh said on Tuesday: "It emerges from the files that the MHA had called for inputs from intelligence agencies... From the files produced before this court, it is discernible that the committee of officers took note of the inputs given by the intelligence agencies... and found that the inputs are of a serious nature and fall under the security rating parameters. In the circumstances, the committee of officers advised not to renew the licence. This court finds that the recommendations of the committee of officers as finally accepted by the MHA, are justified by supporting materials. In the facts and circumstances of the case, this court is not inclined to interfere with the denial of renewal of licence to the petitioner company."

MediaOne is owned by Madhyamam Broadcasting Ltd, many of whose investors are members of the Kerala chapter of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind. Justice Nagaresh also declined to keep his order in abeyance for a few days to enable the channel to appeal against it, saying since national security was involved, he was not "inclined" to grant any such relief. Subsequently, the channel went off air and its editor, Pramod Raman, said they would file an appeal before a division bench.

JNU V-C

"mentally-ill jihadists", was deleted following the uproar on Monday.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* on Tuesday, Pandit said: "I didn't have a Twitter account… It has been found out that it has been hacked and somebody internally from JNU has done this. The point is, many people are unhappy that I am the first woman V-C." She said she had found out from reliable sources about the alleged involvement of people from JNU.

Asked if the Twitter account never belonged to her, she replied: "Never. I never had. My daughter is a cyber-security engineer. Six years ago, she closed it for me because she was applying for some jobs in the US and she told me, 'Mom, you are not going to be on any social media sites'. I'm not at all active on social media."

"It came to my notice only when these pictures came out. Because I'm not on Twitter, so unless I'm on Twitter, how will I know that an account is there," she said. Asked if nobody informed her, she said, "Nobody told me… In this world everybody is a conspirator."

Alleging a "tirade" against her, she said: "Why am I being treated so badly and shabbily by the press? What sin have I done? Just because Prime Minister Narendra Modi beat the Left in breaking a glass ceiling, which the Left did not do."

Asked if she was referring to her appointment as the V-C, she said: "Yes I'm a woman from the marginalised section and from the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Why did the Left not do it all these years? Seventy years they were in power. They couldn't get to JNU? It is their adda (hub)."

On the Savitribai Phule Pune University's vigilance report to the ministry, stating that she had faced action after an inquiry found her guilty of not following rules while granting admission to PIO students, she said: "Where is my side of the story? Is there even one FIR against me?"

FULL REPORTS ON
www.indianexpress.com

District Mining Office, Khunti
Jharkhand State Mineral Development corporation Ltd. (JSMDC)

Notice Inviting Tender for Selection of Agency for Operation and management of various stone mines of JSMDC.

S.No.	District	Block	Village/Mouza	Area (Ha)	Resource (Million Tonne)
1	Khunti	Torpa	Japud	6.0	4.8
2	Khunti	Torpa	Kasmar	5.8	3.4
3	Khunti	Torpa	Urikel	14.7	8.4
4	Khunti	Karra	Kanti	5.4	1.8
5	Khunti	Karra	Jurdag	7.0	3.9
6	Khunti	Karra	Jurdag	5.8	3.5
7	Khunti	Karra	Jurdag	5.7	5.0
8	Khunti	Karra	Muruchkel	13.2	12.6
9	Khunti	Karra	Jojodag	6.3	4.7
10	Khunti	Torpa	Urikel	8.8	5.2
11.	Khunti	Karra	Jurdag	6.8	2.5

The Interested Bidders shall submit their bid in sealed physical envelope as per methodology prescribed in the RFP document. Bidder shall clearly mention "RFP No. 08/2022" Selection of Agency for the operation and management of various Stone mines of JSMDC" along with the Tender Fee of INR 5,900/- (INR Five Thousand and Nine hundred only) inclusive of GST (Non-refundable) in the form of Demand Draft drawn in favor of "Jharkhand state Mineral Development Corporation Ltd." payable at Ranchi or in the form of RTGS/NEFT transfer (Details for RTGS/NEFT transfer as per bid data sheet).

The Interested bidder shall also submit the EMD along with its bid as per below details:

1. Category A of INR 1,50,000/- (INR One lakh and fifty thousand) per stone mine.
2. Category B of INR7,50,000/- (Seven lakh fifty thousand) per stone mine.
3. The EMD can be submitted in the form of the Demand Draft issued by a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank, in favor of "Jharkhand State Minerals Development Corporation Limited" payable at Ranchi or in the form of RTGS/NEFT transfer (Details for RTGS/NEFT transfer as per bid data sheet).

The complete set of Tender Documents can be viewed and download free of cost from the JSMDC website https://www.jsmdc.in/web/Tender.php from Date 22.01.2022. The payment made for purchase of Tender Documents would be non-refundable in nature. The last Date for submission of tender is up to 11.00 a.m on 26.02.2022 and the same shall be opened at 3.00 pm 26.02.2022.For any further information please contact Md. Nadeem Shafi, D.M.O Khunti, Mb No- 7024264629.

District Mining Officer
Khunti

PR 263418 Mines and Geology (21-22)_D

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

Stressed Asset Management Branch, Patna, Khajpura, Jagdeopath, Bailey Road, Patna-800014

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

1. **M/s B K Industries Ltd (Borrower/Company)** Represented by its Directors , having Regd Office at B/401, Priyadarshani Apartment, Boring Road Crossing, Patna-800001 (Bihar)
2. **Mr. Binod Kumar Singh (Director/ Guarantor)** S/o Mr Ramashish Singh, At B-401, Priyadarshani Apartment, Boring Road, District -Patna, Bihar-800001.
3. **Mr. Ramashish Singh (Director/ Guarantor)** At B-401, Priyadarshani Apartment, Boring Road, District -Patna, Bihar-800001.
4. **Smt Archana Raj (Director/ Guarantor),** W/o Sri Binod Kumar Singh, At B-401, Priyadarshani Apartment, Boring Road, District -Patna, Bihar-800001.
5. **Smt Sunita Devi (Guarantor)** W/o Sri Ramashish Singh, At B-401, Priyadarshani Apartment, Boring Road, District -Patna, Bihar-800001.

This is as per the direction of Wilful Defaulter Screening Committee (WDSC) issued vide its order/decision dated 13.05.2021 and in terms of the findings of the said Screening Committee wherein the committee observes as under:

That, the first of you is the Borrower Company in which, Second to fourth of you are the Directors and second to fifth of you are Guarantors have availed credit facility under Sole Banking from our Bank. The aforesaid borrower company i.e. **M/s. B K Industries** was sanctioned credit facility of TLI- Rs.9.50 Crore on 30.03.2012, TLII- Rs.10.00 Crore on 23.01.2016, TLIII (IDC)-Rs.1.36 on 23.01.2016 and Rs.TLIV(IDC) on 22.12.2017 on the terms and conditions as stipulated in the sanction letter & in the documents executed by all of you.

Date of NPA – 29.07.2018 Dues as on 13.07.2021 – Rs.34.20 Cr.

Cause of Action:–
Capacity to pay and Diversion of funds and Disposal of assets – 2.1.3(a), 2.1.3(b) and 2.1.3(d)

Basis of Wilful Default:

- The Borrower did not start the unit despite availing enhanced credit limit.
- The funds were not utilized to the purpose for which credit facilities were sanctioned.
  - As per the credit sanction dated 23.01.2016, Out of Term Loan-II of Rs. 10.00 Crs, Rs. 8.03 Crs was sanctioned towards purchase of Plant & Machinery (Total estimate is Rs. 17.85 Crs with Margin of Rs. 9.82 Crs.).
  - As per Lender's independent Engineer Report of Gulshan Dhiraj & Assocoates, Chartered Accountants dated 30.04.2018, the value of Plant & Machinery as on 31.03.2018 is Rs.7.83 Crs.
  - The value of Plant & Machinery available as per valuation report of Er. Ram Balak Prasad dated 28.06.2019 is Rs. 0.12 Crs.
  - This shows that the borrower has not brought in the requested margin for buying the Plant & Machinery and has also disposed of the P&M available as on 31.03.2018 worth of Rs. 7.83 Crs.
- Borrower is having capacity to repay but not willing to pay the dues which is witnessed by the networth of the Partners/Guarantors-
  - Mr. B.K Singh- Rs. 8.96 Crs as on 31.03.2015,
  - Mr. Ramashish Singh- Rs. 5.25 Crs as on 31.03.2015.
  - Mrs. Archana Singh - Rs. 1.26 Crs as on 31.03.2015.
- Noncompliance of sanctioned terms & conditions.
- No record of the margin money infused in the project.

In view of the above, in terms of clause 2.1.3(a), 2.1.3(b) and 2.1.3(d) of the RBI Master Circular No.RBI/ 2015-16/100 DBR.No.CID. BC.22/20.16.003/ 2015-16 date 01.07.2015, each of you are required by the WDSC to show cause as to why each of you should not be a declared a willful defaulter for the reported diversion / siphoning of funds / reasons specified hereinabove. Please ensure that your reply should reach us on or before 24.02.2022 failing which the committee would be constrained to proceed further in the matter based on the evidence on record treating as if you have no reason/explanation to offer in rebuttal.

Date : 08.02.2022 **Branch Manager**
Place : Patna **For Wilful Defaulter Screening Committee (WDSC)**

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL MANAGEMENT (NCSCM)
(Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)
Anna University Campus, Chennai 600025.
Ph: (+91) 44 22200600, Fax: (+91) 44 22200700, email:careers@ncscm.res.in

Advt. No:HR01/2022
Advertisement for the selection of Project Staff

NCSCM requires Project Staff in various projects on contractual basis. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online on or before 23/02/2022. Further details relating to application procedure, eligibility criteria, interview dates, etc., may be obtained from the website
http://www.ncscm.res.in/cms/careers/careers.php.

Director, NCSCM

उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग
हरिद्वार
पिन कोड– 249404

पत्रांकः 75(1)/16/प्र0परीक्षा(मु0)–2020/गोपन–2/2020–21,
दिनांकः 08 फरवरी, 2022

विज्ञप्ति

उत्तराखण्ड विशेष अधीनस्थ शिक्षा (प्रवक्ता संवर्ग–समूह 'ग') सेवा (सामान्य एवं महिला शाखा) परीक्षा–2020 के दिनांक 28.10.2021 से 31.10.2021 तक सम्पन्न मुख्य परीक्षा के आधार पर विषयवार रिक्त पदों के सापेक्ष निर्धारित अनुपात में (तीन गुना अथवा दो गुना) **"अभिलेख सत्यापन सूची" (Document Verification List)** आयोग की वेबसाईट **www.ukpsc.gov.in** पर जारी कर दी गयी है। अभ्यर्थियों के प्राप्तांक, कट ऑफ मार्क्स एवं संशोधित उत्तर कुंजी अंतिम चयन परिणाम जारी होने के पश्चात आयोग की वेबसाईट पर प्रसारित की जाएगी।

(कर्मेन्द्र सिंह) सचिव

CONSORTIUM FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION
IUAC CAMPUS, ARUNA ASAF ALI MARG, NEW DELHI – 110067
Phone: 011-24126418, 24126419 Fax: 011-24126416, Website: www.cec.nic.in

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

Advertisement No. 1/2022

Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), an autonomous body under University Grants Commission (UGC) invites eligible candidates for Walk- in- Interview of the following positions for various ongoing projects on contract basis initially for a period of one year, which may be extended further as per its requirement and as per the procedure followed for contractual engagements at CEC. These contractual engagements may be extended only up to end of the projects or on actual need basis.

Sl. No.	Name of Post(s)	No. of Post(s)	Interface on
(1)	Administrative Officer	(01 Position)	17.02.2022 at 11:00 AM
(2)	Multi Tasking Staff	(01 Position till 19.08.2022)	17.02.2022 at 02:00 PM
(3)	Accounts Assistant	(02 Positions)	18.02.2022 at 11:00 AM
(4)	Coordinator (Online Courses)	(01 Position)	23.02.2022 at 11:00 AM
(5)	Coordinator (Swayam Examination)	(01 Position)	24.02.2022 at 11:00 AM
(6)	Project Associates	(02 Positions)	25.02.2022 at 11:00 AM
(7)	Technical Assistant (Quality Control)	(02 Positions)	25.02.2022 at 02:00 PM
(8)	Technical Assistant (Vyas Channel)	(01 Position)	25.02.2022 at 02:00 PM
(9)	Technician (Electrical)	(01 Position)	28.02.2022 at 11:00 AM
(10)	Electrician	(01 Position)	28.02.2022 at 02:00 PM

The candidate should bring his/her Bio-Data along with one self attested photograph, original certificates along with self attested photocopy of the certificates at the time of Interface.

For detailed information regarding job description, educational qualification, experience and consolidated monthly remuneration for the above mentioned positions on contractual basis, please visit CEC website: **www.cec.nic.in**

Chief Administrative Officer, CEC

Advertisement No. 18/2022
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
Director (Projects)
In
Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Ltd.
Last date of receipt of applications in PESB is by 15:00 hours on **18th April, 2022.**
For details login to website
http://www.pesb.gov.in

GOVT. OF BIHAR
BIHAR COMBINED ENTRANCE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION BOARD
I.A.S. Association Building, Near Patna Airport, Patna-14.

POST GRADUATE MEDICAL ADMISSION COUNSELLING (PGMAC)-2021
for MD / MS / PGD / DNB (Degree & Diploma) in Govt./ Private Medical Colleges of Bihar

Advt. No.-BCECEB(PGMAC)-2021/05 Dated : 08.02.2022 Website : bceceboard.bihar.gov.in

Notice for 2nd round counselling

In continuation to Adv. No. BCECEB(PGMAC)-2021/04 Dated : 30.01.2022 it is to inform all concerned candidates of PGMAC-2021 that since Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) has re-scheduled the dates of online counselling for admission on All India Quota seats, hence accordingly the important dates for offline 2nd round Counselling of PGMAC-2021 is also hereby re-scheduled as follows;

Important Rescheduled dates for PGMAC-2021 :

Sl.	Programme	Earlier published Schedule Date	Re-scheduled Date
i.	Free exit from Govt. Colleges :	up to 14.02.2022	up to 17.02.2022
ii.	Result / counselling programme publication of 2nd round counselling :	14.02.2022	16.02.2022
iii.	Seat Matrix uploading :	15.02.2022	18.02.2022
iv.	Proposed date of counselling / admission :	16.02.2022 to 21.02.2022	from 19.02.2022

(2) Rest of the Terms & Condition of earlier published Advertisements will remain the same.

Controller of Examination

HARYANA REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY, PANCHKULA
Mini Secretariat, New Office Block, 2nd Floor, Sector-1, Panchkula

PUBLIC NOTICE

Complaint No. 545/2021 and 546/2021,
Suresh Kumar & Sanjeev Kumar Phoughat (Complainants)
Versus
1. Flex Pack Technologies. Pvt. Ltd.
2. Asian Developers Ltd. (Respondents)

Notice to:

1. Flex Pack Technologies Pvt. Ltd. at registered office at Factory No. 50/7, Site-4, Sahibabad, District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201005
2. Asian Developers Ltd. at registered office at B-88, 2nd Floor, Sector-2, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

Whereas the above-mentioned complainant has instituted the above titled complaints against you. Notice & copy of the complaints had been sent to you which could not be either successfully delivered or was refused. You are, hereby, given a notice to appear before the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Panchkula, in person or by a duly authorized person on **09.03.2022** at **11:00 A.M** to answer the same, failing which the complaints will be disposed of ex-parte; for details, log on to https://haryanarera.gov.in.

Administrative Officer (Petitions)
For: HRERA Panchkula

7446/HRY

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

Stressed Asset Management Branch, Patna, Khajpura, Jagdeopath, Bailey Road, Patna-800014

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

1. **M/s. Patliputra Entertainment Pvt Ltd (Borrower/Company)** Represented by its Directors, situated at-301, Maharaja Kameshwar Complex, Fraser Road, Patna-800001.
2. **Mr Anil Kumar (Director/Guarantor),** S/o Late Chathoo Choudhary, At Shivam Apartment, North Sri Krishnapuri,Patna-800001 & At-301, Maharaja Kameshwar Complex, Fraser Road, Patna-800001
3. **Mr Niranjan Kumar (Director/Guarantor),** S/o Yadunandan Singh, H No-186, Rajvanshi Nagar, Shastri Nagar,Patna-800001
4. **Mrs Jyotsna (Guarantor)** W/o Mr Anil Kumar, At Shivam Apartment, North Sri Krishnapuri, Patna-800001 & At-301, Maharaja Kameshwar Complex, Fraser Road, Patna-800001
5. **M/s Patliputra Builder Ltd (Corporate Guarantee),** At-301, Maharaja Kameshwar Complex, Fraser Road, Patna-800001
6. **M/s Patliputra Shoppers Plaza(Corporate Guarantee),** At-301, Maharaja Kameshwar Complex, Fraser Road, Patna-800001
7. **M/s Patliputra Hytech Infra Pvt Ltd (Corporate Guarantee),** At-301, Maharaja Kameshwar Complex, Fraser Road, Patna-800001.

This is as per the direction of Wilful Defaulter Screening Committee (WDSC) issued vide its order/decision dated 13.05.2021 and in terms of the findings of the said Screening Committee wherein the committee observes as under:

That, the first of you is the Borrower Company in which second to fourth of you are the Directors/Guarantors and sixth to eighth of you are the Corporate Guarantors of the Borrower Company have availed credit facility under Sole Banking from our Bank. The aforesaid borrower company i.e. M/s. Patliputra Entertainment Pvt Ltd was sanctioned credit facility of Rs.6.40 Crore on 05/07/2011 & Rs.0.70 Crore on 22/07/2014 on the terms and conditions as stipulated in the sanction letter & in the documents executed by all of you.

Date of NPA – 30.04.2014 Dues as on 13.07.2021 – Rs.6.38 Cr.

Cause of Action:–
Capacity to Pay and Diversion of funds –2.1.3(a) and 2.1.3(b) read with 2.2.1(d).

Basis of Wilful Default:

- In spite of the fact that the Hotel is running well, as per ABS 2016 of company submitted by the borrower, Gross revenue generated was Rs.8.84 Crs and as per provisional balance sheet of 2017 submitted by company gross revenue generated was Rs.11.04 Crs, but as per the account statement total credit in the CC account was 1.63 Crs for FY 2015-16 & Rs. 2.16 Crs in FY 2016-17. This clearly shows diversion of funds for other purposes as the entire amount of sales was not routed through the accounts.
- Borrowers have defaulted in meeting its term loan repayment obligation to the lender even though they have the capacity to honour the said obligation, which is witnessed by the networth and A&L submitted by the borrowers at the time of renewal of the accounts in 2014.
- Patliputra Group of Hotel is one of the largest chains in the mid-priced hotel in Bihar located at Patna and Gaya. The Group has opened another Hotel at Gurugram, Borrower has never come forward to pay the availed loan amount despite the fact that the business was flourishing in the group of hotels.
- Non Compliance of Sanctioned Terms & Conditions by the borrowers such as non-submission of audited balance sheet after FY 2016/ periodical stock statement/ Tax papers and sale proceeds were not routed through the CC account.

In view of the above, in terms of clause 2.1.3(a) and 2.1.3(b) read with 2.2.1(d) of the RBI Master Circular No.RBI/ 2015-16/100 DBR.No.CID. BC.22/20.16.003/ 2015-16 date 01.07.2015, each of you are required by the WDSC to show cause as to why each of you should not be a declared a willful defaulter for the reported diversion / siphoning of funds / reasons specified hereinabove. Please ensure that your reply should reach us on or before 24.02.2022 failing which the committee would be constrained to proceed further in the matter based on the evidence on record treating as if you have no reason/explanation to offer in rebuttal.

Date : 08.02.2022 **Branch Manager**
Place : Patna **For Wilful Defaulter Screening Committee (WDSC)**

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

THE DOORS FLY OPEN WHEN YOU'RE A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE.

— DENNIS RODMAN

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

MOTION OF ATTACK

PM's speech in Parliament betrayed irritation over questions — and the Opposition

WITH ELECTIONS IN five states beginning in days, grandstanding in Parliament, in these bitterly divided times, is par for the course. Some gloves will be off, some mud will fly. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches in the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha became an all-out attack on the Opposition, primarily the Congress, rather than a response to a range of concerns flagged across the aisle. His takedown of the Congress raised valid points, from its imperious past to its shrinking present, its ideological muddle over business and industry, and the hollow ring of its holier-than-thou sermons on federalism and freedom. Yet, in the manner in which he framed his attack, the Prime Minister's shrill tone betrayed anger, impatience, and irritation with criticism. He was right to say that *andhvirodh*, blind opposition, is *anaadar*, disrespect to democracy, but as disrespectful — and corrosive — is for the Government to frame all criticism by the Opposition in terms of an assault on the country and not engage with it.

So a complaint about the Centre not listening to states became a sinister plot to light a fire, Tamil Nadu's reservations over the national entrance test, got conflated with the tragic accidental death of India's Chief of Defence Staff, as the Prime Minister accused the Opposition of trying to divide the country (*vibhajankari maansikta*), called the principal opposition party the leader of the "*tukde-tukde gang*" and under the influence of "urban Naxals". Both these monikers, by the way, have been invented and weaponised by the BJP to name and shame its critics as seditious, anti-national actors. In his attempt to paint the Congress as a member of the extremist fringe, the PM, perhaps, forgot that his targets include Members of Parliament elected by people and sworn in on the Constitution. They are as much representatives of this nation as the PM and his MPs. To corner the Opposition, the PM offered a narrative on Covid management in the country which flies in the face of facts. He accused Opposition-run state governments of instigating migrant workers to leave the state and thus help spread Covid! The sudden lockdown which rendered many jobless, the lack of a financial safety net, the fear of the unknown, all worked together to set off a humanitarian crisis with migrants and their families hitting the road to trudge to the familiar assurances of their villages. Thousands of unemployed young men and women in election-bound UP and other states have faced the brunt of Covid distress. For the PM to tell them that the "Opposition's sin" is to blame for their plight is cynical politics and an attempt to brush the second-wave mismanagement under the rhetorical carpet. This, when the success of the vaccine programme is a formidable achievement by Centre and states working together, and the battle against Covid has been and is being fought by both — the PM himself made it a point to mention the 23 meetings he had with CMs.

At the end of his speech, the PM tried to reach out to the Opposition with a pitch to "move in harmony, speak in one voice, let minds be in agreement" (*samgacchadhwam samvadadhwam/sam vo manamsi janatam*). Eloquent words, but given the tone of what preceded them, they are unlikely to resonate beyond the thumping of desks in the Treasury benches.

CURBS ON PRESS

Threat of cancelling accreditation intrudes on rights of free press, attempts to shrink space for dissent. It must be withdrawn

THE MINISTRY OF Information and Broadcasting is at it again — arrogating to itself the powers to play judge, jury and editor. A new policy announced by the government dangles the threat of cancelling the accreditation of journalists if they "act in a manner which is prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement of an offence". This is an intrusion on the rights of a free press on many counts. First, accreditation is not a favour by the Government; it is bound by democratic norms to provide access to journalists to do their job. Second, what's the definition of "morality and decency," and who will do the defining? These are vague, overbroad terms that, in the hands of a vindictive bureaucracy or a government, can easily be used to harass and silence journalists. This provision also appears to be intentionally blind to the place of journalism in a democracy — which exists to interrogate the state and its exercise of power.

This is not the first time that a government has attempted to walk down this path. In 2018, the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting under Smriti Irani had similarly threatened to cancel accreditation if a journalist was found to have spread "fake news", another catch-all term that is frequently used by the political class to deny unfavourable news. It was forced to withdraw such a rule after protests. In 1988, the Rajiv Gandhi government attempted a similar run on journalistic freedoms through the Defamation Bill, which broadened the definition of defamation and transferred the burden of proof on the accused. The uproar across the country eventually forced the government to withdraw the bill.

Today, technology and social media have not only empowered the political class's one-way communication with the people, but also mainstreamed a narrow hyper-nationalism that is intolerant to questioning and dissent, that is only in thrall to one story. When the government decides what a journalist can do or cannot, Article 19 is in peril. The provisions in the new accreditation policy can turn into weapons to be wielded against the media, and shrink the space for journalism. They must be withdrawn.

BHEEM LIVES ON

Praveen Kumar Sobti's athletic brilliance was overshadowed by the character he played. But that character was truly iconic

THERE IS LITTLE doubt that Praveen Kumar Sobti, who died at 74 this week, was a more talented athlete than an actor. He won four Asian Games medals, including two golds, at the discus and hammer throw events, and participated in two Olympics. In the 1960s and '70s, though, athletes did not get either the recognition or reward they do now. With his acting career, beginning in the '80s, Sobti had perfect timing: He played Bheem, the second of the Pandavas, in B R Chopra's *Mahabharat*. And as with so many others who were involved with television as the medium spread across India, he became known more as his character than himself.

Like Dara Singh before him — who played Hanuman in Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* — Sobti was the ultimate strongman. Well-built and over six-and-a-half feet tall, he was the perfect Bheem — his thick Punjabi accent notwithstanding. For a generation of Indians, whose images of the mythic heroes of the Mahabharata were from oral traditions — stories told by parents and grandparents — the Doordarshan show became the first common, pan-Indian embodiment of arguably India's greatest story. Sobti played other characters too — notably, Saaboo in Chacha Chaudhary. But for much of the rest of his filmography, he was a "henchman", someone the hero could beat up to show his prowess.

It is easy to lament how Sobti the athlete was overshadowed by Bheem. Yet, as iconic characters go, it's hard to do better than he did on the small screen. Today, with multiple channels, reality shows, OTT platforms and the never-ending stream of content, it's easy to forget that for years, every Sunday, families gathered around to watch Sobti and his colleagues for India's original soap opera, action flick, religious drama and moral lesson all rolled into one. For those who do remember, Bheem lives on.

An enabling environment

Union budget has demonstrated commitment towards supply-side reforms, creating jobs sustained by growth

SUSHIL KUMAR MODI

A CRISIS IS also a crucible of reform. The Union budget 2022-23 strives to enact economic reforms for the country that is recovering from the pandemic and pave the pathway for its robust rise in the coming years. It speaks of an outlook for India@100 in preparation for a post-Covid world order.

The thrust has been to nurture economic development with sustainable and wide-scale employment. To that extent, the budget has crafted a growth plan which is driven by investment policy levers. In an ambitious expansion plan, Rs 7.5 trillion as capital expenditure and Rs 10.7 trillion as effective capex have been earmarked to facilitate a virtuous cycle of jobs and growth.

Amid an economic environment where uncertainties still linger, the private expenditure component of GDP usually dithers. There is a need for an enabling milieu. It was therefore imperative that the government steps in and front-loads the economy through public expenditure. But an economy has a limited reservoir of policy resources hence public expenditure needs keen judgement, this budget demonstrates that.

A sizeable 35.4 per cent increase in capital expenditure compared to a mere 1 per cent increase in revenue expenditure marks a structural transformation in the expenditure approach. This increased devotion to capex is pertinent because of its multiplier effect and the facilitation of an environment that crowds in private investment. Studies analysing fiscal policy impacts conclude that Rs 100 spent on capex translate into Rs 245 of increased economic activity. Moreover, since the gains from capital expenditure are not just limited to one fiscal, over longer horizons, the cumulative incremental return is Rs 480. With this understanding, the budget strives to initiate a dynamic growth engine that shall sustain itself.

To catalyse overall investment, the budget has also incentivised state governments to spend on capex. It will extend Rs 1 lakh crore as 50-year interest-free loans to states besides their normal borrowings. States have also been granted a respite to raise their fiscal deficit to 4 per cent instead of the FRBM mandated 3 per cent.

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Leveraging these investment expenditures, the budget's outline seeks to enhance India's infrastructural base across the economic, social and digital dimensions because jobs creation is not done in silos.

Economic infrastructure will be fostered through synergies reaped from the multi-modal approach of PM Gati Shakti pertaining to India's seven growth engines: Roads, railways, airports, ports, mass transport, waterways and logistics infrastructure. Such an integrated approach to world-class infrastructure building shall create industry clusters and corridors thereby boosting productivity. Furthermore, works in these sectors are labour-intensive endeavours, thus budgetary allocations towards their expansion will generate mass employment.

Social infrastructure is enhanced through improved housing, drinking water and education. The budget ensures this through Rs 60,000 crore to provide 3.8 crore households with access to tap water, Rs 48,000 crore to complete 80 lakh houses and Rs 39,553 crore to improve learning outcomes. Such projects along with the Rs 19,000 crore PM Gramin Sadak will not only improve infrastructure but also boost India's rural economy.

Stimulating the digital infrastructure was a profound milestone for this budget. It is critical to ensure that India develops its technological ability and stands at the vanguard of this rapidly digitalising post-pandemic world. Efforts towards establishing a digital ecosystem for the economy is evinced by the projects being pioneered: The rollout of 5G, a national digital health ecosystem, a flagship digital university, e-passports, kisan drones, digital banks, 200 TV channels for supplementary education and broadband coverage to villages through Bharat-Net project.

The introduction of Central Bank Digital Currency is a testament to the digital readiness and will provide a further fillip to India's digital transaction economy. The RBI's Digital Payments Index has demonstrated significant growth, rising three times from March 2018 to September 2021. CBDC shall reduce cash management costs and boost efficiencies in payments settlement, cross-border transactions and direct benefit transfers.

To ensure the realisation of envisaged objectives, the budget also has some essential enablers and careful reforms ingrained.

The most significant enabler for reviving investment and generating jobs in manufacturing will be the production-linked incentive schemes across 14 critical sectors. Achieving the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision, PLIs shall foster India's manufacturing prowess and generate 6o lakh jobs and additional production worth Rs 30 lakh crore in the next five years. Supporting over 130 lakh MSMEs and by extension the numerous jobs created by them, the ECLGS lifeline has been extended alongside the facilitation of Rs 2 lakh crore additional credit through CGTMSE.

An essential enabler for investment growth is efficient capital mobilisation. In 2021, startup investments by venture capital and private equity exceeded Rs 5.5 lakh crore and India witnessed historically high IPOs. Forty-four startups achieved unicorn status in 2021 alone, the third-highest in the world, leading to a total tally of 83 unicorns valued at $ 277.8 billion. Encouraging this fledgling ecosystem, the budget has provided startups with tax incentives to nudge further investments.

2022-23 will herald a new era amid the rise of Web 3.0 and Metaverse. Animation, visual effects and gaming will be the new-age employment sector for youths, and the budget taps its potential by promoting this sector and related skills. Process reforms like One Nation One Registration, reduction of unnecessary compliances, e-billing for procurements, a single portal for all green clearances enhance transparency in the conduct of economic activity, shall fuel investment confidence.

Propping up the economy without an increase in taxation is an achievement and reflects fiscal fortitude and consistency despite challenges. The Union budget has demonstrated an earnest commitment towards supply-side reforms, leading demand with capex and creating jobs sustained by growth, laying the brickwork for India's Amrit Kal.

The writer is a Rajya Sabha MP and former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar

BAD ECONOMICS, BAD POLITICS

At a time poor are in dire need of handholding, budget neglects social sector

D RAJA

THE BUDGET for 2022-23 is a reiteration of the government's tilt towards corporates and big business houses. It gives a heavy impetus to the private sector and neglects the public and social sectors.

The state of agriculture is worsening with the Gross Value Added by it in 2021-22 coming down to 18.8 per cent from 20.2 per cent in 2020-21. For the smooth functioning of the rural economy and to ensure food security, it is necessary to invest in agriculture. However, no measure has been announced to deal with the agrarian crisis. The allocation for agriculture has come down to Rs 3,70,303 crore from Rs 4,74,750.47 crore (revised estimate of 2021-22). The amount reserved for the procurement of paddy and wheat has come down by more than Rs 10,000 crore compared to the previous year. The demands of the farmers' movement have not been fulfilled and the finance minister said nothing about a legal guarantee to MSP. The share of rural development has gone down to 5.23 per cent from 5.59 per cent in the budget.

MGNREGS shielded millions from destitution during the pandemic with the demand for work peaking in June 2021 at 4.59 crore persons. The situation has improved somewhat since then, but the unemployment figures are still staggering. Cutting the MGNREGS allocation is, therefore, not just bad economics, it's bad politics as well.

The recent Oxfam International report on inequality has red-flagged the widening gulf between the rich and the poor in the country. It noted that, "the number of Indian billionaires grew from 102 in 2020 to 142 in 2021, the worst year yet for India during the pandemic". The report proposed some tweaks to India's taxation policies to correct the situation. "A 4 per cent wealth tax on the 98 richest families in India can take care of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for more than two years, the mid-day meal programme of the country for 17 years or the Samagra Siksha Abhiyan for six years," it pointed out. Unfortunately, the government is so cautious of not hurting rich capitalists the slightest that these measures cannot be taken up, let alone far-reaching redistribution of wealth.

> Last year, health was dubbed as one of the six pillars of the budget. But this year, the overall budget of the Health and Family Welfare has increased by a mere 0.96 per cent and the research budget by 3.9 per cent. The budget for Covid vaccination has been cut down by 87 per cent, indicating the government's belief that we are out of the pandemic — that is far from the truth.

India's public health infrastructure imploded during the pandemic and exposed the pitfalls of excessive reliance on private healthcare services. But the government refuses to learn the lessons. Last year, health was dubbed as one of the six pillars of the budget. But this year, the overall budget of the Health and Family Welfare has increased by a mere 0.96 per cent and the research budget by 3.9 per cent. The budget for Covid vaccination has been cut down by 87 per cent, indicating the government's belief that we are out of the pandemic — that is far from the truth.

The country has fallen on all social indices, including hunger and nutrition, in the past eight years. Instead of tackling this, the allotment for mid-day meals in schools has seen a dip of 11 per cent. This cut is striking given the Annual Status of Education Report's (ASER) finding that children of age 6-14 years currently not enrolled in any school has increased from 2.5 per cent in 2018 to 4.6 per cent in 2021. The worst affected by the pandemic were casual and agricultural laborers — predominantly Dalits and members of other marginalised communities. They received no relief in this budget.

The government intends to invite foreign universities to open campuses in the country. The fee structure of these universities will most likely benefit the affluent and further hurt Dalits and other marginalised communities. There is no increase in allocations for the marginalised communities. The Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment, Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs will have to make do with meagre allocations.

While the country is reeling under poverty, inequality, unemployment and disease, the government wants us to believe that "capex" is going to bring growth. The higher capex amount is largely due to paying the Air India debt and defence expenditures. The Air India case is a classic example of "nationalised losses and privatised profits". The Modi government has failed in creating the promised two crore jobs, but the FM has promised another 60 lakh jobs. The government has betrayed all sections of society.

The writer is general secretary, CPI

FEBRUARY 9, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDIAN EXPRESS

16 categories of services brought under NSA

NSA IMPOSED

THE UNION MINISTRY notified a list of 16 categories of services and supplies as essential to the community under the National Security Act. This empowers the government to detain any person with a view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of these essential supplies and services. A notification has been issued under Section 3 of the National Security Act to overcome any objection raised by the Supreme Court in its jurisdiction on three writ petitions challenging detentions under the Act. The Supreme Court had ruled that no person can be detained with a view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community, unless by a law or notification issued well in advance.

US BARS CHAUHAN

US IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS have refused to grant permission to Jagjit Singh Chauhan, "Khalistan" leader, to enter the country because the Indian government had revoked his passport, the State Department said. An earlier visit to the US by Chauhan prompted a strong protest by the Indian government. A State Department spokesperson said US immigration authorities were unaware at the time of Chauhan's visit that India had revoked his passport.

ASSAM IMPASSE

WHILE THE SECOND round of tripartite talks on the issue of illegal foreigners in Assam was postponed for a day, leaders of the movement insisted that they will not accept public documents like land records, ration cards and school certificates as valid documents of identification. They fear that acceptance of these records could lead to acceptance of lakhs of foreigners as Indian citizens.

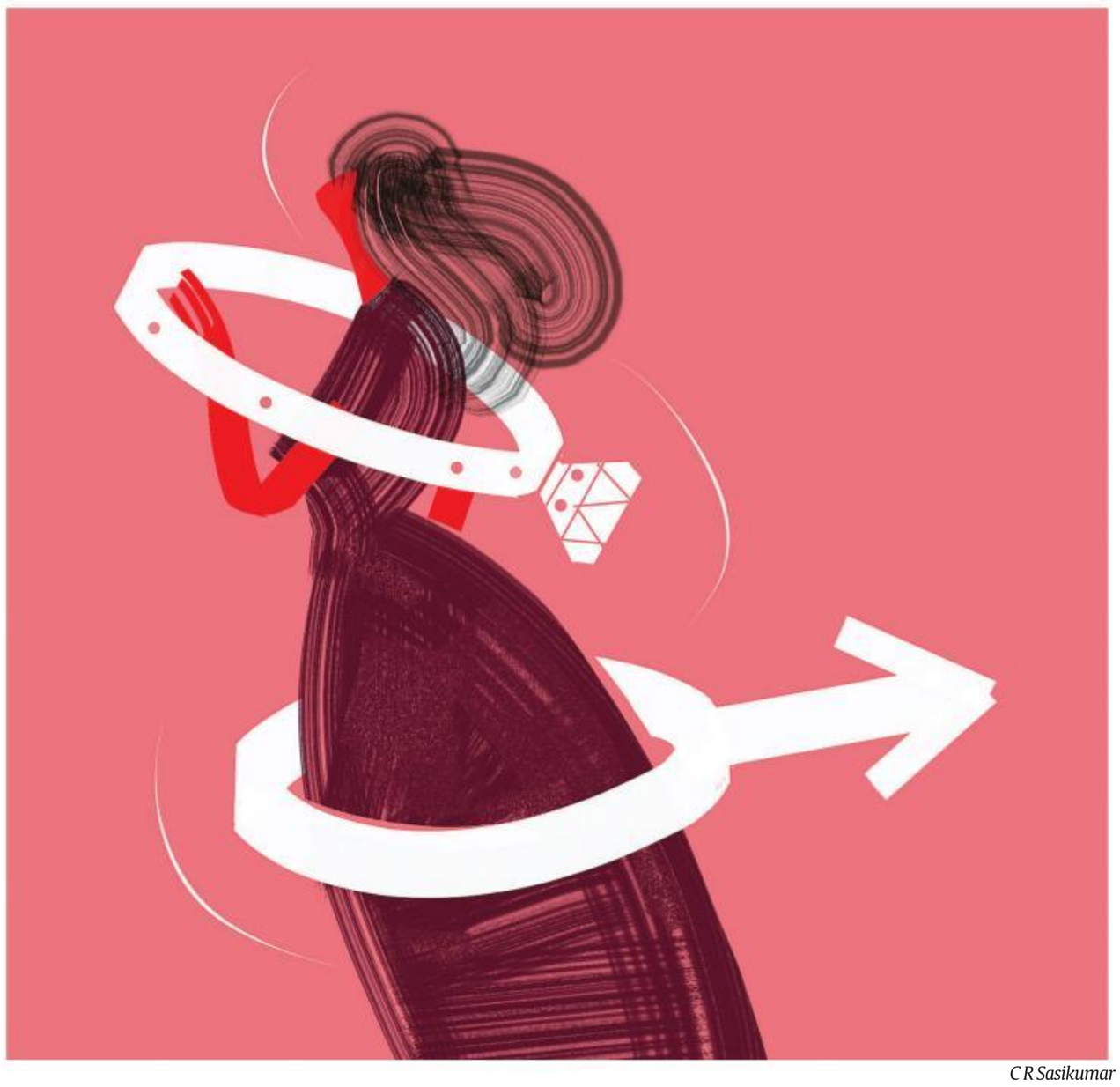
WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The online virtual reality experience that almost every tech giant today wishes to commercially exploit may not catch on." — THE GUARDIAN

Controlling women's bodies

Arguments in marital rape case speak of anxieties of the privileged, their fears of the unravelling of moral codes of patriarchy

RAMA SRINIVASAN



C R Sasikumar

IN RESPONSE TO arguments made in favour of criminalising marital rape, a former top law enforcement officer has speculated that this petition, which he termed anti-civilisation, could bring about the destruction of family and children. Due to his past role as the ex-CBI director, Nageswara Rao must be taken seriously when he appears to support sexual acts that may not be outlawed but are, at least, morally questionable. One of the two judges hearing the case in Delhi High Court has admitted to being sceptical about the legal ramifications of criminalising marital rape but neither appear to question the moral imperatives. Rao represents one extreme view of this complicated relationship.

Another, more prevalent, impulse is the fear of false accusations. The source of this anxiety is linked to both rape cases and dowry harassment ones. This piece will address them individually. Only a fraction of sexual crimes is reported, especially because those that make it to courts appear to put the complainant on trial. This was again evident in recent high-profile cases including that of Tarun Tejpal's and Franco Mulakkal. Even where the judges have been able to ascertain that an explicit "no" was expressed — as in the case of Mahmood Farooqui — the court has ruled for acquittal.

Litigation on sexual crimes draws from social and caste-based perceptions on what constitutes rape. These are, in turn, based on who is presumed to have access to women's bodies. These norms are not laid out in explicit terms but courts as well as social groups skirt around them. When BJP's Kuldeep Sengar was accused of rape in a case where the complainant's father and, later on, her lawyer have both died under suspicious circumstances, his constituents joined together for a demonstration in solidarity — with the accused. Their simple contention was that their representative was innocent.

Similarly, despite a documented history of predatory behaviour, several journalists who were accused of sexual harassment at workplace have denied any wrongdoing. Their colleagues, friends and families, at times, lend support to these refutations. In many ways, the denial has less to do with accusations themselves but, rather, societal perceptions of right and wrong. Men from privileged backgrounds are assumed to have access to bodies of women from all social backgrounds but access of marginalised men, even in cases of courtships and love affairs, is rigorously policed. This discrepancy may be exposed as hypocrisy but it suggests something more deep-seated.

Fears of false accusations are based on an uneasy relationship between law and morality, where sexual acts criminalised under the criminal code and those explicitly permitted under law are still in the zone of moral ambiguity. Criminalisation of acts that are deemed socially acceptable in certain circles brings with it the feeling of persecution by those automatically perceived as bad faith actors.

The only cases where a conversation on false accusations does not skirt around unspoken social norms are those of courtships gone wrong, where women retrospectively file complaints of sexual assaults. A study conducted by Rukmini S in 2013 revealed that 40 per cent of such complaints were cases of consensual sex "criminalised by parents." Men in such courtships are assumed to be guilty whether or not a conviction is possible.

The other source of anxiety here is the history of dowry harassment cases. My ethnographic interviews with lawyers in north India have often dwelled on the "problem" of false dowry cases. Gentle probing on this assumption revealed that the perception of fraud stems from the seemingly cynical timing — often after a marriage has irrevocably broken down — and presumed motivations of the complainant rather than the merits of the cases themselves. Dowry demands and exchanges are still prevalent in rural and urban areas, criminalised by law but, again, in the zone of moral ambiguity. They are taken seriously, if at all, when accompanied by cases of serious violence and harm.

Complaints of extortion and harassment by police officers aside, the claim of dowry harassment — most likely an authentic one — has become a necessary evil in some ways. Women seeking divorce have found that the inclusion of dowry harassment charges is often vital for the case since judges recommend mediation as a rule. The treatment of women within marriages is deemed an internal matter and to be negotiated within family settings. The fear of persecution via false cases stems from the lack of alignment between law and morality.

> The petition against marital rape has been an opportunity for the Indian mainstream to witness the unravelling of some of these unspoken norms on sexual crimes and marital relations. Powerful men such as Rao have explicitly laid out their view that sex against the wishes of their wives is not a crime, legal or moral, while others are in the mood for a marriage strike against what they perceive as a men's rights issue.

The petition against marital rape has been an opportunity for the Indian mainstream to witness the unravelling of some of these unspoken norms on sexual crimes and marital relations. Powerful men such as Rao have explicitly laid out their view that sex against the wishes of their wives is not a crime, legal or moral, while others are in the mood for a marriage strike against what they perceive as a men's rights issue.

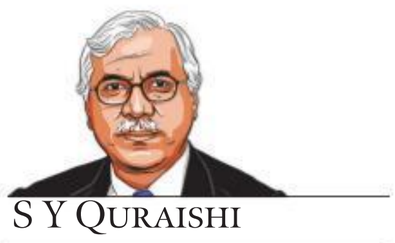
Criminalisation of marital rape opens up another frontier for a battle between law, which is ideally based on dignity and respect for all, and morality in narrower circles, based on unequal power relations within families.

In my December 2020 piece for *The Indian Express*, I had asked: Who is afraid of Indian women? The article had pointed out that for people who view patriarchy — in reality, a social construct — as a natural order, the fear that the edifice will crumble at any moment is very real. Lack of control over women's sexuality presents itself as a crisis that can lead to an unravelling of hierarchies that patriarchal agents are heavily invested in. This case against marital rape is perceived as a civilisational threat by some because it requires such agents to explicitly state these unspoken norms and end the situation of moral ambiguity.

The writer is a Marie Curie postdoctoral Fellow at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and the author of Courting Desire: Litigating for Love in North India

Undermining polls

Despite EC's opposition, broad consensus among political parties, opinion and exit polls continue to be under-regulated



S Y QURAISHI

EVERY ELECTION SEASON, we find television channels flooded with opinion polls. Critics have often questioned their authenticity. All political parties too have opposed these polls, demanding a ban — except when they are shown as winning. The media, on the other hand, invariably opposes the idea of a ban as seat forecasts attract primetime viewership.

In most democracies, opinion and exit polls are common during elections. However, restrictions are also imposed in many countries, extending from two to 21 days prior to the poll — Canada, France, Italy, Poland, Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, to name a few examples. The opposition to the ban in India is mainly on the ground that freedom of speech and expression is granted by the Constitution (Article 19). What is conveniently forgotten is that this freedom is not absolute and allows for "reasonable restrictions" in the same article. The Indian Penal Code and Representation of the People Act, 1951 do contain certain restrictions

While the Constitution allows for reasonable restrictions on freedom of expression, its mandate to the ECI for free and fair elections is absolute. The Supreme Court (SC), in a series of judgments, has emphasised this requirement: "Democracy cannot survive without free and fair elections" (*Union of India vs ADR*, 2003); "Free and fair elections is the basic structure of the Constitution" (*PUCL vs Union of India*, 2003; NOTA judgment, 2013); "The heart of the parliamentary system is free and fair elections" (*Mohinder Singh Gill vs CEC of India*, 1977).

Why does the ECI feel that opinion polls interfere with free and fair elections? Having seen "paid news" in action, it apprehends that some opinion polls may be sponsored, motivated and biased. Also, almost all polls are non-transparent, providing little information on the methodology. With such infirmities, many "polls" amount to disinformation that can result in "undue influence", which is an "electoral offence" under IPC Section 171 (C). It is a "corrupt practice" under section 123 (2) of the RP Act.

The demand for a ban on opinion polls is not new. At two all-party meetings called by the Election Commission in 1997 and 2004, there was unanimous demand for a ban. The difference of opinion was only on whether the ban should apply from the announcement of the poll schedule or the date of notification. In 1998, the ECI issued guidelines that were challenged in the SC. A five-judge Constitution Bench asked the ECI how it would enforce these decisions in the absence of a law. Realising its weakness, the ECI withdrew the guidelines till a law was made. Unfortunately, this left the constitutionality of the issue undecided.

The matter resurfaced in 2008 when many political parties came to the ECI demanding a ban on opinion and exit polls. The ECI advised them that they need to raise it in Parliament, as it required legislative amendment. The EC even vetted a draft of the proposed amendment. Surprisingly, Parliament banned exit polls but not opinion polls (126A, RP Act). It is not clear why the parties, who were unanimous in demanding the ban on both opinion and exit polls, did not pass it in Parliament in its entirety.

In 2013, the debate on banning opinion polls was revived when the law ministry advised the ECI to once again seek the view of all political parties. Fifteen political parties responded and all but one (BJP), supported a ban. It was interesting to watch the debate on the subject in the media. All the participants — media, pollsters and jurists — were heard supporting the opinion polls, yet admitting to the presence of serious flaws.

The ECI and political parties are not alone in doubting the integrity of opinion polls. The Press Council of India says, "This has become necessary to emphasise today, since the print media is sought to be exploited by interested individuals or groups to misguide and mislead the unwary voters by subtle and not so subtle propaganda on casteist, religious and ethnic basis as well as by the use of sophisticated means *like the alleged poll surveys*," (emphasis added).

In early 2014, a sting operation by a television news channel caused quite a stir. As many as 11 polling companies were caught red-handed fraudulently manipulating surveys. These polling agencies were willing to manipulate the margin of error, victory margin for candidates, seat projections for a party or hide negative findings. Unfortunately, this expose did not receive the attention it deserved.

What is the way forward? Ideally, an independent regulator, like the British Polling Council would be a viable option. All polling agencies must disclose for scrutiny the sponsor, besides sample size, methodology, time frame, quality of training of research staff, etc. India could set up its own professional body on the same lines. After the Bihar 2015 election, six leading agencies had spoken about the possibility of starting a self-regulatory body — the Indian Polling Council. Over six years later, there is no progress.

A related issue is exit polls, which were banned by amendment to the RP Act, in 2008, making both the conduct of the polls and their dissemination illegal. However, the media has regularly flouted the law by "conducting" exit polls on poll days, though airing the result only after the closure of the poll on the last day.

Surprisingly, the ECI continues to overlook this violation. In fact, the ECI order allows the dissemination of the exit poll results half an hour after the end of polling on the last poll day. It makes no mention of the ban on the conduct of the poll itself, which is expressly prohibited by the law. Thus, ECI's guidelines stand opposed to the provision of the law. This is creating confusion. Many young researchers have been arrested by the police for violating the law. This must stop.

The writer is former Chief Election Commissioner of India and author of An Undocumented Wonder: The Making of the Great Indian Election

Listening to Lata in Lahore

Pakistanis claim her music as much as Indians own Mehdi Hasan, Farida Khanum

FARAH ZIA

IT WAS LATA'S birthday on September 29, 2021. I shared an old Urdu poem written by a poet-journalist friend Shiraz Raj, who was brought up in Lahore and now lives in Brussels. I recall that growing up in Lahore in the 1970s, around the same time as Raj, Lata Mangeshkar was a habit. She was a part of a collective routine, like getting up in the morning and going to your school or college or workplace.

Each morning, the medium wave-enabled radio sets in almost every household played Aap ki Farmaish on All India Radio's Urdu Service. The presenter would read out multiple names, from cities, towns and villages in Pakistan, requesting popular film songs. While my mother wove mine and my sister's long hair in neat braids, we heard terms like *Do-gana* (duet), and names like Majrooh Sultanpuri, Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Naushad, Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar and Asha Bhosle. As we stood on the roadside, waiting for the tonga to take us to school, the surrounding tea stalls all played Hindi filmi music. There was no escaping Lata, to the point that I started taking the name for granted.

The real introduction to the maestro came by and by — once I realised that it was not the glamorous Mala Sinha singing *Ye haryali aur yeh rasta* on the grainy black-and-white screen, it was *the* Lata Mangeshkar. I did feel somewhat cheated at the picture of a simple-looking singer, who was behind those timeless melodies picturised on the beautiful Hema Malini, Asha Parekh, Nutan, Mumtaz and many more.

The quest of knowing Lata Mangeshkar went on — to know excellence had nothing to do with looks; to know the worth of playback singers and their connections with music directors and lyricists; and to know some basic facts alongside, including that the two most familiar names of Hindi music, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, were sisters. As a child, both Lata and Asha sounded the same to my untrained ears. Knowing the distinction between the two was a mark of growing up and becoming educated in music.

In the 1970s and '80s, we had already missed what became known as the golden period of Indian film music — the decades of 1950s and '60s. Thankfully, the music from that time was preserved and accessible. In Pakistan, it was widely available on radio (Radio Ceylon being a popular means for a long time), gramophone records and audio cassettes.

The political context of enmity between India and Pakistan is irrelevant when it comes to music. Indian films have faced more controls, forcing Pakistani viewers to move from cinemas to Doordarshan to VHS tapes to dish antennas and so on. Music, on the contrary, is thought of as common heritage. It is part of a collective memory that transcends Partition and unites people in strange ways. It came as no shock when Pakistanis mourned Mohammad Rafi's rather early death in 1980. A childhood memory is of the red swollen eyes of a lawyer from Mianwali, who lived next door and was a huge Rafi fan.

It was as if the ties never severed. Lata was a first-name acquaintance as was Rafi and all others. No Lata*ji* or Lata *didi* for us. Pakistanis have owned them as much as Indians have owned Farida Khanum, Mehdi Hasan, Ghulam Ali and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. These masters figure frequently in newspaper columns on culture on both sides, sometimes in fiction too. In his modernist short story *Teh Dar Teh*, Balraj Menra records a conversation between two friends named Intizar Husain and Balraj. In the story Intizar says: "*Yaar aik kaam karo… yaar Kashmir le lo, Lata Mangeshkar hamey de do… Hanso mutt! Subha jab hum dus crore Pakistanion ki aaankh khulti hai, Lata ki awaaz hamare kanon main parti hai.. Lata..* (Friend, do me a favour…my friend why don't you keep Kashmir and give us Lata Mangeshkar. No, don't laugh! Every morning ten crore Pakistanis wake up to the voice of Lata in their ears…Lata..)"

Having accepted Lata as the undisputed melody queen, people on this side of the border kept abreast with all scandals and gossip, through film magazines that were easily available in the first few decades. I remember reading a petty squabble about who was the older of Noorjehan and Lata, also about a discord between Asha and Lata, and the famous fight between Lata and Rafi, all amicably resolved in the end — except perhaps in Pakistani households. The famous quote, celebrated since the day it was uttered, is about Lata praising Mehdi Hasan in these words: *Unn ke galey man bhagwan bolta hai*.

The music buffs of Lahore insist that ace music director, OP Nayyar, who had refused to work with Lata Mangeshkar, declared *Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai* sung by Lata as the greatest song ever. For them, music directors like Naushad, SD Burman, Madan Mohan and Shankar-Jaikishan had picked and made her the Lata Mangeshkar that we know, though there were others too.

Such is Lata's power and influence. She walked the tight rope, balancing greatness with popularity. She made music that one could enjoy and feel elevated about at the same time. This sense of fulfilment is where Lata Mangeshkar's true greatness lies.

Zia has worked as a journalist and magazine editor for 25 years. She now works as director, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A COLLEGE FAILS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'In the name of secularism' (IE, February 8). The anti-hijab row in a Karnataka college does not just fly in the face of the constitutionally-mandated fundamental rights of education and to profess, practice and propagate one's religion. The college also snubs its commitments towards nation-building. A college where students' identity is questioned and made to follow sanitised, exclusionary and "secular" dressing, falls short of standing up to its very purpose. Educational institutions are places where values like equality, liberty, fraternity and secularism are taught. A course correction by the institution without judicial intervention could go a longer way in upholding the values of the republic — where individual agency is given a voice.

Aishwarya Shetty, *Mumbai*

WITHOUT HER VOICE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Our inner voice' (IE, February 8). To a multitude, Lata*ji* was her song. As such, nothing would have changed if not for the new pain of recalling the doyenne. One can imagine innumerable instances where her songs that appealed to our better instincts would have lifted spirits or even doused animosity, thus deterring violence. For generations of Eklavyas, Lata*ji* promises to be Drona. Though the news and we will move on, our society would do well to imbibe her perfection, magnanimity and love.

M Yusuf Ghazali, *Patna*

HIJAB DIVERSION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Her right to learn' (IE, February 8). It is shameful that our government continues to polarise voters on the basis of religion and yet, time and again, the masses succumb. The Karnataka government's decision to ban hijab is reminiscent of the decision taken a few years ago in France, which led to widespread dissent. Diverting attention from mainstream failures by ratcheting up religious tensions each time there are elections has now become the trademark of the BJP. By turning against minorities, we are risking inviting unwanted attention. At a time when Saudi Arabia is taking rapid strides in women freedom, it would be better if India just followed it instead of getting mired in endless controversies.

Gaurav Gupta, *Pune*

DETERIORATING TIES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Upsetting the balance' (IE, February 8). Centre-state relations face a deterioration due to the proposed changes in cadre rules. The changes are allegedly non-deliberative and non-objective. The smooth functioning of All-India Services requires both consultation and objectivity. The Centre needs to frame rules based on objective criteria for deputation. Measures like giving central deputation for officers with specific domain expertise after an initial 12 or 14 year period could be considered. Such logical steps can bolster Centre-State relations and secure non-partisanship of the All India Services.

Anjali Bhavana, *Thiruvananthapuram*

OSCAR NOMINATIONS

'THE POWER OF THE DOG,' LEADS THE PACK

Jane Campion directed Netflix western, "The Power of the Dog", was showered with 12 Oscar nominations on Tuesday, the most of any movie this year, with "Dune" close behind with 10 and "West Side Story" and "Belfast" each receiving seven.

TOP OF THE WORLD

Eric Lander faced bullying complaints. *Reuters*

USA

Biden adviser Lander resigns after complaints

Washington: A top science adviser to US President Joe Biden resigned on Monday after allegations came to light that he had bullied and demeaned staffers. Eric Lander, who serves as director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, was the focus of an internal review after subordinates complained about his treatment of them. The review was first reported by Politico earlier on Monday and confirmed by White House press secretary Jen Psaki."I am devastated that I caused hurt to past and present colleagues by the way in which I have spoken to them," Lander said in the resignation letter submitted to Biden. **REUTERS**

RAPE INSIDE DEFENCE MINISTER'S OFFICE

Australian lawmakers apologise for sexual abuse in Parliament

ISABELLA KWAI
SYDNEY, FEBRUARY 8

TOP LAWMAKERS in Australia, the Prime Minister among them, formally apologised on Tuesday to employees in the federal Parliament for a culture of pervasive sexual harassment and assault in the nation's halls of power.

The apology, endorsed broadly among the political parties, was a recognition of the widespread calls for change after a damning review last year of Parliament's toxic workplace.

That report, spurred in part by a former parliamentary employee's account of being raped in the defence minister's office, painted a chilling portrait in which powerful men faced few consequences as they crossed boundaries with young female staff members.

"Any bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault is unacceptable and wrong," said Andrew Wallace, the speaker of the House of Representatives. "We say sorry."

Prime Minister Scott Morrison echoed Wallace. "Sorry is the start," he said, adding that he wanted politics to be a place where young women, in particular, could follow their dreams, rather than "have them crushed by brutality and the misuse of power."

The acknowledgment that parliamentary leaders had failed to ensure a safe workplace was the first in a series of measures suggested by the review, which was compiled by Kate Jenkins, Australia's sex discrimination commissioner.

PM Scott said he wanted politics to be a place where young women could follow their dreams

The review found that one-third of employees in Parliament had experienced sexual harassment, with rates reaching 40 per cent for women. About 1 per cent of the 1,700 people surveyed said they had experienced actual or attempted sexual assault.

The report came nine months after Brittany Higgins, a former staff member for the center-right Liberal Party, said she had been raped by a colleague in 2019. The man Higgins accused of rape, Bruce Lehrmann, has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

On Tuesday, Morrison singled out Higgins in his remarks. "I'm sorry to Higgins for the terrible things that took place here," he said. **NYT**

Diplomatic shuttle: Macron in Ukraine after Putin talks

Biden pledges end to Nord Stream 2 Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline if Russia invades

SYLVIE CORBET& DASHA LITVINOVA
KYIV, FEBRUARY 8

FRENCH PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron brought his diplomatic effort to defuse the crisis over Ukraine to its capital of Kyiv on Tuesday, a day after hours of talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin yielded no apparent breakthrough.

Macron met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as fears of a possible Russian invasion mount. Moscow has massed over 100,000 troops near Ukraine's borders, but insists it has no plans to attack.

The Kremlin wants guarantees from the West that NATO will not accept Ukraine and other former Soviet nations as members, that it halt weapon deployments there and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe — demands the U.S. and NATO reject as nonstarters.

On Tuesday, Russia's Defence Ministry said six large landing ships were moving from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea for exercises.

Macron's talks with Putin on Monday lasted more than five hours, and the French leader told reporters that they allowed him to ensure that "there's no degradation and no (further) escalation." He said he did not expect Putin to make any "gestures", saying his objective was to "prevent an escalation and open new perspectives. ... That objective is met."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, right, meets French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday. *AP*

US President Joe Biden has said that any prospect of Ukraine entering NATO "in the near term is not very likely," but he and other NATO member nations and NATO itself refuse to rule out Ukraine's entry into the alliance at a future date.

Biden met in Washington on Monday with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who also will travel to Kyiv and Moscow on Feb. 14-15.

Biden vowed that the Nord Stream 2 Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline, which has been completed but is not yet operating, will be blocked "if Russia invades, that means tanks and troops crossing the border of Ukraine again." Halting the pipeline's operation would hurt Russia economically but also cause supply problems for Germany.

Scholz warned Moscow that "a lot more could happen than they've perhaps calculated with themselves" in case of an invasion.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Russia that an invasion of Ukraine will only make NATO stronger, but said he still believes "principled and determined diplomacy" could defuse the crisis.

Writing in *The Times of London*, Johnson urged allies to finalise plans for heavy economic sanctions that would come into effect if Russia crosses the border into Ukraine.

He said the UK is ready to bolster NATO forces in Latvia and Estonia as he prepared to meet the Lithuanian Prime Minister in London on Tuesday to show support for the Baltic nations.

Johnson said he was considering dispatching RAF Typhoon fighters and Royal Navy warships to southeastern Europe. Britain said Monday it is sending 350 troops to Poland to bolster NATO's eastern flank. It already has sent anti-tank weapons to Ukraine.

More than 100 US military personnel have arrived in Romania ahead of a deployment of about 1,000 NATO troops expected in the country in the coming days, Romania's Defence Minister Vasile Dincu said, adding that "it won't be long before the rest of the troops arrive."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Kyiv was "with interest anticipating the signals" Macron brought from Moscow and "open to dialogue," but also will not cross its own "red lines." **AP**

Retired Pope asks forgiveness over handling of abuse cases

THE NEW YORK TIMES
ROME, FEBRUARY 8

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

TWO WEEKS after a report found that retired Pope Benedict XVI had mishandled four cases involving the sexual abuse of minors while he was an archbishop in Germany decades ago, he acknowledged on Tuesday that "abuses and errors" had taken place under his watch, but denied any misconduct.

"I have had great responsibilities in the Catholic Church," Benedict said in his response. "All the greater is my pain for the abuses and the errors that occurred in those different places during the time of my mandate. Each individual case of sexual abuse is appalling and irreparable."

During his eight-year papacy, Benedict added, he had met with dozens of abuse victims during many apostolic trips and had "seen at first hand the effects of a most grievous fault."

In his response on Tuesday, Benedict took specific issue with one case involving a pedophile priest. The lawyers who conducted the investigation found that Benedict had lied to them during the course of their inquiry. On Tuesday, Benedict described it as an honest mistake that had been interpreted with undue harshness.

USA

$10mn reward for info on Kabul airport attack leader, says US

Washington: The United States has announced a reward of up to $10 million for information on leader of militant organisation ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) Sanaullah Ghafari and those responsible for last year's militant attack on the Kabul international airport that killed at least 185 people. The US Department of Rewards for Justice issued notifications to this effect on Monday. "Rewards for Justice is offering a reward of up to $10 million for information on ISIS-K leader Shahab al-Muhajir," it said **PTI**

USA

Govt approves support deal with Taiwan

Washington: The Biden administration has approved a $100 million support contract with Taiwan aimed at boosting the island's missile defence systems as it faces increasing pressure from China. China, which is sharply critical of any American arms sales to Taiwan, called on the US to revoke the deal and stop any military interaction with the self-governing island. "US arms sales to Taiwan ... undermine China's sovereignty and security interests, and damage China-US relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," an official said. **AP**

UK CABINET CHANGE

Rees-Mogg named minister for Brexit opportunities

H S RAO
LONDON, FEBRUARY 8

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson, under pressure to resign over parties in Downing Street during lockdown, on Tuesday reshuffled his Cabinet and appointed Jacob Rees-Mogg as the minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency.

Rees-Mogg, 52, currently leader of the House of Commons, will be based in the Cabinet Office. Mark Spencer, the current Chief Whip, will replace Rees Mogg as the Leader of Commons.

Rees-Mogg, a prominent Leave campaigner during the 2016 EU referendum, will be a full member of the Cabinet, having previously only attended it. Spencer, who was previously chief whip, will continue to attend.

Chris Heaton-Harris has become the new Chief Whip, in charge of disciplining Conservative MPs. Stuart Andrew, former Deputy Chief Whip, will be the minister for housing.

Andrew, the MP for Pudsey since 2010, previously held the position of Treasurer of HM Household and was a Deputy Chief Whip in the House of Commons.

The shake-up of the ministerial team follows the appointment of Stephen Barclay as the Prime Minister's chief of staff.

It also comes as Johnson, 57, seeks to relaunch his administration following the 'Partygate' row. He is facing intense pressure to step down from the Opposition and Conservative MPs. **PTI**

INDIA AT UNITED NATIONS

'Some terror groups mocking sanction regimes'

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, FEBRUARY 8

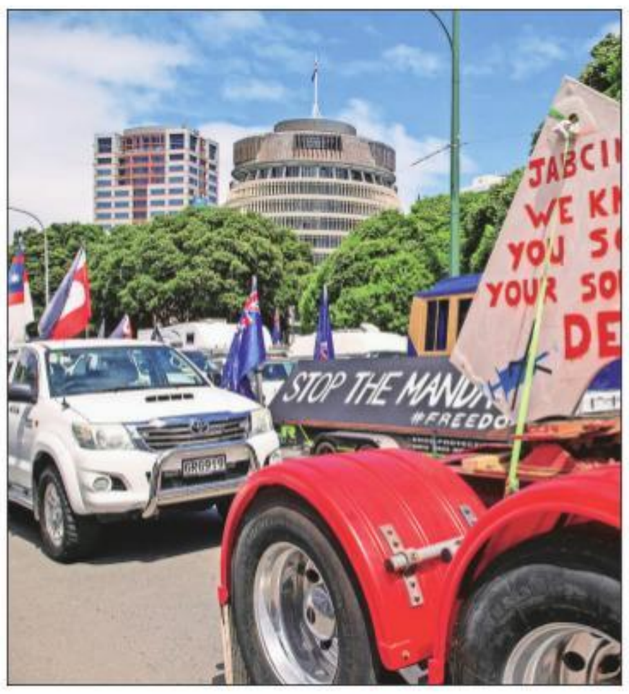
SOME TERRORIST groups have made a "mockery" of the UN Security Council's sanction regimes by taking full advantage of carve-outs given for humanitarian purposes, India said as it made a veiled reference to Pakistan, saying proscribed terrorist groups in the neighbourhood have rebranded themselves as humanitarian organisations to evade sanctions.

TS Tirumurti

"It is imperative that sanctions do not impede legitimate humanitarian requirements. However, it is important to exercise due diligence while providing humanitarian carve-outs, especially in cases where terrorism finds safe-havens," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador TS Tirumurti said on Monday.

Speaking at the UNSC Open Debate hosted by Council President Russia on "General issues relating to Sanctions: Preventing their humanitarian and unintended consequences", Tirumurti said there have been examples of terrorist groups taking full advantage of humanitarian carve-outs, "making a mockery of sanction regimes," including that of 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee.

"There have also been several cases of terrorist groups in our neighbourhood, including those listed by this Council, re-branding themselves as humanitarian organisations to evade these sanctions," he said, making a reference to terror organisations based in Pakistan. "Under the garb of the humanitarian cover provided by such exemptions, these terrorist groups continue to expand their terror activities in the region and beyond. Due diligence, therefore, is an absolute must," he added. **PTI**



COVID PROTESTS SPIRAL

Protests in Canada inspire smililar convoys in Australia and New Zealand, where vehicles blocked a road near in Wellington on Tuesday (in pic). Thousands of people in cars, trucks, caravans and other vehicles have crossed New Zealand and Australia this week to protest pandemic restrictions. *AP*

Militants involved in Balochistan attacks had foreign support: Imran

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 8

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday claimed that terrorists involved in the recent deadly attacks in the troubled southwestern Balochistan province had foreign support.

At least nine soldiers and 20 militants were killed in clashes and follow-up cleanup operations after Baloch rebels attacked Naushki and Panjgur areas of the province last week. The banned Baloch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attacks. The separatist outfit has recently stepped up attacks on security forces and installations.

The security forces had claimed that during the fight they intercepted communication between the militants and their handlers in Afghanistan and India.

In the past, the External Affairs Ministry has dismissed Pakistan's allegations of India's involvement in some of the terror strikes in that country and said the so-called claims of "proof" are figments of imagination.

Imran Khan visited Naushki where the attack happened

Khan, along-with Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, on Tuesday visited Naushki where four soldiers, including an officer, were killed in the attack.

"Foreign funding is involved in terrorist attacks in Balochistan" But those involved in spreading chaos will not get anything out of it,? Khan said, adding that, "We are hopeful that terrorists will never succeed in Pakistan." He also announced a 15 per cent increase in the salary of soldiers of paramilitary troops of Frontier Corps and Rangers, which are at the forefront of fighting militancy in Balochistan . **PTI**

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

China non-committal on return of Indians students

K J M VARMA
BEIJING, FEBRUARY 8

CHINA SAID on Tuesday that it was considering a "coordinated" arrangement for the return of foreign students, but remained non-committal on a definite timeline to allow them, including over 23,000 Indians, who are stuck back home for the past two years due to Beijing's Covid-19 visa bans.

Asked at a media briefing on Tuesday when will China permit the stranded Indian students and what is hindering Beijing to allow them, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian merely retreated what his ministry has been saying for over a year that Beijing wants an orderly return of the students as per the safety protocols of Covid-19.

"I can tell you that the Chinese government attaches great importance to the issue of foreign students returning to China for their studies," Zhao said.

EXPLAINED

Students in a limbo

SINCE 2020, China has stopped issuing visas for Indians and currently, there are no flights in operation between the two countries. The extension of China's strict zero case policy of Covid-19 to thousands of foreign students, including 23,000 Indian students, has virtually ruined nearly two years of their education.

"We are considering in a coordinated manner the arrangement for allowing foreign students to return to China for their studies. We stand ready to work actively toward the healthy, safe and orderly cross-border flow of people based on sound anti-epidemic protocols," he said. **PTI**

BLASPHEMY CHARGES

Hindu teacher sentenced to life imprisonment in Pak

Karachi: A Hindu teacher was on Tuesday sentenced to life imprisonment by a local court over charges of blasphemy in Pakistan's southern Sindh province.

The teacher, Nautan Lal, was also fined Pakistani Rs 50,000 by Additional Sessions Judge Murtaza Solangi in Ghotki in Sindh.

The court took two years to convict Lal who has been in jail since 2019 as an undertrial prisoner. In the past two years, his requests for bail have been rejected twice. Lal was arrested in September 2019 after a video went viral on social media in which an intermediate student of the public school alleged that the Hindu teacher had committed blasphemy against the Prophet. The student claimed that Lal, who is the also owner of the school, had visited the school that day and committed the act. **PTI**

CALLS IT 'MOST PROGRESSIVE STEP'

Lanka defends proposed changes to anti-terror law

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Tuesday defended its proposed amendments to the draconian counter-terrorism law as the "most progressive step" towards securing and protecting the fundamental rights of its citizens.

The foreign ministry in a statement said the proposed bill to amend the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which the government intends to introduce in parliament and upon it being passed into law, would be a salutary piece of legislation that would give persons tangible protection.

After 43 years since it was enacted, "it would be the most progressive step that would give people subject to the said law, tangible protection towards securing, advancing and protecting their fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution."

The statement comes as Sri Lanka was due to meet the EU sub-committee on human rights in Geneva later on Tuesday.

A Sri Lankan court on Monday granted bail to long-held prominent human rights lawyer and activist Hejaaz Hizbullah, who was arrested under PTA on April 14, 2020 for suspected links to the 2019 Easter attacks which killed 270 people, including 11 Indians. He was held without being charged.

Sri Lanka is under pressure from the EU to reform the controversial PTA which allows detention up to 90 days without being charged with provisions for further extension of the time. **PTI**

NEPAL RESEARCHERS WARN 2,000-YEAR-OLD ICE CAP THINNING AT ALARMING RATE

Everest's highest glacier could disappear this century: Experts

SHIRISH B PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 8

RESEARCHERS IN Nepal on Tuesday warned that the highest glacier on the top of Mount Everest could disappear by the middle of this century as the 2,000-year-old ice cap on the world's tallest mountain is thinning at an alarming rate.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) said that Everest has been losing ice significantly since the late 1990s, citing a latest research report.

The Everest Expedition, the single most comprehensive Scientific Expedition to Everest, conducted trailblasing research on glaciers and the alpine environment, the ICIMOD said.

A recent article published in the Nature Portfolio journal reported that the ice on Everest has been thinning at an alarming rate.

The multidisciplinary team comprised scientists from eight countries, including 17 from Nepal. Three of the co-authors of the study were affiliated with the ICIMOD.

It has been estimated that the ice in the South Cole glacier located at an elevation of 8,020 metres is thinning at a rate of nearly two-mitre per year, the report said. The findings were based on data from a 10-metre-long ice core obtained from South Col Glacier (in the Nepalese side of the Everest) at an elevation of 8,020 metre and meteorological observations from the two highest automatic weather stations in the world located on the southern slopes of Everest at 7,945 and 8,430 metre.

The finding states that the change in ice cover could have been triggered by climate change . *Reuters Photo For Representantion*

The researchers, on the basis of radiocarbon dating, estimated the age of ice in the glacier to be 2,000-year-old. The rate of ice loss measured is more than 80 times faster than the 2,000 years it took to form this thickness of ice.

"The long-term effect on the availability and stability of these water towers, which will impact downstream communities is of major concern," the ICIMOD said.

Glaciers in the Himalayas make a significant contribution to water resources for millions of people.

The research finding states that the change in ice cover in the Everest could have been triggered by climate change.

In December 2002, China and Nepal announced that the world's highest peak is now taller by 86 centimetres after they remeasured Mt Everest at 8,848.86 metres, over six decades after India conducted the previous measurement in 1954.

The revised height of Mt Everest put an end to the decades-long dispute between the two neighbours on the height of the world's tallest mountain that straddles their shared border. **PTI**

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

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

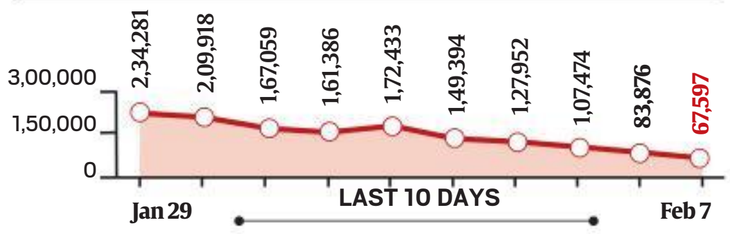
DASHBOARD, AS ON FEB 7

708 DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

New cases	Active cases	Deaths
67,597	9,94,891	1,188

Weekly CFR: 0.36% | Overall CFR: 1.27% | Total deaths: 5,04,062

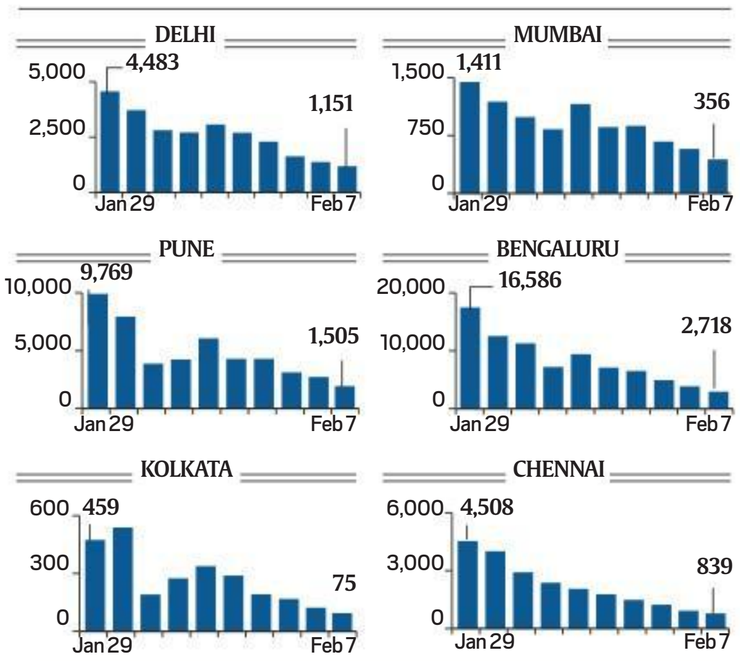
NEW CASES, DAILY



SURGE IN THE STATES

State	ON FEBRUARY 7			Weekly positivity
	New cases	Active cases	Deaths	
Kerala	22,524	302,183	860	35.75%
Maharashtra	6,436	106,059	30	8.68%
Karnataka	6,151	87,114	49	10.16%
Tamil Nadu	5,104	105,892	1	7.96%
Madhya Pradesh	3,945	40,591	2	7.88%

CASES IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS

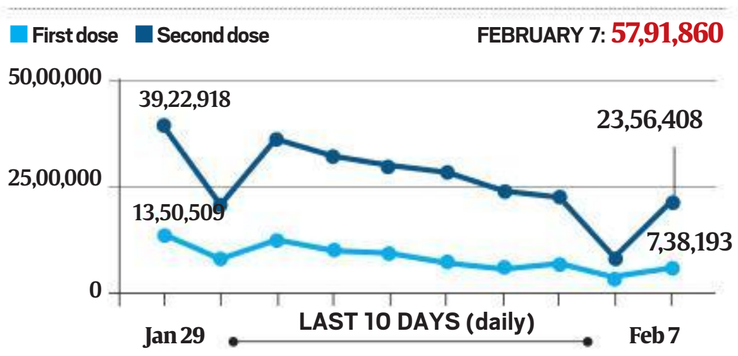


TOTAL TESTS 74,29,08,121

TESTS ON FEB 7	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	OVERALL POSITIVITY
13,46,534	7.13%	5.70%

INDIA TOTAL DOSES 170,21,72,615

(Adults 1st dose: 90,09,24,138; 2nd: 72,83,43,993; 15-18 age group 1st dose: 4,99,87,314; 2nd: 75,90,456; precautionary: 1,53,26,714)



SIMPLY PUT

The China-Russia relationship

Xi is seemingly with Putin against the US, but the relationship between their countries is complex; their interests do not always converge. The situation in Ukraine is fluid, and all parties are hedging their bets.

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 8

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR Putin's show of strength with President Xi Jinping in Beijing last week amid the standoff with NATO on Ukraine was intended to demonstrate that Russia and China were on the same page on the "core interests" of upholding "international equity and justice" in the face of US "unilateralism", and supported each other against "external interference and regional security threats".

The joint statement issued after the summit — titled 'International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development' — hailed the "new inter-State relations between Russia and China [as] superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era", and said the friendship had "no limits" and no "forbidden areas of cooperation".

Despite being together in rejecting US unipolarity, the relationship between Russia and China is complex and layered. Each has its distinct worldview and specific interests in its geographical region, and its own battles to fight.

Vladimir Putin with Xi Jinping in Beijing last week. *Sputnik via Reuters*

Mistrust to cooperation

Relations between China and the former Soviet Union were frosty, marked by mistrust and doctrinal differences for most of the Cold War decades. The change came in 1989, when Mikhail Gorbachev became the first Soviet leader to land in Beijing since Nikita Khrushchev in 1958. The visit took place in the midst of the Tiananmen Square student protests, but Gorbachev held off from saying anything that would anger his hosts. Gorbachev and paramount leader Deng Xiaoping declared "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence" as the basis of their bilateral relations.

A decade after the Soviet Union broke up, disappointed and humiliated by the way the West had downgraded it, and deep in economic crisis, Russia under Putin's first presidency turned to China under President Jiang Zemin. In 2001, the two countries signed the Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation, paving the way for expanding economic and trade ties, including sales of defence equipment and energy by Russia to China, and Russia's backing for China's position on Taiwan.

The George W Bush Administration was not perturbed — and said this was not an alliance against the US. Last June, the two countries extended the treaty at a virtual meeting between Putin and Xi. Putin told Xi that the "Russian-Chinese coordination plays a stabilizing role in world affairs", and China's President said their countries had "set an example for the formation of a new type of international relations".

Together against US

Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea in Ukraine led to a sharp downturn in Moscow's ties with the US, NATO, and Europe. This was also the turning point in Russia's ties with China, which revealed the possibilities, potential, and the limits of the relationship.

When the US, EU, and Australia imposed sanctions on Russia, Putin turned reflexively to Beijing. Over the next year, Russia opened its doors wide for Chinese investments, and struck a $400 billion deal for Gazprom, the Russian state monopoly gas exporter, to supply 38 billion cubic metres (bcm) annually to China for 30 years from 2025.

The Power of Siberia pipeline began operations in 2019, and sent 16.5 bcm of gas to China last year. During Putin's visit to Beijing last week, the two countries signed a deal for another pipeline, Power of Siberia 2, which will add 10 bcm of gas to the annual supply for 30 years.

Since 2016, trade between the two countries has gone from $ 50 bn to over $147 bn. China is now Russia's largest trading partner. Towards a modus vivendi in Central Asia, the two countries agreed to work towards speeding up the linking of the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative.

With their ties closer than ever before, the crisis in Ukraine has been an opportunity for each country to express solidarity with the other's grievance against the US. Should the West impose financial and banking sanctions on Russia, Beijing is expected to assist Moscow, perhaps with alternative payment methods.

China said during Putin's visit that Russia's "reasonable security concerns should be recognised and resolved", an apparent reference to Ukraine's interest in joining NATO, and the joint statement backed the Russian opposition to any expansion of the Western military alliance in Europe.

Russia reaffirmed support for the One-China principle, and opposed any form of independence for Taiwan. The statement also hit out "against the formation of closed bloc structures and opposing camps in the Asia-Pacific region" and "the negative impact" of the US's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Different interests

And yet, as several observers have pointed out, the China-Russia compact is not yet a formal security alliance against the West, nor is it an ideological partnership.

The joint statement referred to NATO's expansion, but did not mention Ukraine. Back in March 2014, in the vote on UN Security Council resolutions on the referendum in Crimea that was used by Putin as an excuse to annex the Black Sea peninsula, China had abstained — and despite the recent bonhomie, has not recognised Crimea's accession to Russia.

China's main security interests lie in Asia; Russia's are in Europe. From Putin's demands in ongoing negotiations with the West, it is clear that he is seeking the restructuring of European security — and if the US wants to link the crisis in eastern Europe with China, it was their problem, not his. Russia, which wants to be recognised as a great power once again, has positions independent of Beijing on many issues — including on the relationship with India.

As the smaller economy — its GDP is a tenth of China's — but with a strong memory of its lost superpower status, Russia is loath to become China's junior partner. Its experience with China in 2014 had brought home the reality that friend or not, Beijing drives a hard bargain. The negotiations on the pipeline and gas prices were fraught, and Russia is acutely conscious that its gas exports to Germany and the rest of Europe gets much more revenue — and that China anyway has other pipelines to tap. Also, despite talk of Russia-China co-operation in Central Asia, Moscow still sees the region as part of its sphere of influence.

For Beijing, war in Ukraine is the least suitable of options. It would take US military energies away from the South China Sea, but might also stall talks to resolve trade issues. China and the EU are each other's biggest trading partners — China's trade with Russia is small by comparison. Beijing will not fight the war if it breaks out, but it will nonetheless find it messy and complicated to negotiate.

As for Ukraine, it is a crucial link in Xi's BRI project. China is also Ukraine's biggest trading partner — and its agricultural exports, particularly corn, have sustained China during its trade war with the US.

View from New Delhi

In this crisis with many moving parts, it is easy to both overstate and under-read the the Russia-China relationship. All actors are hedging their bets in ways that are altering the geopolitics of Europe and Asia in real time.

New Delhi's best bet would be to treat its relations with both countries and the US separately — or it runs the risk of shrinking its own space. India's relationship with Russia is not what it used to be, but there is much that both sides continue to see as mutually beneficial. The Russia-China statement did not mention China's border dispute with India; it only made a reference to developing cooperation among the three countries.

After the Russian-linked Redfish media teased a documentary that drew parallels between Kashmir and Palestine, the Russian embassy clarified that Redfish was not official media, and reiterated that Kashmir was an issue for India and Pakistan to resolve bilaterally. This came a day after Pakistan and China issued a statement expressing concern at India's "unilateral actions" in J&K.

As one former Indian diplomat put it, India would restrict its foreign policy choices and undermine its own status as a rising power of global standing by taking sides in a conflict that has nothing to do with it. What else was French President Emmanuel Macron's five-hour meeting with Putin over dinner if not a display of the grand complexity of global politics, the fluidity of the present, and the opportunities in it?

On EPFO agenda: interest, tax, investment

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

ON WEDNESDAY, the Finance Investment & Audit Committee (FIAC) of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will meet to discuss the EPFO Board's accounts and earnings from investments so far. This comes ahead of the EPFO Central Board of Trustees meeting in Guwahati on March 4-5 to decide on the interest rate for its subscribers for 2021-22.

What's new

2021-22 will be the first financial year when the government's proposal to tax interest on higher contributions to the EPF will come into effect. The Budget for 2021-22 had proposed to tax interest on PF contributions above a threshold — Rs 2.5 lakh (for private sector employees) or Rs 5 lakh (for government employees) — effective from April 1, 2021.

The Budget proposal had noted that the government has found instances of some employees contributing high PF amounts and getting the benefit of tax exemption at all stages — contribution, interest accumulation, and withdrawal. The proposal aims to exclude high net-worth individuals (HNIs) from this benefit on their higher-than-designated contributions.

Interest rate, as of now

In March last year, the EPFO Board finalised a recommendation for an 8.5% interest rate for the previous financial year, 2020-21. This was the same as the rate for the year before that, and the lowest offered by EPFO in eight years.

The EPFO had started crediting the interest rate for FY21 for its subscribers. "23.59 crore accounts have been credited with an interest of 8.50% for the FY 2020-21," it said in a tweet on December 20. It has an active subscriber base of more than 6.7 crore, and 6.9 lakh contributing establishments.

For FY2021, the EPFO had decided to liquidate investment in equity, and the interest rate recommended was a result of combined income from interest received from debt investment as well as income realised from equity investment. The recommendation on interest rates is then ratified by the Finance Ministry.

The interest rate for 2019-20 was retained for 2020-21 despite substantial withdrawals and lower contributions by people whose resources were impacted by Covid. Until December 31, the EPFO had settled 56.79 lakh claims worth Rs 14,310.21 crore provided under the advance facility.

Wednesday's agenda

The FIAC will discuss the Board's earnings and submit a recommendation for the interest rate ahead of the meeting next month, a Board member said.

It will also discuss the Board's approval for investment of up to 5% of its annual deposits in new asset classes of alternative investment funds (AIFs), including infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs), which the Board had given initial approval to in its meeting in November.

The Board had empowered the FIAC to decide upon options, on a case-by-case basis, for investment in all such asset classes. The EPFO would go for investments in public sector bonds. At present, the National Highways Authority of India and Power Grid Corporation have launched public sector InvITs.

In April last year, the Labour Ministry notified changes in investment options to include units issued by Category I and Category II alternative investment funds regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

The EPFO can invest up to 15% of investment in equity, as per the pattern of investment notified by the central government and the internal guidelines of the EPFO approved by the Board. It had invested Rs 7,715 crore in equity until June 30 this fiscal.

Stricter policy for accreditation of journalists, and the concerns

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE GOVERNMENT has issued a new policy on accreditation of journalists, introducing an entire section about reasons that can result in the suspension of the accreditation.

What has changed?

The new policy, prepared by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) and issued by the Press Information Bureau, lays down guidelines on how PIB accreditation will be granted to eligible journalists. At the moment there are 2,457 PIB-accredited journalists in the country.

For the first time, it specifies conditions that can result in the journalist losing accreditation. If a journalist "acts in manner which is prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement of an offence", her accreditation can be cancelled.

The previous policy, issued in 2013, had stated, under general terms of accreditation, that accreditation "shall be withdrawn as soon as the conditions on which it was given cease to exist. Accreditation is also liable to be withdrawn/suspended if it is found to have been misused".

The new policy has ten points that may result in the accreditation being cancelled, including if a journalist is charged with a "serious cognisable offence".

What concerns does this raise?

One of the core responsibilities of a journalist is to expose wrongdoing, whether by public officials, politicians, big businessmen, corporate groups, or other people in power. This could result, at times, in such powers trying to intimidate journalists or to block information from coming out.

A common tool used by powerful people is filing of defamation cases against journalists and media platforms. Now, defamation has been made one of the provisions that can lead to cancellation of accreditation.

Journalists often report on issues and policy decisions that the government may not like. The new policy's provision about acting "in manner which is prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality" or "incitement of an offence" can be subjective. The policy is silent on who will decide if a journalist's conduct violates any of these conditions. Any investigative story on sensitive issues could be held to be in violation of any of these provisions.

Who is eligible for accreditation?

There are multiple categories. But a journalist needs to have a minimum five years' professional experience as a full-time working journalist or a cameraperson in a news organisation, or a minimum of 15 years as a freelancer to become eligible. Veteran journalists, with over 30 years of experience, and who are older than 65 years of age, too are eligible.

Accreditation is only available for journalists living in the Delhi NCR region.

A newspaper or a periodical needs to have a minimum daily circulation of 10,000, and news agencies must have at least 100 subscribers. Similar rules apply for foreign news organisations and foreign journalists. The policy has introduced a provision that journalists working with digital news platforms are also eligible, provided the website has a minimum of 10 lakh unique visitors per month.

Applications for accreditation are vetted by a Central Press Accreditation Committee headed by the DG, PIB. After a journalist applies, a mandatory security check is conducted by the Home Ministry, which includes police verification of the journalist's residence.

How does accreditation help?

The policy mentions that the accreditation does not "confer any official or special status" on the journalists, but only recognises them as a "professional working journalist".

There are three advantages. One, in certain events where VVIPs or dignitaries such as the President, the Vice President or the Prime Minister are present, only accredited journalists are allowed to report from the premises. Second, accreditation ensures that a journalist is able to protect the identity of his or her sources. An accredited journalist does not have to disclose who he or she intends to meet when entering offices of union ministries, as the accreditation card is "valid for entry into buildings under MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) security zone".

Third, accreditation brings certain benefits for the journalist and his or her family, like being included in the Central Government Health Scheme, and some concessions on railway tickets.

Have governments tried to put similar curbs earlier?

Several governments have tried, but have had to usually withdraw.

In 2018, during its first term, the NDA government introduced Fake News Guidelines, proposing that a journalist's accreditation can be suspended and even permanently cancelled, if media regulatory bodies adjudge that the journalist had propagated fake news. The order was withdrawn.

In 2017, the Rajasthan government brought in a Bill to protect state officials from "scurrilous and non-substantiable charges". It entailed a jail term for a maximum of two years and a fine. The Bill was withdrawn.

In 2012, during the UPA regime, Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan wanted to introduce a Private Member's Bill in Lok Sabha, which proposed setting up a media regulatory authority with powers to ban or suspend coverage of an event or incident that "may pose a threat to national security from foreign or internal sources". Eventually Natarajan did not introduce the Bill, and her party too distanced itself from it.

Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, whose government was rocked by corruption allegations, had proposed a defamation Bill in 1988, which would "make publication of imputations falsely alleging commission of offences by any person as an offence." The Bill, eventually withdrawn, proposed a jail term of up to five years for defamation.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,JITIN KALRA,S/O JAGDISH KALRA R/o C-391,FF,Vikaspuri Delhi-110018,have changed my name to JITIN KUMAR KALRA. 0040601916-4

I,Tushar Kumar Ranka,S/o-Ajay Raj Ranka residing-E-87E, Second-Floor, Mansarover Garden, Delhi,have changed my name to Tushar Ranka,for all purposes. 0040601940-2

I,Sushant K Yadav S/o Yogesh Chander Yadav R/o-E-25, Mansarovar Garden, N.Delhi-110015 have changed my name to Sushant Kumar Yadav. 0040601960-4

I,Salman S/o Jamshed Khan,R/o G-572, Ram Sawroop-Colony, Shahid-Nagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh-201006,have changed my name to Salman Khan,for all purpose 0040601965-9

I,RAMESH KUMAR BABBAR, S/O.RAM CHAND BABBAR, H.NO.92-C,PKT-A-14, HIMGIRI APPT,KALKAJI EXTN .SOUTH-EAST DELHI-110019,changed my name to RAMESH BABBAR. 0040601916-1

I,Neetu Malhotra W/o Gurpreet Singh Gogia R/o-1411, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar Delhi-110009, have changed my name to Neetu Gogia for all purposes. 0040601965-1

I,Nandan Singh S/o-Bishan Singh,R/o-C-574,Behind-Water Tank, Sec-1,Rohini Delhi 110085, have changed my name to Nandan Singh Negi. 0040601916-5

I,Manjit Khara W/o Late.Jaideep Gopal Surie,R/o G-150 Nar-Vihar Part-2,Sec-34 Noida, Uttar,Pradesh-201307, Have Changed my name to Manjit, Permanently. 0040601916-2

I,Maniksha Sahu D/o-Ramgopal Sahu R/o.C-27,Block-G,Gautam Puri,Phase-1, Badarpur,New Delhi-110044,have changed my name to Maniksha,for all purposes. 0040601940-1

We,Kulwant Singh and Sumeet Kaur,R/o-H-376,Second Floor,Palam Vihar,Gurgaon, Haryana-122017,has changed our,Minor Daughter's,name from Prisha Bhui and Prisha Kaur Bhui to Prisha Kaur,for all,future purposes,all name pertain with same child. 0040601965-4

I,Rashmi Dahiya,Mother of,Dhruv Dahiya,W/o-Sh.Amit Dahiya R/o-Village-Dhanwapur, P.O.Daultabad, Gurugram, Haryana-122006,inform that Rashmi and Rashmi Dahiya,both are one and the same person.My name is Rashmi Dahiya,for all,future purposes. 0040601940-6

I,Manjushree Dhun Thacker, Daughter of,Late Sri.Braj Kishore Pandey,Resident of,644,Maruti-Mane Block, Asian Games Village,New Delhi-110049,have changed my name to Ms Manjushree Dayanand vide-affidavit dated-08.02.2022 at Patiala House-Courts,New Delhi,India 0040601960-2

I,Tanea Das Chowdhury D/o,Anil Kumar Sood, Ex.-W/o Amitava Das Chowdhury R/o-109,Block-2, Kirti-Apartments, Mayur-Vihar-1 Extn.,Delhi-110091,I got divorce from my husband Amitava Das Chowdhury, vide-court decree-No.H.M.A. Case-No.1508 of 2021,dated-16-12-2021.Further,I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Tanea Sood. 0040601960-9

I,ANJUDEVI TIWARI,W/O SB TIWARI,R/0 RZ-364 YB SAINI NIWAS RAJ NAGAR PART-2, PALAM-NEW DELHI-110077, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM ANJUDEVI TIWARI TO ANJU TIWARI, AND MY DATE-OF-BIRTH IS 15-July-1975,VIDE-AFFIDAVIT, DATED-03/01/2022 BEFORE NCT-DELHI. 0040601965-5

I, P Wungmathing, NO. 13004493K, Rank-Sepoy, R/o Hamleikhong Block II, PS. Ukhrul Ukhrul District, Manipur, inform that my son's name wrongly written in my service record as (1) Pharungsing, D.O.B. 25/03/2003 and (2) Chichimi, D.O.B. 25/03/2005 instead of (1) Pharungshing PA, D.O.B. 21/06/2003 and (2) chijami Pharung Awangshi, D.O.B. 12/12/2006. 0040601956-1

I, Dinesh Chander Kuniyal s/o Late Kamla Pati r/o B-112, Shyam Kunj, Goyla Ext, Najafgarh, N. Delhi-110043 declare that my name has been inadvertently recorded as Denesh Chander in all my educational documents, however, my correct and complete name is Dinesh Chander Kuniyal. I declare that Dinesh Chander & Dinesh Chander Kuniyal both are one and the same person. So, I will be called and known by the name of Dinesh Chander Kuniyal for all intent and purposes. 0040601802-1

I,Jaisveen Kaur Nagpal D/o Balvinder Singh Nagpal R/o BW-62B Shalimar Bagh Delhi-110088,changed my name to Jaisveen Kaur. 0040601960-3

I,Mahender Kumar S/o Chotu Ram R/o H.No.13, Second Floor, Road-No-48, Punjabi Bagh, Delhi-110026 have changed my name to Mahender Goel. 0040601960-5

I,Atul Anand S/o Shri Shiv Nath Roy R/o House No.109/1, First Floor, Gautam Nagar, New Delhi-110049 have changed my minor daughter's name from Vaibhavie aged 13 years to Vaibhavie for all purposes. 0040601916-10

I,Anurag Verma S/o,Radhey Shyam Verma R/o-Plot-No.T-20, Gurudayal-Vihar, Chanchal-Park, Delhi-110041,have changed my minor daughter's name Yashi Verma to Yaashi Verma. D.O.B-31/05/2009. 0040601960-7

I,Aakriti alias Aakriti Stuti Sinha,D/o Lalit Kumar,R/o 202, tower cs12 supertech Capetown sector 74 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh 201301 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Aakriti Stuti Sinha. 0040601916-9

I,AISHA JAMEEL D/O.JAMEEL R/O.4518,GALI-SHAHTARA AJMERI-GATE,DELHI CORRECTED MY NAME AS AYESHA JAMEEL AND FATHER NAME MOHAMMAD JAMEEL,FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0040601940-7

I,Hitherto Known as Tehrun Nisha,W/o-Abdulla Khan R/o-B-318,Azad, Gali.No.5,Near-Chand Masjid, Mandawali, Fazal Pur, Delhi 110092Have changed my,Name and shall hereafter be known,as TAIRUM NISHA. 0040601940-5

I, Shama,W/o Jamshed Khan,R/o G-572, Ram Sawroop Colony, Shahid-Nagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh-201006,have changed my name to Aktri,for all purpose. 0040601965-8

I, Tanuj Alias Tanuj Kumar Alias Tanuj Prajapati, S/o Salek Chand, R/o 13A, Karan Enclave, Chhapraula, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201009, have changed my name to Tanuj Singh. 0070771730-2

I, Mac Lanton Kharmawphlang, Son of Late Mac W Shabong, R/O 32 2nd Floor Woodstock, Nirvana Country, Sec.-50, Gurgaon state and confirm that my Legal Name is Mac Lanton Kharmawphlang. I further state that Lanton Kharmaw Phlang is the same person that is myself. 0040601892-1

I, Anil kumar Basra,S/o Satya Pal Basra R/o-RZ-95,Street-No.9, New-Uttam Nagar,Sunil-Dairy, New Delhi-110059,have Changed my name to Anil Basra, for all future purposes. 0040601903-2

I, ARADHANA RAWAT, D/o INNOCENT DAYAL, R/o 25/22, First Floor, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008, have changed my name to ARADHNA RAWAT for all purposes. 0070771850-1

I, Ajay Gandhi S/o Late Sh. Indersen Gandhi R/o J-33, Jorbagh Road, Jorbagh, New Delhi-110003 has changed my name from Ajay Gandhi to Ajay Kumar Gandhi for all purposes vide Affidavit No.IN-DL74036252690919U Dt: 05 Jan 2022. 0040601804-1

I Vijay Goyal alias Vijender Goel alias Vijender Kumar S/o Late Sh. Hira Lal R/o D-20, Ground Floor, Old Gupta Colony, Delhi-110009 have changed my name to Vijender Kumar for all purposes. 0040601888-3

I Madan Khanna S/o Sh. Hardev Khanna R/o H-15, H-Block, Naraina Vihar, Delhi-110028 is also known as Madan Shastri. Both names are of one and the same person. 0040601888-2

I Harjinder Singh Thapar S/O, Sardar Gurnam Singh R/o 17/64, Subhashnagar Delhi-110027 have changed my name to Harjinder Singh for all purposes. 0040601937-1

I Ekta Yogesh Sharma W/o Mr. Yogesh sharma. R/o G3 163, Indiabulls Centrum Park, Sector 103, Gurugram (Haryana) Pin 122006 have changed my name to EKTA SHARMA For all purposes and shall hereafter be known as Ekta Sharma 0040601897-1

I Arun Kumar Varshney S/o-Shiv Narayan Varshney R/o-58, Engineers Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-34 have changed my name to Arun Varshney for all purposes. 0040601927-1

I Aparna G , Aparna Girli Babu, Aparna Gangakumary D/O, Babu Chandrasekharan R/o Flat No. 75-f, Second Floor, Pocket-a (dda Flats), Mayur Vihar Ph-3, Kondli, New Delhi 110096 have changed my name to Aparna Chandrashekhar 0040601656-1

It is for general information that I,Uzma Parveen,W/o-Abdul Gaffar,R/o-H.No.B-130,Gali.No. B-11,Kanti-Nagar Ext.Krishna Nagar,East Delhi-110051, declare that name of mine has been wrongly-written as Uzma Gaffar in my minor daughter Ifra(13 Years)School-Record. The actual-name of mine is Uzma Parveen which may be amended accordingly. 0040601916-11

I, SUMITRA and SHEETAL and SHITAL DEVI W/O Bambode Suresh Raoji, Quarter No.40K, CBI Colony, Vasant Vihar, Delhi-110057, are one and same person and consider the name SHITAL DEVI for all future purposes. 0040601899-1

I,Amandeep Singh S/o Charanjeet Singh R/o-27, Ashoka-Park, Main-Rohtak Road, New Delhi-110035 have changed my name to Amandeep Singh Bhamra. 0040601960-8

I,Devinder,S/o-Devraj Badhwar residing-E-34,Saraswati Garden,Near-Mansarover Garden, Delhi,have changed my name to Devinder Badhwar,for all purposes. 0040601940-3

I,Bhavya Bahl W/O, Kunal Wadhawan R/O, A-4/20, Jeewan Jyoti Apartment Pitampura Delhi-110034,have changed my name to Bhavya Wadhawan 0040601916-7

I,Aviral Gupta S/o Sanjay Gupta R/o D-62, Ramprastha Colony, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011 have changed my name to Aviiral Gupta. 0040601960-6

I,Amresh Kumar S/O,Om Prakash R/O, H.No-887, 3rd Floor Pocket-6, Sector-2, Rohini Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Amresh Kumar Sharma. 0040601916-6

I,Akhil Nagpal,S/o Narinder Kumar Nagpal R/o-52, Shakti Vihar,Pitampura, Delhi, Changed Name To Akhil Kumar Nagpal. 0040601940-4

I,Ajay S/O Shri Bhagoti,R/O C-2/123,Sector-27,Rohini, Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Peshawari Lal for all purposes. 0040601960-1

I,ANIL KUMAR S/O LAKHAN LAL GARG R/O D-13/19, SECTOR-8, ROHINI,DELHI-110085.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ANIL KUMAR GARG. 0040601916-8

I,A S CHAHAL,S/O SAMPURAN SINGH,R/o KG-2/288,Vikaspuri, Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Arvind Singh Chahal. 0040601916-3

I, Tushyant S/o Choudhary Dharam Pal R/o H.No-101, Chaudhary Market, Village Patpar Ganj, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110091 Have changed my name to Tushyant Kumar for all future purposes. 0040601890-1

I, Rattan Lal, S/o Mehesher Nath Dass, R/o L-25, Delta-2, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddh Nagar, have changed my name from Rattan Lal to Rattan Lal Dass for all future purposes. 0070771879-1

I, Raman Preet Singh Toor, S/o Joginder Singh, R/o House No 530-C, Urban Estate Phase 2, Patiala-147002, have changed my name to Raman Preet Singh. 0070771882-1

I, Parnit Kaur Nijjar W/o Navkaran Singh Bakshi R/o-House.No-330, Street-No.10, Sunder Vihar,Delhi-110087, have changed my name to Parneet Kaur, for all future purposes. 0040601903-1

I, NAZMA KHAN, W/o MOHAMMAD FAIZAN, R/O- 768, 2ND FLOOR, MAYUR VIHAR PHASE-3, JAY AMBEY APARTMENT, MAYUR VIHAR, EAST DELHI, DELHI-110096, have changed my name to NAZIMA KHAN for all purposes. 0070771870-1

I, Jaspreet Kaur Toor, W/o Raman Preet Singh, R/o House No 530-C, Urban Estate Phase-2, Patiala-147002, have changed my name to Jaspreet Kaur. 0070771885-1

I, Beetoo Goswami, S/o Krishna Kumar, R/o A-901, Sahil Vignesh Residence, Bhujbal Wasti, Wakad, Near Wakad Bridge, Pune City, Pune, Maharashtra-411057, I have changed my name from Beetoo Goswami to Varun Goswami. 0070771873-1

LOST & FOUND

Original Conveyance Deed No.269 dated 17.01.2003 infavour of Gian Devi Gandhi has been lost. If someone finds the same , kindly contact me on my Mobile No.9871138483. Dalip Kumar Gandhi 0040601888-4

We, Praveen Kumar Nagpal and Anju Nagpal S/o Om Prakash Nagpal,have Lost our Original Share-Certificate of Flat.No. 562,Krishi Apartments-Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018. FIR Lodge-Vide LR.NO. 110242/2022.Founder-inform at above address. 0040601903-3

Lost my wallet containing original Driving Licence, ATM/Debit cards, photocopies of Aadhar, PAN & Voter I.Card, RC of vehicles, somewhere on 06-02-2022 at Near Jhandewalan Metro Station, New Delhi. Finder contact: Harshit Arora s/o Dalip Kumar, R/o 120/1, Paschim Puri, New Delhi-63. Mob#9818915452 0040601895-1

Sreekant Vinayak Khandekar, S/o late Shri Vinayak Kashinath Khandekar, 565, Ground and First Floor Duplex, with car garage Mandakini Enclave, Alaknanda New Delhi 110019 lost original conveyance deed. Any person found contact 9810028246, 8588821490 0040601889-1

I, Mohammad Asif,S/o-Inamul Haq,R/o-A-87, 4th-Floor,New Seelampur, Delhi-110053, informing publicly,that my and my family's documents have been lost/Misplaced, somewhere. If someone,finds please send at above said, address. Thanking you, Documents details,as under: (1)-Mohammad Asif,Voter Id, Driving-licence &Passport No-U6095184 (2)-Shiba, Passport. No-R9625657 (3)-Asba Mahin, Passport.No-R9625354 (4)-Mohammad Rayyan, Passport. No-R9625664 0040601965-6

PUBLIC NOTICE

"General Public is hereby informed through this publication that my client Smt. Jasbir Kaur W/O Late Sh. Malkiat Singh R/O WZ-1A, Sant Garh, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018 disowns her only Son namely Dilbagh Singh, from her movable and immovable properties henceforth any person having any transaction or putting encumbrance over ths said properties shall be doing so at his/her own risk and cost hereinafter and my client shall not be responsible for any of his acts.

Sd/-
SASAN & SASANS
Advocates
Y-13, LAWYERS CHAMBER, CIVIL WING, TIS HAZARI, DELHI-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to general public that my client Sh. Ram Saran & Smt. Sheela Devi W/o Sh. Ram Saran both R/o C-1069, Sangam Vihar, Devali New Delhi-110062, debarred his son Rahul Kumar & his wife Shashi, from their all movable and immovable properties and severe all their relation form them. If any person adhere any financial, social relation with them, shall be at his own risks. My client Shall not be responsible for their acts.

Sd/-
Karamveer Singh (Advocate)
Ch. No. 469, Saket Court, New Delhi-17

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that, my client, Smt. Geeta W/o Sh. Vishive Vender Bainy owner of Entire Ground Floor of Freehold **Property Bearing No. H-1574**, Situated at **Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi** have lost, Original Agreement to Sell, GPA and Will executed in favor of M/s. North East Buildcon Pvt. Lt. or any other documents w.r.t. Aforementioned Property, in Delhi. If found and/or seen, please contact undersigned. **ALL PERSONS** having any claim in respect of sale, lien or otherwise howsoever are requested to contact undersigned within 14 days hereof failing which the claim(s) if any, of such persons(s) will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and the said process shall be completed.

Suresh Kumar,
Advocate
Mob:- +91-9818159221
Enrl:- D/3617/2009

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Manav Sardana son of Shri S.B. Sardana, resident of Imperial Auto Industries Ltd., 1316, Matura Road, Faridabad, Haryana, custodian of title deeds and documents pertaining to Property bearing Nos. D-98, & D-99, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi and Adverigachem Batta, Marna Slolim (Lot No. 4) Goa. The original conveyance deed, Sale Deed/Agreement to Sell/ Transfer Deed, and other related documents of said properties has been lost. An F.I.R. to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, Sector-31, Faridabad, Haryana, vide F.I.R./N.C.R. No. 21, dated 04.02.2022. Any Peraon(s) found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person and deliver at above address.

Sd/-
Sada Nand Lal Karn (Advocate)
(D-362/2000)
Sadanand & Associates
8/3, First Floor, Prem Nagar near Safdarjung Bus Trminal
New Delhi-110003

PUBLIC NOTICE

That my client Bideshwar Jha S/o Late Liladhar Jha, R/O- Village + Post Vijay SalemPur, Dist. Madhubani, Bihar-847404 has Debarred/ Disowned his son Namely **JAY PRAKASH JHA** S/o Sh. Bideshwar Jha, Daughter-in-Law Namely **MRS. RUPAM KUMAR** and his Grand-Daughter Namely Kiva Jha D/o Shri Jay Prakash Jha Age About 2 Years, from his all movable and immovable properties and has severed all relations due to his ill-behavior and out of control. Any Person Dealing with him in any manner whatsoever shall do so at his own risks, cost and consequences and my client or his representative shall not be held responsible for any act and deeds whatsoever from today.

Sd/- **KAMALA KANT JHA** ADVOCATE
Chamber No. 539 Lawyers Chamber Block, Dwarka Court Complex, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Veena Sukhija W/o Sh. Satish Sukhija have lost my Original Demand cum Allotment Letter Dated: 22.05.1982 issued by DDA in favor of Mr. Harish Chandra Chopra in respect of my property DDA LIG Flat-C6A/31C, 2nd Floor, Janak Puri, Delhi. Online complaint lodge vide dated. 07.02.2022, SO No: 430/2014 Delhi Police P.S: Crime Branch, Delhi LR No. 108366/2022. If anybody find please inform at 9953313300.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that my client SH. RAMESH KHURANA S/O LATE SH. MUKAND LAL KHURANA R/0 B-1/591-G, JANAKPURI, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110058. That after the death of his father Late Sh. Mukand Lal, my client and his family divides all the properties by drafting MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING dated 03rd of February, 2012. In that MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, SHOP NO.-17, L.G.F. PALIKA BAZAR, G.T. ROAD, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH **(Which was in the name of Kishan Das Mukand Lal)** comes in the favour of my client Sh. Ramesh Khurana. Now, my client is going to sell the above said Shop. If any such person / any family member found any problem, shall have time to contact within the 15 days after the publication. After that my client shall not be responsible in any manner for the same.

NAKUL GROVER (Advocate)
G-22, Suneja Tower 1, Dist. Centre, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it Known to all that my client Rajesh Verma S/O Late Sh. Nanak Chand R/O- C-95-C, Behind Shivaji College Raja Garden, New Delhi-110027 intending Purchaser of Property Bearing No B-33, With All Its Roof Right Land Measuring 25sq.Yds (13.5 X 16.67) out Of Khasra No 9/10 Situated in the area of village Nilothi, Colony of Shiv Vihar Gali No 27 Nilothi Extn New Delhi 110041. If Any Person Have Any Claim /Objection Regarding The above said Property Please Cont 9818827583. Please intimate us Within 15 Days.

Sd/-
RITU VERMA
Advocate
En. No. D/1126/92
Seat Central Hall,
Near Advocates Lunch Room,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at large is hereby informed that my client Bikram Singh, S/o Late Sh. Raghunath Singh R/o Village Kankrola, Distt. Gurugram, Haryana and his family members have severed all relations and ties with his in laws i.e. sons of Late Sh. Attar Singh, Residents of House No. 368, Kapashera, New Delhi - 110097, Any person dealing with the aforesaid persons shall do so at their own risk and consequence and my client shall not be liable in any manner for any act of the aforesaid persons.

NEERAJ YADAV ADVOCATE
Enrl. No. D-1363/2007
A-219, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

"IMPORTANT"

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NATIONAL FERTILIZERS LIMITED

एन एफ एल NFL

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
A-11, Sector-24, Noida-201301
(CIN-L74899DL1974GOI007417)
Phone No. 0120-2412294, Extn. 2220

Ref. No.: 10-2021-22-NPS-NPK-06EW & 11-2021-22-DAP-07E — Date: 09.02.2022

NOTICE INVITING GLOBAL E-TENDERS

Bids are invited for supply of loose bulk fertilizers as detailed below:

E-tender No.	Product	Qty. [in MT]	Coast	Last date of bid submission
2022_NFL_104894_1	DAP (18:46:0)	50,000	ECI	19.02.2022 till 18:00 Hrs
2022_NFL_104368_1	NPS (20:20:0:13)	60,000	ECI	
	NPS (16:20:0:13)	60,000	ECI	
	NPK (12:32:16)	60,000	WCI	

For details, visit websites : www.nationalfertilizers.com or https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app . Corrigendum / Addendum, if any, shall be published only on above websites.

Executive Director (Marketing)

@NFL_Kisan @nationalfertilizers National Fertilizers Limited

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)

1.	Name of work with its location	Provision of side pathway, man refuges and replacement of dilapidated pathway sheets on major girder bridge no-3, 21, 28, 41, 61, 139 in LRJ-DDN & 3, 6, 14 & 21 in RWL-RKSH section under AXEN/BL/MB over MB Division & Replacement of badly corroded rivets and member i.e bracing angles, cross frames and gussest plates of Br. No. 1255 UP on MB-SRE section under the jurisdiction of SSE/BR/M/MB & Improvement to longitudinal level of girder with provision of stool of Br. No. 28 & 49 on JHL-HSR in the jurisdiction of AXEN/BL/UMB.
2.	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 1,80,48,519.61
3.	Completion period of the work	06 (Six) Months
4.	Date & time for submission of tender & opening of tender	Up-to 15.00 hrs on 03.03.2022 Opening of tender after 15.00 hrs on same day
5.	Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

Tender Notice No. 32-W-Br.1255UP-ManRefuge-PathwayBr.28&49-MB&UMB Dated: 08.02.2022 — 276/22

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person **Named:** Sita Ram, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** About 55-56 Years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Long, **Wearing:** Brown Jacket, Blue Jeans, Blue Sirt was found dead at Parking Footpath In front of Shani Mandir Near Metro Station Gate No. 5 CH Chowk, Delhi, on 29.01.2022.In this regard a DD No.28A, dated 29.01.2022 has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi..

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform the following.

SHO
P.S. Kotwali, Delhi
DP/1979/N/2022(UIDB) **Ph.: 011-23977100, 8750870121**

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

Open Tender Notice Number.-NCR-PRY J0COMM (MISC)/7/2021/38618 Date:02.02.2022

Tender Notice

Following open tenders in sealed covers on prescribed tender forms are invited by the Sr. Divl. Commercial Manager or Divisional Railway Manager's/Commercial, North Central Railway, Prayagraj on behalf of President of India.

1	Tender No.	31-2022 to 61-2022
2	Details of work including Place	Installation of 31 ATMs at 19 Railway Stations. Chunar (01), Mirzapur (02), Vindhyachal (1), Prayagraj Chheoki (1), Manikpur (1), Prayagraj (6), Subedarganj (4), Bamhrauli (1), Fatehpur (2), Phaphund (1), Etawah (2), Firozabad (1), Shikohabad (1), Tundla (1), Hathras (1), Aligarh (2), Somna (1), Khurja (1), Dadri (1)
3	Approximate cost in Rs.	00
4	Cost of Tender Forms in Rs.	₹1180.00
5	Office address from where the tender information can be obtained	Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/Prayagraj of North Central Railway, Prayagraj Division.
6	Earnest Money to be deposited in Rs.	0.00 (Zero)
7	Period of Contract	Five Years
8	i- Date & time for dropping the tender form ii- Date & time for the opening of tender	i- From date of publishing of tender notice in newspaper to 04.03.2022 Upto 13 hrs. ii- At 15 hrs. on 04.03.2022
9	Place for submission of tender /Bid	Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, office of Divisional Railway Manager, North Central Railway, Civil Lines, Nawab Yusuf Road, Prayagraj-211001
10	Website & Notice board where the full detail of tender can be seen	Tender details (Tender docments, terms & conditions) shall be available & downloaded on www.ncr.indianrailways.gov. in upto 13:00 hrs. on 04.03.2022 i.e. date of opening of the tender.

146/2022 V

North Central Railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Martyr of CISF on 09th February

SI/Exe D N P SINGH BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006	CT/GD SURVE NAVNATH BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006	CT/GD MALLIKARJUN BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006	CT/GD DINESH SINGH BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006
CT/GD J. N. MISHRA BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006	CT/GD R. K. YADAV BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006	CT/GD U. P. SHUKLA BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006	CT/GD R. K. TIWARI BIOM KIRANDUL 09-02-2006

The CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of these brave-hearts. On this day, they laid down their lives at the altar of duty while fighting with LWE outfits. Their Courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally indebted to them for their noblest deeds.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, E/M CIRCLE, RAIPUR (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice

Online tenders are invited on behalf of Governor of Chhattisgarh from contractors, **Registered contractor C.G. P.W.D. class in & above** For Form "A" (Percentage Rate Tender) **in new Registration system (unified Registration system)** for the following work:-

NIT No.	Name of Work	Probable amount of contract	Last date of bid submission
79/SE E/M/2021-22 (1 Call) System Tender No. 92032 Class D & above	Shifting all Electrical lines such as Poles & Transformers to road widening Under P.W.D. (E/M) Sub Division Mahasamund, Under PWD B&R Division Mahasamund, Dist- Mahasamund (C.G)	Rs.100 Lacs	24-02-2022
80/SE E/M/2021-22 (1 Call) System Tender No. 92022 Class C & above	Utility Shifting (LT & HT- Line & Pole, X'mer Shifting etc. and Electrification) Work in Different Places for CGRIDCL Under District - Dhamtari (C.G.)	Rs.200 Lacs	24-02-2022
81/SE E/M/2021-22 (1 Call) System Tender No. 92018 Class D & above	Shifting of all Elecrical lines such as poles & Transformers to road widening work Under PWD B&R Division Gaiyaband Dist - Gariyaband (C.G)	Rs.100 Lacs	24-02-2022

Note:- The tender documents can be downloaded from the web-portal **http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in.** Only those contractors/bidders, interested in bidding shall pay the tender document cost online.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
P.W.D., E/M Circle Raipur (C.G.)

67571

विकास का वादा– मजबूत इरादा आपकी थी चाह, हमने बनाई राह — Credible Chhattisgarh विश्वसनीय छत्तीसगढ़

DELHI JAL BOARD DELHI SARKAR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (T)/A.C.E.(M)-4
LUCKNOW ROAD, TIMAR PUR, DELHI-110054.

Sort NIT. No. 75 (Item no. 1, 2) (2021-22) E.E.(T)/A.C.E.(M)-4.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Earnest Money	Tender fee (Non-refundable)	Last date / time of receipt of tender through e-procurement Solution
1.	Intercepting waste water flowing in drain at Shah Alam Bandh Road in SPS Jahangir Puri for treatment at STP Coronation Pillar under A.C.E. (M)-4. (Re-invite). **I.D 2022_DJB_216258_1**	3,74,57,187/-	07.02.2022 03 P.M. onward	7,49,200/-	1500/-	Technical bid will be received 18.02.2022, 3:00 PM & opening of Financial bid after completion of technical bid & confirmation of EMD from Bank.
2.	Trapping of GTK drain No. 1 discharge of CETP in industrial state AC-18, under ACE (M)-4. **I.D 2022_DJB_216258_2**	1,89,19,712/-	07.02.2022 03 P.M. onward	3,78,400/-	1000/-	Technical bid will be received 18.02.2022, 3:00 PM & opening of Financial bid after completion of technical bid & confirmation of EMD from Bank.

Further details in this regard can be seen at **https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in**

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1103 (2021-22)

Sd/- (S.K SINGH)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-T(M)-4

"STOP CORONA: ***"Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"***

कार्यालय उप संचालक पशु चिकित्सा सेवायें जिला मुंगेली (छ.ग.)

E-mail address-ddvsmung.cg@gov.in

क्रमांक/2190/भण्डार/निविदा/2021-22 — मुंगेली, दिनांक-31/1/2022

SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTICE

वर्ष 2021-22 में कलेक्टर मुंगेली के निर्देशानुसार **BV 380 Layer Bird/Farm Equipments/Layer Feed** क्रय हेतु निविदा निर्माता फर्मों अथवा उनके अधिकृत विक्रेताओं से मोहरबंद निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र की प्राप्ति के लिए आवेदन पत्र प्रस्तुत करे निविदा के लिए 1500.00 (अक्षरी एक हजार पांच सौ रूपा मात्र)नगद या बैंक ड्राफ्ट के माध्यम से भुगतान कर 14 फरवरी 2022 सायं 5.30 बजे तक कार्यालय तीन दिवस एवं समय में प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। डाक से निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त करने हेतु डाक व्यय रूपये 200.00 (अक्षरी रूपये दो सौ मात्र) का अतिरिक्त भुगतान करना होगा। निविदा प्रपत्र क्रय की देय राशि वापसी योग्य नहीं होगी। डाक द्वारा प्रेषित निविदाओं में किसी भी प्रकार के विलंब के लिये कार्यालय जवाबदार नहीं होगा। निविदा प्रपत्र का अवलोकन कार्यालयीन दिवस एवं समय में किया जा सकता है। जिसमें क्रय किये जाने वाले सामग्री का नाम अनुमानित मात्रा एंव जमा की जाने वाली धरोहर राशि के साथ-साथ निविदा शर्तों का उल्लेख किया गया है।

निविदा का विवरण:– **1.** BV 380 Birds **2.** Poultry Feed (Layer Pallat/Finisher Pallat) (Details are inside Tender Form) **3.** Poultry Feederer & Drinker for layer Bird (Details are inside Tender Form) **4.** Plastic/Fiber Egg Rack to Keep Egges

क्र०	निविदा का प्रकार	निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	निविदा प्रपत्र जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एंव समय	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एंव समय
1	BV 380 Layer Birds/ Equipments As SN- 1 to SN- 4	दिनांक 14.02.2022 सांय 5.30 बजे तक	दिनांक 15.02.2022 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक	दिनांक 16.02.2022 पूर्वान्ह 10.30 बजे

निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त करने, जमा करने, खुलने का स्थान–
कार्यालय उप संचालक पशु चिकित्सा सेवायें जिला– मुंगेली

निविदा से संबंधित समस्त जानकारी हेतु जिले के वेबसाईड mungeli.gov.in का अवलोकन कर सकते हैं, एवं निविदा प्रपत्र डाउनलोड की जा सकती है। डाउनलोड की हुई निविदा प्रपत्र की राशि निविदा जमा करते समय उप संचालक पशु चिकित्सा सेवायें मुंगेली के पदनाम से डिमांड ड्राफ्ट द्वारा जमा करना अनिवार्य है। निविदा केवल रजिस्टर्ड पोस्ट (ए.डी.) अथवा स्पीड पोस्ट अथवा पी.एण्ड टी. विभाग के अधिकृत कोरियर के द्वारा प्राप्त कि जावेगी अथवा निविदा पेटी मे डाली जाएगी। निर्धारित समयावधि के पश्चात प्राप्त निविदायें स्वीकार नहीं की जावेगी। निविदा आमंत्रण की कार्यवाही स्थगित/निरस्त करने का सम्पूर्ण अधिकार उप संचालक पशु चिकित्सा सेवायें जिला– मुंगेली के पास सुरक्षित है।

अधोहस्ताक्षरी निविदाकर्ता को यह एकाधिकार सुरक्षित होगा कि वह बिना किसी पूर्व सूचना के सामयिक कारणों के आधार पर जो कि विचार योग्य नही है, निविदा को निरस्त/पोस्टपोण्ड कर सकता है। इस बाबत् किसी भी प्रतिभागी से किसी भी प्रकार की चर्चा नही की जावेगी और ना ही पत्राचार स्वी

GOLD	RUPEE	OIL	SILVER
₹48,167	₹74.74	$92.90	₹61,607

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of February 7

SENSEX: 57,808.58 ▲ 187.39 (0.33%) **NIFTY:** 17,266.75 ▲ 53.15 (0.31%) **NIKKEI:** 27,284.52 ▲ 35.65 **HANG SENG:** 24,329.49 ▼ 250.06 **FTSE:** 7,576.90 ▲ 3.43 **DAX:** 15,188.12 ▼ 18.52

International market data till 1900 IST

SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

Covid health cover claims surge to ₹36K cr, most from Maharashtra

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

INSURANCE COMPANIES received 28.46 lakh claims for Rs 36,003 crore in the last 22 months (till February 4) from people affected by the coronavirus, with claims worth Rs 4,300 crore coming in the last four months.

Of this, insurers have settled 25.53 lakh claims for Rs 23,595 crore so far since the Covid pandemic began in March 2020, according to figures compiled by the General Insurance Council. Companies have repudiated 1.98 lakh claims for Rs 1,459 crore so far. Maharashtra reported the maximum number of claims at 9.3 lakh for Rs 9,637 crore, followed by Gujarat with 3.44 lakh claims for Rs 4,345 crore, and Tamil Nadu with 2.85 lakh claims for Rs 4,144 crore. Insurers settled 8.46 lakh claims for Rs 6,511 crore in Maharashtra.

The average size of the Covid claim at the all- India level works out to Rs 1,26,467 while the size of the settled claim per person is Rs 92,411. Indicating poor health cover penetration, insurers received only 93,386 claims for Rs 701 crore from Kerala, which reports the most Covid cases now. The average size of the claim settled per person in Kerala is also one of the lowest at Rs 57,294. Uttar Pradesh accounted for the maximum amount settled per person at Rs 1,24,720.

Telangana reported the highest average per person Covid claim of Rs 183,670.

However, in the backdrop of falling incomes because of medical exigencies or job losses, many Indians are scaling down the coverage of their health insurance policies in a bid to save on the premium amount expended. "Adding to this alarming trend is the fact that nearly 30 per cent of the Indian population remain uninsured and you have a dangerous situation that is detrimental to our country's goal of achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030," said Satish Gidugu, CEO & whole-time director at Medi Assist Healthcare Services.

Covid testing in Mumbai. *File*

"To reverse this course, it is imperative that tax paying citizens are incentivised to opt for a higher health insurance cover while the government focuses on its slew of initiatives aimed at the bottom 50 per cent of India's population," Gidugu said.

On most insurance products, the GST rate is 18 per cent, which thrusts the premium to 118 per cent for the end-user. The abolition or at least a sizeable reduction in the GST on all personal lines of products — from 18 per cent to 5 per cent will encourage more people to buy health insurance, said ManipalCigna Health Insurance, CFO Srikanth Kandikonda.

Insurance companies mobilised Rs 54,235 crore as health cover premium during the nine-period ended December 31, 2021, a rise of 28.78 per cent from Rs 42,113 crore in the same period of last year. Of this, mobilisation through retail insurance cover rose to Rs 20,995 crore. Public sector New India Assurance collected Rs 12,050 crore as health premium during the nine-month period, as against Rs 8,212 crore in the same period a year ago.

Gidugu said there is an opportunity to reduce the GST rates on health insurance premiums, allow input credit on GST paid towards employee health insurance and eliminate perquisite tax completely on employee medical reimbursements. This will create a significant impact on the overall adoption of health insurance.

INTERVIEW WITH CHAIRMAN, CBIC

'ITC enabling provision to help catch fake dealers; process to be centralised'

THE BUDGET has introduced provisions for enabling restriction of fake input tax credit (ITC) and it will help catch those fake dealers who were showing a sudden spike in their supplies and not paying the corresponding tax, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman VIVEK JOHRI said. In an interview with AANCHAL MAGAZINE, Johri said rate rationalisation under GST will happen in phases as it cannot be very disruptive to revenue. Edited excerpts:

Vivek Johri *via @cbic_india Twitter*

Some enabling provisions about ITC under GST have been put in the Budget. Will it be something that will affect honest taxpayers also?

The important purpose of bringing in this provision, which talks about restricting ITC, is to ensure that a new taxpayer who has entered the system is not able to suddenly generate a large number of invoices for passing on ITC. We noticed that in the past, based on our investigation into fake dealers and fake ITC, there was one common trait - many of these big dealers did not have any income tax footprint, they had no background in dealing with goods and services and they were entering the system. They would issue invoices of large amounts, show a sudden spike in their output supplies, not pay the tax corresponding to those supplies and, then, leave the system in two or three months' time. So, we want to have the ability to identify such taxpayers, so that in a centralised way, without leaving discretion in the hands of the officer in the field, we are able to, then, say that only so much of the credit be allowed in the first month; that is not to say that rest of the credit will never be available. Depending on his behaviour, we release the rest of the credit, but the sole purpose of having this enabling provision is to deal with the situation.

The GST collections seem to have stabilised around the Rs 1.4-lakh-crore level. The initial idea was to have the system automatically detect leakages. How is it now?

E-invoice is definitely helping and we are going on lowering the threshold ... The idea is that we should be able to universalise it for all invoices. You have invoices on the system, you have e-way bills for goods. To a large extent, you're able to deal with the problem of fake invoices for goods. But people have become smarter, we find that they're issuing fake invoices for services also, and unlike goods where it's still possible to track the movement of goods, in services even that is not possible. So, that's why the attempt is to have one source of truth in the system, which will be the invoice that we'll try and we'll use to construct the GSTR-1 of all GST dealers and the GSTR-1 then auto populates the GSTR-3B. So, there is a self checking mechanism within the system.

We've also tried to make checks more rigorous at the entry point. For the registration process, we introduced Aadhaar authentication and physical verification. The whole purpose of that is not to harass the trader, but to make sure that the taxpayer who's coming in is duly identified. It's not a bogus entity, it's not a benami entity. Then, after the taxpayer is in the system, we are able to watch his behaviour. Based on the data that we collect from these sources, we are running analytics on all of them. We also do data triangulation, with other agencies, income tax, Customs, for example, MCA that also gives us some more clues about what is the background. That is how we intend to proceed.

Is textiles going to be the immediate focus for rate rationalisation under GST or will there be other items? Will fuel, especially ATF, be included under GST?

I am not privy to what the GoM is wanting to proceed, but my limited understanding is that it is not confined to textiles. They will look at the overall rate structure. Some sectors need more capital…and the need for refunds, but, they will look at the overall interest. The Finance Minister while speaking to the industry chambers has said it (ATF) will be taken up at the next GST Council discussion.

So, that would mean slab changes? Or is there a middle rate or revenue neutral rate that is being looked at?

I don't think they've applied themselves to that. There are various options. But obviously, whatever decision they take, it cannot be very disruptive to revenue because that is a concern. So, either they phase it in or they lay down a trajectory of how we should do it to get to the golden mean. The inversion thing will get corrected first, then the rate slab changes, and then, essentially doing it in phases. It will have to be phased.

The government has not favoured duty cuts for Tesla. Is the proposal off the table?

I don't think it's fair to speak about a particular company's proposal...but the current rate structure is fine. It doesn't need any change. At the current rate structure, you have many other companies coming into the country, right? They're not talking about rejigging the rate structure, they're happy with 15, 30, 60, 100 per cent, right? Now, they take the call based on the value chain. You have to take a call as a business where you fit into that value ... There are companies that are bringing in parts for manufacturing here. So all the options are there. To say that tariff is coming in the way of somebody investing in the country, whether for sale or for manufacture, I don't think is a correct representation.

SECTOR WATCH
BLOCKCHAIN

$450-mn web3 bet: Why Polygon drew major investors

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN WHAT is the biggest investment round in an Indian blockchain venture, marquee investment firms including Sequoia Capital India, Softbank Vision Fund II and Tiger Global have infused $450 million in Polygon, a decentralised scaling platform for ethereum blockchain.

EXPLAINED

The company

Polygon was founded by Jaynti Kanani, Sandeep Nailwal, Anurag Arjun and Mihailo Bjelic. The platform is essentially a "Layer 2" network built on the ethereum blockchain to mitigate the traffic load on the main blockchain.

The ethereum blockchain, which is awaiting an update for its transition to a faster and more efficient stake-based network, has become congested with addition of more and more users. This led to the creation of "Layer 2" networks like Polygon. In addition to being a network, Polygon also has a native cryptocurrency token MATIC, which has a market capitalisation of $15.6 billion.

Interest among top investors

For Sequoia Capital, Softbank and Tiger Global, the web3 ecosystem — that comprises cryptocurrencies, non-fungible tokens (NFT) and metaverse applications — has become a catchup game with VC fund Andreessen Horowitz that has taken the lead in web3 investments. Specifically, for Polygon, investors would have looked at its aims of boosting its presence in the gaming and NFT ecosystems.

Polygon hired YouTube's former head of gaming Ryan Wyatt earlier this year to lead Polygon Studios to pursue these efforts.

Other web3 investments

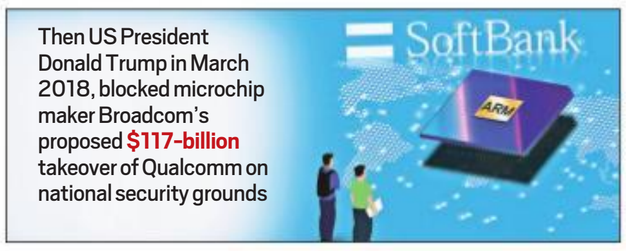
Prior to the $450-million investment in Polygon, the biggest investment in the web3 or cryptocurrency space in India was made in trading platform CoinSwitch Kuber, where Andreessen Horowitz and Coinbase Ventures led a $260 million round in October last year. On Tuesday, Bengaluru and San Francisco-based crypto trading platform Mudrex announced a $6.5 million pre-Series A fund raise from Arkam Ventures, Tribe Capital, and Bolt by QED Investors.

Livspace turns into a unicorn

New Delhi: Home interior and renovation platform Livspace has turned unicorn after raising $180 million in a funding round led by investment firm KKR at a valuation of over $1 billion, the company said on Tuesday. **PTI**

Regulatory roadblock: 'Arm' sale latest in failed global deals

Amid regulatory issues, SoftBank Group dropped the planned $80-billion sale of Arm Ltd to Nvidia Corp, instead seeking to list the company. It was blocked by the US FTC, faced scrutiny in Britain and the EU, and was awaiting nod in China. Some other deals that collapsed due to regulatory hurdles:



Then US President Donald Trump in March 2018, blocked microchip maker Broadcom's proposed **$117-billion** takeover of Qualcomm on national security grounds

Taiwanese firm GlobalWafers' planned $5-billion takeover of **German chip supplier Siltronic** collapsed last week as it did not get timely regulatory approval from Berlin on time

Chinese PE firm Wise Road Capital and **US chipmaker Magnachip Semiconductor Corp** nixed $1.4-billion merger pact in December after the US said it posed security risks

US chip-gear maker Applied Materials abandoned last March a $3.5-billion deal to buy **Japanese peer Kokusai Electric** from KKR as it didn't get nod from China

The United States locked money transfer company MoneyGram International Inc's proposed $1.2 billion sale to China's Ant Group in January 2018 over national security concerns

Source: Reuters

Kashmir tweet row: Now, Suzuki, Toyota express 'regret'

New Delhi: Suzuki Motor Corporation on Tuesday regretted "the hurt to sentiments" in India caused by unauthorised social media posts of its Pakistani dealers and business associates supporting separatists in Kashmir.

In a statement posted on the Twitter handle of Maruti Suzuki India, its parent Suzuki Motor Corporation stated: "We deeply regret the hurt to sentiments, that such insensitive communication has caused. It will be our constant endeavour to advise our business associates to comply strictly to our company policy in this regard."

Earlier in the day, Toyota said that it is a global mobility company that aims to earn the respect and admiration from people in each community in which it operates.

"We are an apolitical entity, and any political statements made by dealers or other associated stakeholders are not authorised by us and do not reflect our corporate stance. We regret any hurt this may have caused," it said. **PTI**

How Israel Police 'used' Pegasus for 'spying'

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

ISRAELI POLICE used the NSO Group's Pegasus to illegally spy on the phones of top government officials, journalists, activists and even Avner Netanyahu, the son of former Prime Minister of the country Benjamin Netanyahu, a report in *Haaretz* said.

Allegation in *Calcalist* report

According to the report in Israeli daily *Haaretz*, which in turn quoted a report in the newspaper *Calcalist*, Israeli Police had used NSO Group's Pegasus to spy on Benjamin Netyanyahu's son Avner Netanyahu, the former Prime Minister's media advisers Topaz Luk and Yonatan Urich, former Finance Ministry Director General Shai Babad, and other members of the government.

The report also alleges the spyware was installed on phones of some of the witnesses and people interrogated as a part of the ongoing investigation against the former Prime Minister Netanyahu.

The spyware had also hacked into the phones of journalists and Israeli new organisation Walla's editor-in-chief Aviram Elad to check if they were being put under pressure by anyone.

Pegasus in other countries

In January, *The New York Times* reported that India had bought Pegasus from Israel as part of its a $2-billion package for weapons including a missile system. Flagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi's landmark visit to Israel in July 2017, the first by an Indian Prime Minister to that country, the *NYT* report said it came even as "India had maintained a policy" of what it called "commitment to the Palestinian cause," and "relations with Israel were frosty."

Apart from India, the report mentioned how the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the US, too, had bought and tested the spyware "for years with plans to use it for domestic surveillance until the agency finally decided last year not to deploy the tools."

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Auto PLI: 115 applications received

New Delhi: The Centre has received 115 applications from Indian and overseas companies under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) Products, Minister of State for Heavy Industries Krishan Pal Gurjar informed Parliament on Tuesday.

The Rs 25,938-crore scheme is aimed at incentivising production of advanced vehicles, such as electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and advanced automotive components, including completed knock down kits for passenger and commercial vehicles. AAT products with minimum domestic value addition of 50 per cent are eligible for sales value linked incentives. **ENS**

Govt on Tesla in LS: Can't have market in India but jobs in China

New Delhi: Making it clear that relaxations will not be provided to US-based electric vehicles major Tesla unless it participates in manufacturing activities in India, Minister of State for Heavy Industries Krishan Pal Gurjar on Tuesday said there cannot be a situation where the market is India but jobs are created in China.

Tesla's Model 3 vehicles, Shanghai. *Reuters file*

He told the Lok Sabha during Question Hour that the company is yet to apply for schemes as per the government's policy.

Responding to a query on Tesla, the minister said "the company wants workers from China and market of India. This is not possible in Modi government... our government's policy is that if india market is to be used, job opportunities will have to be given to Indians." **PTI**

BRIEFLY

US crypto seize

Washington: Over $3.5 billion was seized and a couple arrested for laundering billions in cryptocurrency stolen from a 2016 hack, said the US Justice Department. **AP**

NALCO Q3

New Delhi: NALCO's Q3 net profit rose near 3.5-fold to ₹831 crore over a year ago.

CSR by MDL

New Delhi: Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders helped Cama & Albless Hospital set up an HDU and a neonatal ICU.

HPCL store

New Delhi: HPCL opened 2 non-fuel 'HaPpyShop' convenience stores, in Mumbai and Visakhapatnam. **ENS**

Chip sector: EU relaxes state aid rules

URSULA VON DER LEYEN
President, European Commission AP file

Brussels: The European Commission will ease funding rules for innovative semiconductor plants under plans announced on Tuesday as the European Union.

The European Chips Act will "enable 15 billion euros ($17 billion) in additional public and private investment by 2030," Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said. The move mirrors the $52 billion US Chips Act. **REUTERS**

MOVES NCLAT

Govt seeks to distribute ₹16K cr to IL&FS creditors

New Delhi: The government has moved the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal's Delhi bench, seeking approval for interim distribution of group assets worth Rs 16,200 crore to the creditors, including public funds, by March 31.

The government-appointed board of IL&FS had earlier approved the interim plan. The assets identified for interim distribution include Rs 10,950 crore in cash and Rs 5,250 crore worth of InvIT units held by a section of group firms. The NCLAT will consider the plea on February 24.

"By March 2022, it is estimated 249 IL&FS group entities would have been resolved by way of sale, liquidation/closure or transfer to the InvIT ... Rs 21,300 crore of assets ... will be available with various IL&FS group entities," the government said in an affidavit. **FE**

Vedanta nixes recast plan

New Delhi: Vedanta on Tuesday said that it will not undertake any corporate restructure, including demerger and spin-off, and continue with its existing structure.

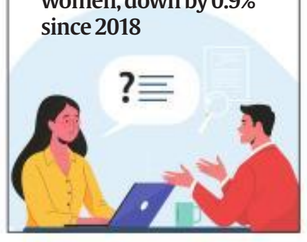
"The board of directors of the company have discussed various important policy matters and made ...decisions. Company has concluded this comprehensive review with inputs from various experts and advisors," it said. The board concludes the current structure is optimal and is commensurate with current scale and diversified lines of businesses. **PTI**

'MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES, BUT FEW AS BOARD CHAIRS'

Share of women in leadership positions in India Inc has grown, but fewer are serving as board chairpersons, said a Deloitte Global report

17.1% of board seats in India held by women in 2021, up by 9.4% in 2014

3.6% of board chairs are women, down by 0.9% since 2018



Solar tariff pooling: Updates to give price parity for discoms

KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE POWER Ministry is set to come out with rules to pool solar tariffs to accelerate the procurement of solar power by discoms. The Centre is also looking to boost bundling of renewable energy in existing thermal PPAs.

The proposal

The Centre plans to pool all solar power procurement in a given period and ask that all buyers pay an average of all the tariffs that are contracted in a pooling period. Therefore, if a PPA (power purchase agreement) is signed at an agreed tariff of Rs 2.5 (per unit) based on a discovered price by SECI (Solar Energy Corporation of India) and the discovered price in the next bid by SECI is Rs 2.4 per unit, then the tariffs will be averaged out with both the buyer under the new PPA and the earlier PPA paying the resultant average tariff. If in the next bid, the discovered tariff is lower, then the bids would be pooled again, leading to a new average tariff which would be applicable to earlier PPAs and the new PPA.

The requirement

A consistent fall in solar power tariffs due to falling price of solar panels has led to discoms waiting for a further fall in tariffs rather than contracting PPAs at current prices, said experts. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

Bharti Airtel board okays ₹7,500-cr fundraise

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel said on Tuesday its net profit during the December quarter declined 27 per cent sequentially to Rs 830 crore (after exceptional items). In the preceding quarter, it had booked a one-time gain of Rs 722 crore on account of spectrum sales to Jio.

Adjusting for this, the net profit in the preceding quarter would have stood at Rs 594 crore. During the December, 2021 quarter, the net profit before exceptional gain was Rs 807 crore.

Bharti's board on Tuesday approved an enabling provision for a fund-raise of up to Rs 7,500 crore through the issuance of various debt instruments to refinance borrowings. **FE**

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPRINTEDING ENGINEER (C) DR-XV
JAL SADAN ANNEXE, LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI- 110024
E-mail: eecdr15.djb@gmail.com

NIT No. 5/EE(C)DR-XV (2021-22)

Item No.	Name of work	Tender Amount	Tender fees	Completion Period	Date of Release in e-procurement	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement
1	Providing / Laying/ Jointing internal/ Peripheral sewer lines in Devli & Sangam Vihar GOC(U/A Col. reg. no. 354, 390, 397, 433, 492, 603, 656, 714, 813, 868 and 873, 1296 A&B) Tender Id 2022_DJB_215555_1	Rs. 23,47,84,435/-	Rs. 1500/- Non refundable	8 Months	07.02.2022 At 5.20 pm onwards	28.02.2022 at 3:10 PM

NIT alongwith all terms and conditions are available on the website http://delhi.govtprocurement.com

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1105(2021-22)

Sd/-
DEPUTY S.E.(C) DR.XV

Stop Corona, Wear Mask, Follow Soical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (T) M-6
D-BLOCK: MOTI NAGAR: NEW DELHI-110015

PRESS NIT NO. 69 (2021-22)

Item No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost	Date of release of tender in E-procurement solution	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through e procurement
1.	Replacement of old/rusted water lines in A Block Lok Vihar, Pitampura in Tri Nagar AC-16 under AEE (M-16).	Rs. 62,08,711/-	Tender ID No. 2022_DJB_216276_1 on 07.02.2022 at 03:31 P.M	18.02.2022 Upto 3:00 PM
2.	Providing and laying 450 mm dia outfall sewer line by trenchless technology from Rani Bagh market to 1600 mm dia trunk sewer line on Parwana Road under AEE M-15 in AC-15	Rs. 1,54,21,159/-	Tender ID No. 2022_DJB_216276_2 on 07.02.2022 at 03:37 P.M	18.02.2022 Upto 3:00 PM
3.	Replacement of old /damaged and fully silted sewer line By PENTODE METHOD from UGR BC (East block) to Delhi police colony, Shalimar Bagh, AC-14 under AEE(M)-14.	Item Rate EMD Rs. 1,70,000/-	Tender ID No. 2022_DJB_216276_5 on 07.02.2022 at 04:05 P.M	18.02.2022 Upto 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

Sd/-
(Trilok Chand)
Ex. Engineer (T) M-6

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1106(2021-22)

"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar,(U.P)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

सार्वजनिक सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि निम्नलिखित भूमि को नौएडा प्राधिकरण द्वारा आपसी समझौते के आधार पर क्रय किया जाना प्रस्तावित है –

क्र. सं.	ग्राम का नाम	खाता संख्या	खसरा संख्या	क्षेत्रफल (हे० में)	कृषक/आवेदक का नाम	क्रय करने का उद्देश्य
1.	बादौली बांगर	160	46ग	0.4810 में हिस्सानुसार	सुनील कुमार, सुन्दर सिंह, देवेन्द्र कुमार पुत्रगण ओमप्रकाश निवासी तुगलपुर। विनोद कुमार पुत्र शिवनारायण, निवासी ग्राम शफीपुर।	ग्रेटर नौएडा में एल०जी० रोटरी–नॉलेज पार्क–एवं नौएडा के सेक्टर 146 तथा 147 के मध्य हिण्डन नदी पर सेतु/एप्रोच रोड़ के निर्माण हेतु।
2.	मोहियापुर	117	39	0.7330 में से हिस्सानुसार	श्री रामवीर पुत्र जगमाल, निवासी ग्राम –मोहियापुर। श्री कपिल व विकास पुत्रगण रोहताश, निवासी ग्राम–मोहियापुर।	सैक्टर-163 व सेक्टर-164 के विकास एवं सड़क निर्माण हेतु।

उपरोक्त भूमि क्रय किये जाने में यदि किसी जन साधारण को संबंधित भूमि के सम्बन्ध में कोई दावा/आपत्ति देनी हो, तो सार्वजनिक प्रकाशन के 15 दिन के अन्दर तहसीलदार (भूलेख विभाग) अथवा विशेष कार्याधिकारी (डी०), नौएडा के कार्यालय में प्रस्तुत कर सकता है।

तहसीलदार
नौएडा

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
PUBLIC WORK DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR TENDER
Tender Notice No. 48 Year 2020-21

S.N.	Name of work	Estimated Cost
1	Improvement of Vadape Junction with C.C. Road Length 1.20 Km and width 15.00m S.H.84 In Tal. Bhiwandi, Dist. Thane.	8,35,69,288.00
2	Construction of Cement Concrete on Vadape Nimbavali Bhinar Road S.H.84 In 50/300 to Km. 51/400 In Tal. Bhiwandi, Dist. Thane.	7,45,90,652.00
3	S.R. Programme 2021-22 : Renewal and Strengthening with Bituminous Treatment to Chichavali Pachapur Shirgaon to S.H.81 Joining Road M.D.R.86 in Km. 0/000 to10/450 in Tal. Bhiwandi, Dist. Thane.	2,66,21,937.00
4	S.R. Programme 2021-22 : Renewal and Strengthening with Bituminous Treatment to Ambadi Dighashi Kunde Savroli Road M.D.R.47 in Km. 0/000 to 13/730 (In Patches) In Tal. Bhiwandi, Dist : Thane.	2,64,86,266.00
5	S.R. Programme 2021-22 : Renewal and Strengthening with Bituminous Treatment to Vadape Nimbvali Bhinar Road S.H.84 In Km. 51/400 to 53/200 In Tal. Bhiwandi, Dist. Thane. (In Patches)	2,64,62,681.00

Date of E-Tender Downloading : 10.02.2022 to 07.03.2022 Time 10.30 to 17.30 PM
Date of Pre-bid 22.02.2022 Time 2.10 PM
Date of E-Tender Opening : 09.03.2022, Time 12.30 PM (If Possible)

1. Tender form Condition of Contract Specification and Contract drawing can be downloaded from e-tendering portal of public work Department of Maharashtra i.e. https//mahatenders.gov.in
2. Tender Notice can be seen also on web site https//mahatenders.gov.in & www.Mahapwd.com

No./TD/Tender/786
Office of the Executive Engineer
P.W. Division No.1 Thane
Station Road
Date : 04.02.2022

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
P.W. Division No.1 Thane

DGIPR-2021-2022/4192

E-Procurement Notice
SHORT TERMS INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1.The Executive Engineer HPPWD Arki Distt. Solan H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system in 2 cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department

Sr no	Name of Work	Estimated cost	EMD	Cost of tender	Eligible class of contractor	Time
1.	Construction of Govt. Sr. secondary School Building at Loharghat, Tehsil Ramshear, Distt. Solan HP(SH:-C/o building portion, Site development, WS/SI,rain harvesting tank and septic tank etc.	1,99,38,218/-	2,31,882/-	5000/-	Class C	24Months
2.	Construction of office cum Residential accommodation for Agriculture extension office at Arki, Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan(SH:-C/o Civil works, Site development,Providing and fixing WS & SI construction of rain harvesting tank and septic tank 7 soak pit etc.	65,15,872/-	99,000/-	2000/-	Class C	12 Months.
3.	Construction of examination hall for Govt. senior secondary school(Boys)at Kunihar Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan HP(SH:-C/o Civil work and water supply and sanitary installation etc.	11,41,032/-	23,000/-	500/-	Class D	6Months

2. **Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website http://hptenders.gov.in
Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: http://hptenders.gov.in Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

Key Dates

1.	Date of Online Publication	9.02.2022 10.00 HRS
2.	Documents Download Start and End date	21.02.2022 10.30HRS upto 04.03.2022 18 HRS
3.	Bid Submission Start and End Date	21.02.2022 10.30HRS upto 04.03.2022 18 HRS
4	Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of tender Documents	05.03.2022. up to 11HRS
5	Date of Technical Bid opening ,Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid	05.03.2022 11.30 HRS

The tender documents shall be uploaded online in 2 cover:

i) Cover I shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/Eligibility information"

ii) Cover 2 shall contain BOQ/Financial Bid where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

1. Submission of Original Documents: The bidders are required to submit(a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid documents and(b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit(EMD) and other Technical Documents in o/o the Executive Engineer, HP,PWD, Arki Divn. HP as specified in Key dates at Sr.NO.4 on Tender Opening Date
2. failing which the bids will be declared non responsive,
6. BID OPENING DETAILS The bids shall be opend on 05.03.2022 .at 11.30HRS in the office of Executive Engineer,HP,PWD,Arki divn./Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle, HP,PWD, Solan HP by the uthorized officer. In their interest the tenderer are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.
8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Executive Engineer
HPPWD Division Arki
Distt. Solan H.P
on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

6750/HP

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
10-3-311/A, CASTLE HILLS, MASAB TANK, HYDERABAD - 500 028
CIN: L13100TG1958GOI001674

E-AUCTION SALE OF ROUGH DIAMONDS FROM NMDC DIAMOND MINING PROJECT, MAJHGAWAN,PANNA

NMDC will display lots of rough diamonds of about 8336.45 carats from 11/02/2022 onwards on appointment basis at NMDC Diamond Mining Project, Majhgawan, Panna and Surat to be sold through e-auction conducted by M/s MSTC Limited.

For further details regarding Time of display, E-Auction and admission procedure, buyers may visit NMDC Website: **www.nmdc.co.in** or CGM, Panna at 07732-271234 or contact DGM (Coml), Panna at mobile no. +91-6266201192 or HO,Hyderabad at mobile no.+91-9490759607 M/s MSTC Limited +91-9650554645/ +91-6281048513.

New Address of Commercial Department of South Eastern Railway

All units of Commercial Head Office of South Eastern Railway which were previously functioning at New Koilaghat Building (8th, 9th, 10th & 11th floor), 14, Strand Road, Kolkata - 700001 have now been shifted to South Eastern Railway Headquarters Complex at Garden Reach.

The new address of the Commercial Department under Principal Chief Commercial Manager, South Eastern Railway is **New Administrative Building (2nd floor), South Eastern Railway, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata - 700043.**

PR-613 **Principal Chief Commercial Manager**

South Eastern Railway
We serve with a smile

A.P.TOWNSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
4th Floor, Bus Bhavan, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Request for Proposal Notification Dt: 07.02.2022

The RFP proposals invited for providing STP 1) ASR Nagar (0.20 MLD) in GVMC ULB, 2) AtchauLova-I (1.00 MLD) 3) AtchauLova-II (1.00 MLD) in GVMC ULB 4) Narsipatnam -I (0.60 MLD), 5) Narsipatnam-II (0.30 MLD) in Narsipatnam ULB and 6) Yelamanchili (0.10 MLD) in Yelamanchili ULB (Total-3.30 MLD) in Visakhapatnam District vide RFP.Notice.No.04/CTO-I/ APTIDCO/20-21, Dt:07.02.2022 (2nd call) on E-Procurement Platform **http://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.** if any other particulars please contact Concern CTO-1 during office working hours.

Sd/- Managing Director, APTIDCO, Vijayawada.

DIPR No.670PP/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22, Dt.08/02/2022

Dakshin Gujarat Vij Company Ltd.
CIN U40102GJ2003SGC042909
Regd. & Corp. Office: 'Urja Sadan', Nana Varachha Road, Kapodara Char Rasta, Surat 395 006 GUJARAT

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

DGVCL Toll Free No. 19123 (or 1800 233 3003)

Tender Notice

Details for the tender mentioned hereunder are available on www.dgvcl.com (for view and download tender documents) and www.dgvcl.nprocure.com (for view, download and online tender submission).

Sr. No.	Tender No.
1	DGVCL/SP/2248/11KV Polymeric Surge Arrester

Note : Bidders may visit the Company website/s for regular updates till opening of the tender.

CE (P), DGVCL, Surat.

GUJARAT MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Cujarat Undertaking)
Regd. Office: Block No. 14/1,
Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan. Sector· 10, Gandhinagar
Ph: 079-23250767, 23250766, 23257698

TENDER NOTICE NO: D-34/2021-22

Tenders are invited online from reputed Manufacturers / formulators/ direct importers/authorizd Dealers/ Distributor for Purchase of **Dolutegravir 50mg Tablet** On quantity Contract basis and details of specification, quantity is available on, http://gmscl.gujarat.gov.in All tender documents can be downloaded free on the website: http://gmscl.nprocure.com Interested bidders are requested ro submit the tender through e-tender process.

Duration of downloading of tender document (online):- 05/02/2022 to 15/02/2022 up to 18.00 Hrs.

Last date for Submission (online): **15/01/2022** up to 18-00 HRS
Last date for submission of physical document: **16/02/2022** upto12:00 HRS
Opening of Teennical Bid-Date (online) **16/01/2022**: At 13-00 HRS.

INF/4004/21-22 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

Sr. DEE-TRS-GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender against Tender No. **230-TRS-GZB-2019-20-24-2RT.** The details are as under:

Name of the work	'Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for two years of EOT Cranes with stand by spare installed in Electric Loco Shed, Ghaziabad.'
Approx. cost of work	₹ 14,21,077.35
Earnest Money	₹ 28,400.00
Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender	04.03.2022 (11:00 Hrs.)
Date & Time of opening of tender document	04.03.2022 (After 11:00 Hrs.)
Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

- The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in e-tender system.
- For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.
- No manual offers are acceptable.
- Cost of Tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

No. 230-TRS-GZB-2019-20-24-2RT
Dated : 08.03.2022 275/2022

Serving Customers With A Smile

OFFICE OF MEMBER SECRETARY, RAJASTHAN MEDICARE RELIEF SOCIETY MAHARANA BHUPAL GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL, UDAIPUR

No./RMRS/2021-22/908 Dated : 03/02/2022

Notice Inviting Bid no 18/02-02-2022

(NIB no GHU2122A0089.....)

Following bids at Member Secretary, RMRS, Maharana Bhupal Govt. Hospital, Udaipur is invited from interested bidders upto closing date. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement Portal (**http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in of the state.

Item no. 1 UBN no.(GHU2122GLOB00115)	Item no. 9 UBN no.(GHU2122GSOB00123)
Item no. 2 UBN no.(GHU2122GLOB00116)	Item no. 10 UBN no.(GHU2122WSRC00124)
Item no. 3 UBN no.(GHU2122GLOB00117)	Item no. 11 UBN no.(GHU2122GLOB00125)
Item no. 4 UBN no.(GHU2122GLOB00118)	Item no. 12 UBN no.(GHU2122GLRC00126)
Item no. 5 UBN no.(GHU2122WSRC00119)	Item no. 13 UBN no.(GHU2122GLRC00127)
Item no. 6 UBN no.(GHU2122GLOB00120)	Item no. 14 UBN no.(GHU2122GLRC00128)
Item no. 7 UBN no.(GHU2122GSRC00121)	Item no. 15 UBN no.(GHU2122SLRC00129)
Item no. 8 UBN no.(GHU2122GSRC00122)	

Sd/-
Member Secretary
Rajasthan Medicare Relief Society
Maharana Bhupal Govt. Hospital, Udaipur

DIPR/C/1480/2022

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unidentified dead body of female **Namely:** Unknown **s/o:** Unknown, **R/o :** Unknown, **Age:** about 60/65 years, **Height:** 5'1", **Complexion**: Fair, **Wearing**: Grey Colour Kurta and black colour jarsi and Dark grey colour pant, who was found in East Passenger Hall, in front of Auto Taxi Stand, Delhi. In this regard a case **DD No. 17A dated. 04.02.2022 has been registered at PS: Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi**

Any person having any information or clue about the above deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

Sd/- SHO
P. S: Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi
DP/33/RLY/2022(UIDB) **Tel. 011-23961522**

RailTel
(A Government of India Undertaking)
CIN No L64202DL2000GOI107905

TENDER No. RCIL/TRD/NR/2021-22/OT-2 RailTel/Northern Region invites E-tenders from eligible bidders for **"TRD work in connection with Up-gradation of Signalling from Standard-I to Standard II(R) with Electronic Interlocking at five stations (i.e. Verka Jn. Kathunangal, Jaintipura, Batala and Chhina) in Amritsar–Pathankot section of Firozpur Division, Northern Railway"** Tender Notice & tender document are available on **www.ireps.gov.in** Addendum/ corrigendum will be uploaded on IREPS portal only.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
S&T Branch
OPEN TENDER

Invitation of E-tender on behalf of the President of India acting through **Sr. Divisional Engineer Signal & Telecom (Co-Ordination), West Central Railway, Jabalpur** for the following works:- **NIT No.:** JBP-N-SIG-TENDER-2022-3. **Name of work with location: Shifting of relay hut & POLB at LC 11 under the ROB work of Jabalpur Division on West Central Railway. Approx. cost of the work:** ₹ 1,16,24,554.37. **Cost of Tender form:** 00. **Address of the office of Railway:** Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)'s Office, 1st Floor, DRM Building, Jabalpur. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,08,100/-. **Completion Period:** 4 Months. **Date & Time for Closing & Opening of Tender:** Closing at 15.00 Hrs. on 10.03.2022 & Opening after 15.00 Hrs. The complete information of the above 'e-tender' is available on website **https://ireps.gov.in** and also placed on notice board of the Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) Office, West Central Railway, Jabalpur. Tenders other than in the form of e-bids shall not be accepted against above tender.

DRM (S&T), W.C.Rly., Jabalpur.

कोरोना से बनाना है दूरी तो वैक्सीन लगवाना है जरूरी।

WESTERN RAILWAY
PROVISION OF KAVACH

Tender No. EPC_WR_SnT_01 R. Date : 07.02.2022. Principal Chief Signal and Telecom Engineer, 5th Floor, Station Building, Churchgate, Western Railway, Mumbai - 400020 invites, E-Tender Bidders will be able to submit their original /revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **Name of work : Provision of KAVACH (Formerly known as Train Collision Avoidance System - TCAS) andlaying of 48 Fiber Armoured OFC (in two routes) in connection with work of raising of "Speedup to 160 kmph on 303 KM Absolute Block Section of Vadodara - Ratlam - Nagda on New Delhi - Mumbai route of Western Railway. Approx. Cost of Work : Rs. 1511065636/-. EMD : Rs. 7555400/-. Date & Time for submission of e-Tender and opening of e-tender : Up to 31.05.2022 and 14.06.2022 @ 15.00 hours. Website particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc. : www.ireps.gov.in** at above office address. 0699

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EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

The DRM (Commercial)/SEE for and on behalf of the President of India Invites open e-tender for the following work. The last date of online tendering is 08.03.2022 up to 15:00 hrs. All information and tender documents related to E-tender is available on Website: **www.ireps.gov.in 1. Name of work:** Award of contract for Sole advertisement rights of Vinyl/sticker at exterior side of 1400 HP Rake of DEMU/MEMU trains for a period of three (03) years., **Approx cost (In Rs.):** 32,41,426, **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 64, 900, **Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.):** 3,000, **2. Name of work:** Award of contract for Sole advertisement rights of Vinyl/sticker at exterior side of 1600 HP Rake of DEMU/MEMU trains for a period of three (03) years., **Approx cost (In Rs.):** 43,75,258, **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 87,600, **Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.):** 3,000, **3. Name of work:** Award of contract for Sole advertisement rights of Vinyl/sticker at exterior side of Conventional Rake of DEMU/MEMU trains for a period of three (03) years., **Approx cost (In Rs.):** 5,60,247, **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 11,300, **Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.):** 3,000 The above tender notice is available on website:-**www.ireps.gov.in RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER:-** Railway administration reserves the right to postpone/modify or to cancel the above tender without assigning any reasons.

Divisional Railway Manager/Commercial
E.C. Railway, Sonpur
PR/01638/SEE/COML/T/21-22/44

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

The **Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) /E.C.Railway/Samastipur** for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works **in E-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways:- 1. Tender Notice No.:** TC-14-2022-SPJ, **Name of work:** Improvement and regrading to LC approach road damaged due to CTR (P) works in NKE-PNYA section. **Tender Value (in Rs.):** 2,24,61,994.03, **Earnest Money (in Rs.):** 2,62,300.00, **Completion period of the work:** 08 Months, **2. Tender Notice No.:** TC-15-2022-SPJ, **Name of work:** Improvement of approach road of LC No.25 and 25A in Sitamarhi-Raxaul section. **Tender Value (in Rs.):** 63,69,385.75, **Earnest Money (in Rs.):** 1,27,400.00, **Completion period of the work:** 04 Months, **(1) Last Date & time for receiving of Tender in E-Tender mode on IREPS web portal:** - 28/02/2022 upto 12:00 hours. **(2) Opening Date & time for E-Tender:** 28/02/2022 after 12:00 hours. **(3) Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on Website: www.ireps.gov.in** Amendments / modifications if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be uploaded in the website.

Divisional Engineer/Co-ord
E.C.Railway/Samastipur
PR/01641/SPJ/ENGG/T/21-22/40

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

DRM (Electrical)/ECR/ Dhanbad for and behalf of the President of India invites e-Tender for execution of the following works. **(1) (i) E-Tender No.:** EL/26/OPEN/2021-22, **(ii) Name of the work with location and Completion of Work:** Electrical work in connection with (A) Replacement of old lever frames of remaining yard/cabins at PTRU (B) BRKA: Improvement and renovation of service building of primary rake maintenance (PRM) at Barkakana depot (C) Replacement of overhead transmission line with underground cables at different electric substations over Dhanbad Division (D) Replacement of damaged power supply cables of signaling system at different stations over Dhanbad Division (Completion period: 06 Month) **(iii) Approx. Cost of the work:** Rs. 66,09,589.85, **(iv) Earnest Money to be deposited:** Rs. 1,32,200.00, **(2) (i) E-Tender No.:** EL/27/OPEN/2021-22, **(ii) Name of the work with location and Completion of Work:** Electrical work in connection with (A) Improvement of Front Facade of DRM office Dhanbad (B) Provision of new SCADA system at BRKA as per RDSO specification No. TI/SPC/RCC/ SCADA/0130(Rev.2) with A&C slip No. 1 (C) KTE:- Yard remodeling of KTH along with removal of DDS and conversion of single line working into double line (D) Upgradation /Improvement of illumination level of loco sheds with inspection pits at Diesel Shed, PTRU (E) GMO:- Up gradation of electric loco shed of GMO. (Completion period: 06 Months) **(iii) Approx. Cost of the work:** Rs. 70,34,653.40, **(iv) Earnest Money to be deposited:** Rs. 1,40,700.00, **(3) Date & Time for submission of closing and opening of e-tender:** Closing of e-Tender: On 03.03.2022 at 11:00 Hrs., Opening of e-Tender: On 03.03.2022 after 11:00 Hrs., **(4) Website particulars:** website: **www.ireps.gov.in** Manual offers are not allowed against e-Tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Elect.)
East Central Railway, Dhanbad
PR/01633/DHN/ENGG/T/21-22/52

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Bid Notice

Bid Notice No.-C/470/SBD/GMU/D/SON/2022

1. For and on behalf of the President of India, Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Sonpur Division, East Central Railway invites sealed Bid on Open, Competitive, Single stage single packet tender system, from food and catering service providers for "Provision of Catering Service at General Minor Unit (GMU) at stations (Shahpur Patoree, Maheshkhunt, Dighwara, Bachwara, Thanabihpur, Mohiuddin Nagar, Desari, Caragola Road, Kursela, Goraul, Khudirambose Pusa & Mehnar road) of Category D. Bids invited from Individuals/Partnership firms/Companies/Registered sole-proprietor firm/Co-operatives/Self Helps Groups. **2. Bid Documents:** The interested bidders may purchase 'Bid Document' which can be obtained between 10:00 hrs and 17:00 hrs on all working days from 11.02.2022 to 03.03.2022 in person from the Railway office at the address given in paragraph 5 below, on payment of non-refundable document fee. **Bid document** can also be downloaded from the website **www.ecr.indianrailways.gov.in** and the bids can be submitted on the downloaded document along with a separate Demand Draft towards the cost of bidding documents at the time of bidding. **3. Receipt of Bids:** The sealed bid will be dropped by the bidders or their representatives on 04.03.2022 till 12:30 pm in the box specified at the address given in para 05. The bids shall be opened on the same day (dated 04.03.2022) at 15:00 in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives. **4.** Railway reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof. **Detailed information is available on the website: www.ecr.indianrailways.gov.in 5. Address for Communication:** Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Sonpur Division, East Central Railway, PO+PS: Sonpur, Dist : Saran (Bihar) PIN-841101 Tel: 06158-221646, Fax: 06158-221646 Email: **srdcmsonpur@gmail.com**

Divisional Railway Manager (C)
Sonpur Division
PR/01639/SEE/COML/T/21-22/60

WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION
SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No. S&T/BRC/21-22/32/SIG Date: 04.02.2022; Sr. DSTE/ Vadodara acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against **Tender No. SandT_BRC_21-22_32_SIG.** Bidders will be able to submit their original / revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **(1) Name of work with its location:** Signalling work for **"Shifting of Signalling cable on Down side in DFCCIL ROW between Km 306/23-312/6 (Panoli-Ankleshwar) in connection with new Up & Down Connecting lines between Panoli-Sanjali section"** in connection with the work of "Design, Supply, Installation, Programming, Testing and commissioning of Electronic Interlocking (E.I) system at PANOLI along with outdoor S&T work in connection with "Proposed modification in Panoli Yard due to Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd. Alignment"", **(2) Approx. cost of the work:** ₹ 1,07,48,123.17; **(3) Earnest Money to be deposit:** ₹ 2,03,800.00; **(4) Date & time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender:** 04.03.2022 @ 15:00 Hours and 04.03.2022 @ 15:30 Hours; **(5) Web side particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc. http://www.ireps.gov.in** Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, 2nd Floor - Annex Building, DRM's Office, Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara - 390 004 233

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EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Open E-Tender Notice

Open E-tender Notice No.11SEE21-22

The DRM (Engg.)/SEE for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Tenders for the following works. The last date of online E-tendering is 28.02.2022 up to13:00 hrs. All information and tender documents related to E-tender is available on website - **www.ireps.gov.in (1) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 9362 Square feet Railway land in the section Thanabihpur under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.6,05,605.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.60,600.00., **(2) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 5778.12 Square feet Railway land at Mahesh Khunt, North of Gate No. 25/C, in the section Mahesh Khunt under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.5,36,260.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.53,600.00., **(3) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 6000 Square feet Railway land at Lalitpur in the section Lalitpur under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.1,06,480.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.10,600.00., **(4) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 12050 Square feet Railway land at Lalitpur New South to Railway crossing in the section New Lalitpur under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.2,68,862.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.26,900.00., **(5) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 6359.16 Square feet Railway land at Mahesh Khunt in the section Mahesh Khunt under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.5,98,950.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.59,900.00., **(6) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 375.50 Square feet Railway land at Jhanjharpur Road Imli Chowk in the section Thanabihpur under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.73,205.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.7,300.00., **(7) Name of work:** Tahbazari right of 5550 Square feet Railway land at High Level on abandoned ghat line between Alalpur – jahanvee Chowk in the Section Thanabihpur under jurisdiction of ADEN/THB for the period 36 months (from 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2025). **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.6,67,097.00., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.66,700.00., **(8) Name of work:** Barauni-Kitihar Section: Provision of covering, drain, and Sump to improve dranage at LC No. 5C, 4E, 5 and 5F newly constructed LHS. **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.98,72,007.50., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.1,97,500.00., **(9) Name of work:** Left over work for the Construction for Embankment for track and Road in connection with Junction arrangement work within the Railway boundary at Dinkar Gram Simaria Station for the proposed extension of Barauni Thermal Power Station on deposit basis. **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.6,05,98,178.80., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.4,53,000.00., **(10) Name of work:** At Sarai :- Construction of Goods office with merchant room, labour huts, toilet complexes and water booths. **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.96,22,766.79., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.1,92,500.00., **(11) Name of work:** At Naziganj:- Provision of directional loop line. **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.2,82,04,563.68., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.2,91,000.00., **(12) Name of work:** At Sonpur : Provision of Water supply arrangement in connection with coach washing cleaning plant (Mechanised) – 01 No. in Demu shed Sonpur. **Approx. cost (In Rs.):** Rs.51,94,049.80., **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** Rs.1,03,900.00., The above tender notice is available on website **www.ireps.gov.in** RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER: Railway Administration reserves the right to postpone /modify or to cancel any one or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.

Divisional Railway Manager/ENGG/Sonpur
PR/01634/SEE/ENGG/T/21-22/108

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, साहेबगंज

अति अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ई– निविदा सूचना संख्या – **RDD/SD/SAHIBGANJ/13/2021-22**

1. कार्य की विस्तृत विवरणी:

क्र०सं०	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि	अग्रधन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	साहेबगंज जिला के बरहरवा प्रखण्डन्तर्गत ग्राम नुराई से हमनपुर अवराटोला के बीच अतरसा नाला में उच्चस्तरीय पुल निर्माण	रू0 3,40,09,495.00	रू0 6,81,000.00	10000.00 रूपये	18 माह
2	साहेबगंज जिला के बोरियो प्रखण्ड अंतर्गत ग्राम बांझी एवं केन्दुआ के बीच नदी पर उच्चस्तरीय पुल निर्माण	रू0 3,45,89,049.00	रू0 6,92,000.00	10000.00 रूपये	18 माह

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि – 14.02.2022
3. ई–निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय – 22.02.2022 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक
4. ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, साहेबगंज/मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रक्षेत्र, एफ0 एफ0 पी0 भवन, धुर्वा, राँची में निविदा शुल्क, अग्रध

States want AIFF to give financial support like BCCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE ALL India Football Federation's member associations have asked its parent body to take a leaf out of the BCCI's book when it comes to granting monetary aid to affiliated states. The world's richest cricket board was cited as example by the member associations during the AIFF's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which was held last Saturday in Mumbai.

"Some members cited examples of BCCI's support to the state associations in terms of financial support, and urged the AIFF to help them with adequate funds to continue the development of football in their respective states," an federation insider told PTI on conditions of anonymity. AIFF president Praful Patel said the matter will be "reviewed for sure", but at the same time he also urged the associations to build on a working relationship and seek support from their respective state governments.

Patel also pointed out the support from the governments in Odisha, Jharkhand, Kerala and West Bengal for the development of football. During the AGM, Patel said that the AIFF will be sanctioning financial grant to the state associations. "Under exceptional circumstances, we did offer a COVID solidarity fund last year, and we will be working on our budget to stand with the state associations again this year," he said.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that N A Harris, the president of the Karnataka State Football Association (KSFA), wanted the AGM to pass a special resolution that allows Patel to continue for a fourth term as AIFF chief, a suggestion that was rejected by the incumbent as it is in violation of the Sports Code. AIFF sources said Harris had argued that the AGM being the most powerful body had the power to pass a resolution. Some members had raised the matter of election, which has been pending for more than a year, and how to go about the pending case. It was then decided to form a three-member committee to expedite the matter, concerning the election of office bearers of the AIFF, which has been pending before the Supreme Court.

"The AIFF elections are currently a matter of sub-judice, and Patel informed the House about his unwillingness to continue for an extended term. "Patel also stated that the AIFF had approached the Supreme Court in 2020 on whether the federation should conduct the election as per the old constitution, or wait for the new constitution to be issued, and awaits a decision on the matter," a member in the know of things said. In its AGM held in December 2020, the AIFF's general house had approved the extension of the term of the executive committee till the Supreme Court decides on a pending case related to the framing of a new constitution and election process.

How a Saudi-backed venture can upset golf's established order

A much bigger Asian Tour, built on the kingdom's financial backing, threatens to lure marquee players from US and European circuits

TUSHAR BHADURI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE PGA Tour with the DP World Tour (formerly known as the European Tour) have been the predominant golf circuits in the world for the last several decades. The two, especially the US league, are considered the holy grail for golfers around the world.

But now, their monopoly is set to be challenged and it is Saudi money that's behind the possible upheaval.

What's happening?

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), which bankrolled the takeover of English Premier League club Newcastle United last year, has proposed a much bigger Asian Tour, at least in monetary terms. The investment of more than $300 million in the venture will have 10 events, larger guaranteed sums for the players, limited fields, 54-hole tournaments with no cuts, and team competition.

Former World No. 1 Greg Norman has been appointed CEO of LIV Golf Investments, the Saudi-backed company that is trying to lure the highest-profile golfers from the two bigger tours with exorbitant sums. Many of them have joined the venture and even signed Non-Disclosure Agreements.

Why is this development significant?

It threatens the hegemony of the PGA Tour and DP World Tour. The two provide the biggest prize money and boast of the biggest names in the game competing on the most hallowed golf courses in the world, but they cannot compete with the seemingly- unlimited Saudi coffers. The new venture, scheduled to start next month in Thailand, is short on detail as yet, but already there is an event lined up in England, at the proverbial heart of the old order, that too in the week preceding the US Open, one of golf's four Majors. Going beyond the Asian geographical boundaries shows that the fight is for control of the game and challenging the status quo. Norman, meanwhile, insists that the main motivation is to "grow the game of golf." He adds that "this is just the beginning" and "we're in this for the good of the game."

What is there in it for the elite players?

According to six-time Major winner **Phil Mickelson**, "pretty much every player in the top 100 in the world has been contacted."

With the sums of money reportedly being offered to join the new venture, it's no surprise that many golfers will be willing. The PGA Tour doesn't offer appearance money (other circuits do, to attract big names), and missing the cut deprives them of a share of the prize money. But here, there is a promise of guaranteed payouts. Many of the players approached may be in their late 40s or even early 50s and may not have too many years left at the top. They would be tempted to make the most of any big pay day.

Even though they may be affiliated with one or more tours, professional golfers don't consider themselves employees but 'independent contractors', hence are free to play wherever returns are highest. Mickelson, one of the greats of the game, has several complaints about the way the PGA Tour treats its players, regardless of the impressive prize money.

"The players don't have access to their own media. If the Tour wanted to end any threat, they could just hand back the media rights to the players. But they would rather throw $25 million here and $40 million there than give back the roughly $20 billion in digital assets they control. Or give up access to the $50-plus million they make every year on their own media channel," he told Golf Digest.

"There are many issues but that is one of the biggest. It's not enough that they are sitting on hundreds of millions of digital moments. They also have access to my shots – access I do not have. They also charge companies to use shots I have hit."

The market-disrupting world of NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) and sports collectibles, which now include "video highlights", also adds intrigue to ownership of these TV footage rights. Bryson DeChambeau sold four NFTs of his own, but a marketplace for golf holds huge potential.

The PGA Tour players are also required to seek permission to appear at competing events, and Mickelson says all these stipulations reek of "greed beyond obnoxious."

How have the established tours reacted?

Not much in the form of official reaction, but there's talk of player bans, and keeping those who join the new venture out from the Ryder Cup, one of the biggest and most followed events in the game, as both players and future captains. Also, the two big tours have tried to increase prize money to keep their flock together.

The PGA Tour has started the Player Impact Programme, which rewards golfers for favourably influencing fans and followers on social media. It's considered a bid to placate their most high-profile assets from looking elsewhere.

What has been the response from the upstarts?

LIV Golf Investments is talking a good fight. Though there's not much clarity about their plans, Norman insists "of course, there are going to be things announced in the future. Our mission is to make sure this platform is firmly cemented in the world of golf… We want to get the message out there that it's not specifically for the Asian region, and that's critically important for everybody to understand."

"It's disappointing to see some of the attacks that have been taking place unwarrantedly. If you pre-judge anybody without knowing the facts, then shame on you," he added.

What have been the bigger concerns about the new venture?

The Saudi government has, of late, invested a lot of money in sport – football, motorsport, boxing and even WWE – to spruce up its image. Critics who flay the kingdom's allegedly poor human rights record and blame the ruling family for the death of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, call this phenomenon 'sportswashing'. The proposed golfing league is seen as another such attempt. The players who are keen on joining the new venture are quick to point out that they are "not a politician" and free to pick up big cheques for their sporting prowess.

One has seen something similar in the cricket world during the 1970s in the form of Kerry Packer's World Series. It staged rebel matches parallel to official ones before being co-opted into the fold.

It remains to be seen how the fight to control the fairways and greens plays out.

India outclass France to open Pro League campaign

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
FEBRUARY 8

Harmanpreet Singh and Varun Kumar got the first two goals in the match from penalty corners before Shamsher Singh, Mandeep Singh and Akashdeep Singh found the target to secure a thoroughly one-sided verdict.

AFTER THE high of the Olympic bronze medal in Tokyo, the Indian men's hockey team started 2022 in style, thrashing France 5-0 in their opening match of the FIH Pro League at Potchefstroom, South Africa, on Tuesday.

Harmanpreet Singh and Varun Kumar got the first two goals from penalty corners before Shamsher Singh, Mandeep Singh and Akashdeep Singh found the target to secure a thoroughly one-sided verdict.

India face hosts South Africa in their next FIH Pro League encounter on Wednesday. The Indians, under head coach Graham Reid, took time to get into groove as the French exerted some pressure in the opening quarter, which ended goalless.

The few opportunities that India got – including two successive penalty corners - were repelled by resolute defending or wasted by errant shooting. It was in the second period that the floodgates opened with Harmanpreet (21st minute) and Varun (24th) getting on the scoresheet through set-pieces, both finding the target with low shots to the goalkeeper Arthur Thieffry's right. and Shamsher capping a quick counterattack with India's third goal, the final pass coming from Abhishek.

The second half started with Mandeep Singh making it 4-0 from an assist by skipper Manpreet Singh in the 32nd minute. Akashdeep, playing his 200th match for India, then found the target with a reverse hit in the 41st.

France tried to make some sort of comeback in the final quarter and earned back-to-back penalty corners in the 48th minute, but could not reduce the margin. The Indians too couldn't add to their tally in the last 15 minutes but the final scoreline would be a satisfactory one against a team ranked 13th in the world which entered the FIH Pro League after Canada pulled out due to Covid-19 concerns.

Once the Indian team got into rhythm, they kept the French defence under relentless pressure. When the first half ended, India had had 14 shots at goal, with their opponents managing just five.

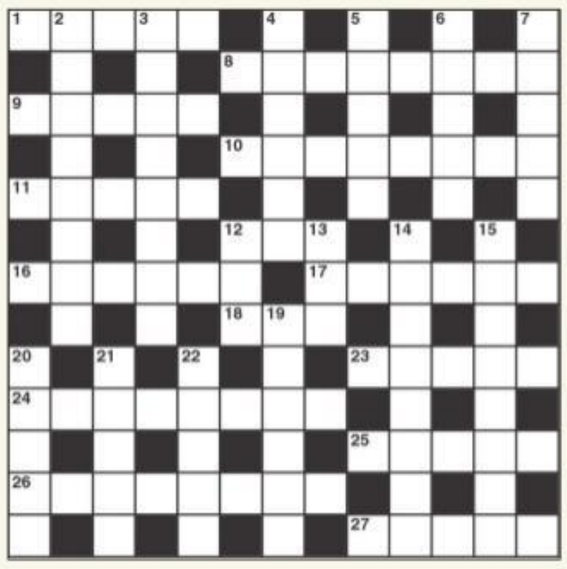
Australian Reid's wards converted two of their four penalty corners while the European team failed to make use of the three they got.

By the time the game ended, the Indians had taken 22 attempts at goal, compared to only nine by the French.

Though possession was evenly distributed, the Olympic medallists made much better use of the ball, making as many as 34 circle penetrations as against 26 by the opponents.

India converted two of their four penalty corners in a facile 5-0 win over France in their opening match of the FIH Pro League. *Hockey India/Twitter*

CROSSWORD 4659



ACROSS
1 Point to point express (5)
8 Furious ace fined for open disobedience (8)
9 The original winner (5)
10 Provided with wings but powerless to use them? (8)
11 Sounds tired of regular meals (5)
12 Stray from the proper route (3)
16 Goods thrown out from planes in the morning (6)
17 An aggressive female runner (6)
18 Runabout vessel (3)
23 Wrest apart and scatter (5)
24 First phase of the Stone Age (5,3)
25 First jetliner to arrive at airport terminal (5)
26 Some rags torn from very thin material (8)
27 Condition of the nation (5)

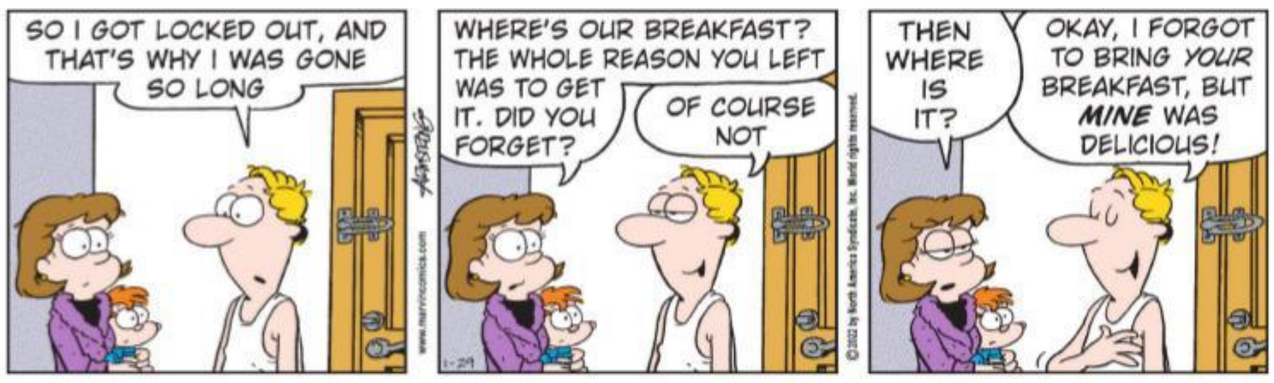
DOWN
2 Inside man (8)
3 Busts are developed but not easily perceived (8)
4 Superior Spanish gentleman I accommodated (6)
5 Stiff attire I'd put on (5)
6 Girl has love in her heart for another (5)
7 Repairs many objects (5)
12 One may see one in the museum of Natural History (3)
13 Sped but wasn't really fast (3)
14 Something you may want to catch. Call in the Army (4,4)
15 Part of 'The Clock' symphony? (8)
19 Something very like a campanologist (6)
20 States the time for practice (5)
21 She is in time (5)
22 Directions to a friend to find an Asian country (5)

Solutions Crossword 4658: Across: 1 Fatal error, 6 Taxi, 10 Turns, 11 Waterfall, 12 Estonian, 13 Agent, 15 Unifies, 17 Slimmer, 19 Baggage, 21 Petunia, 22 Alibi, 24 Shove off, 27 Train fare, 28 Taste, 29 Reel, 30 Beaten down. **Down:** 1 Fate, 2 Thrashing, 3 Lasso, 4 Rowdies, 5 Outings, 7 Adage, 8 Idle threat, 9 Organist, 14 Dumb waiter, 16 Italians, 18 Manifesto, 20 Enslave, 21 Project, 23 Irate, 25 Eaten, 26 Neon.

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)
Financial decisions are a necessary preliminary to the formulation of long-term plans. In other words, the inevitable questions to be asked of anything are how much will it cost and can I afford it? You should seize a romantic offer soon , as long as you've checked out the pros and cons.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Whatever occurred around this time last month should now be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It's important that you don't persist with trials and tribulations beyond their allotted span. In other words, deal with personal problems now, immediately.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Your current secretive phase is due to continue for some weeks yet, although changes this week will see you more ready to disclose confidential information. Emotionally, you can look towards stable relationships and faithful friends as your best bet.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Your sociable stars remain strong. The ideal way to exploit your current celestial influences is to involve yourself in group and community enterprises, perhaps to do with the environment or another worthy cause. What you really want to do is make the world a better place, or at least your small corner of it.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
For some reason your private entanglements and public activities seem to be dovetailing. You must prove that you are capable of handling responsibilities across the board. It's not enough just to deal with details which concern you and nobody else.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Now that the Sun has altered its position you must push yourself forward. This particular planetary picture brings out your maternal qualities, even if you're a full-blooded male. By this I mean that you'll be taking sensitive and defenceless folk under your wing over the next few weeks.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Libra is one of the three Air signs, which means that by nature you are generous and sometimes impractical. My advice at the moment is that it is fine to be a lazy, languid, lugubrious Libran and to resist all pressure to the contrary, and that people who don't like that can lump it.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)
You may be irritated by the fact that partners are apparently making the running at home or in the family. Yet, why don't you stop and think? All you need to do is propose a radically different way of running your routine and all your arrangements will fall into place very favourably.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
If your desire to be more independent necessitates an upheaval on the home front, then so much the better. Happily, Venus is now safeguarding your emotional interests and making it quite acceptable to take personal risks, as long as you are aware of the consequences.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
The problem in your horoscope lies not in the sections of your chart ruling money, but in that signifying speculation and risks. You're supposed to be a past master at handling finances, but right now you appear desperate for reassurance. Perhaps, though, you can reassure yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Relationships with youthful relatives and children should be showing signs of improvement. One way or another, perhaps through work, younger people are bound to cross your path over the next two weeks, probably exerting a greater influence on your thinking.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Certain planetary aspects still signify that it would be wiser to go the whole hog and lay all your trump cards on the table, especially if family concerns are paramount. Compromise is all very well, but other people must recognise and respect your needs.

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.

A_____ can kill quicker than a germ. - John Steinbeck (3,4)

DMNAO
EIKNLU
BELSS
AEFILD

SOLUTION: NOMAD/MONAD, BLESS, UNLIKE, AFIELD/FAILED
Answer: A **sad soul** can kill quicker than a germ. - John Steinbeck

SUDOKU 4740

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4739

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

> It's impossible to say. It's a part of communication, propaganda, from the Chinese Olympic Committee. It's important, I think, for the Chinese Olympic Committee, for the Communist Party and for many people in China to try to show: 'No, there is no Peng Shuai affair.'"
>
> **MARC VENTOUILLAC,**
> ONE OF THE TWO JOURNALISTS WHO SPOKE TO PENG SHUAI

BRIEFLY

Ramkumar exits Bengaluru Open

Bengaluru: Prajnesh Gunneswaran emerged as the only Indian to manage a win in the singles main draw of the Bengaluru Open as Ramkumar Ramanathan and Arjun Kadhe made first-round exits, along with two other home players, here on Tuesday. The left-handed Gunneswaran, who returned aggressively, beat French player Mathias Bourgue 7-6(4), 6-2 in the opening round of the USD 53,120 ATP Challenger tournament. However, Ramkumar, who won the doubles trophy in Pune last week with Rohan Bopanna, squandered a one-set advantage to lose 6-3, 0-6, 5-7 to Australia's Max Purcell in his opening round. Kadhe, who had qualified for the main draw, struggled with his serve and lost his match 16 2-6 to Turkey's Altug Celikbilek. Wild card S D Prajwal Dev lost 2-6, 2-6 to Bulgaria's Dimitar Kuzmanov. **PTI**

F1 drivers to stop taking the knee

London: Formula One will no longer set time aside for drivers to take the knee ahead of races as it looks to introduce more concrete actions to combat racism, Chief Executive Stefano Domenicali told Sky Sports on Tuesday. Formula One launched its "We Race As One" diversity, inclusion and sustainability platform in 2020, which included a pre-race moment when drivers gathered on the grid to express their support for the initiative with a gesture of their choice. "I think it was the time to move from just a gesture recognising something that's really important to a plan," Domenicali said. "I think the gesture has been an important gesture because we need to respect everyone as always. But now is the time to move on and take some other action." Some drivers, most notably seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton chose to take the knee.

Saqlain to continue as Pak head coach

Karachi: Former spinner Saqlain Mushtaq is likely to continue as head coach of Pakistan for the upcoming home series against Australia in March-April. Saqlain's future with the team was under a shadow recently when he resigned as head coach of international player development at the High Performance Centre while his interim tenure as head coach of the national team also ended with the tour to Bangladesh. A reliable source in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that Saqlain was most likely to continue as head coach for the Australia series. "He will be asked to continue as interim coach until the PCB makes a final call on who will be permanent coach of the national team after the Australia series," the source said. **PTI**

Hardik, and other options

All-rounder has of late not been the multitasker India craved, and there are several other alternatives

SANDIP G
FEBRUARY 8

At his best, few do what Hardik Pandya does. His gifts are rare and several — like hitting the first ball he faces out of the ground; like whipping up a six-hitting carnage, like clocking 140 kph with his first ball; like seaming at this pace in favourable conditions.

He can wear several garbs — that of the selfless, single-ticking sidekick for Virat Kohli; that of the tie-end-up support act for Jasprit Bumrah, a finisher with the bat as well as the ball. On seaming surfaces, he can move the ball both ways; on sluggish decks, he unleashes his cutters and slower balls; he brings balance and ballast, but only when he is at his best.

Pandya is like a lab-designed multitasking specimen of a cricketer, but for a body that wilts in the cauldron of international cricket. There could be players more skilled than him in individual facets. But as a wholesome package, men like him are rare. More so for a country where fast-bowling all-rounders rarely sprout; even if they do, not with Pandya-like pedigree.

Little wonder then that coaches, captain, fans, or whoever is closely monitoring Indian cricket, keep a tab on him, even though he last played a Test three years ago, and his appearances in white-ball cricket are sporadic of late. Even in those games, he seemed like an imposter of his peak years.

In his injury-free glory days, Pandya frequently influenced games. Among those that have made their debuts after he has — in 2016—no one has managed to score runs at a strike rate of 116. Combined with an average of 32 for someone who bats at no. 6 or 7, he was indeed a real deal.

In this span, only Rohit Sharma has struck more sixes in the 50-over-game than him either (54). Pandya wreaked pure destruction in his last few knocks — the 76-balled 90 in Sydney, the 92 not out of the same number of balls in Canberra, or the whirlwind 63 from 44 balls against England in Pune.

Those were knocks that lend credence to the theory of picking him purely for his big-hitting prowess.

Before injuries stymied him, Pandya's bowling was equally impactful. He filled in mostly as the third seamer, operated at the death and when handed the new ball, regularly nabbed wickets too.

Like on his 50-over debut in Dharamsala when he ran through New Zealand's top order, or his thrifty spells during the 2017 Champions Trophy and in South Africa (2018).

But a cameo bowler as he is now, bereft of his old pace and venom, he is no longer an automatic in the eleven or the squad. So just as Pandya is in search of his old self, so are the selectors in a quest to find an alternative or replacement, not his carbon copy maybe, but at least someone who could fill in the multiple roles he could. Several of them could be thrust into the Pandya role with an eye on the 2023 World Cup.

In his injury-free glory days, Hardik Pandya frequently influenced games. *PTI file*

Like for like (?):
SHARDUL THAKUR

Thakur can bat, and in present form is a better bowler than Pandya. He might not have the pace of Pandya, but is crafty, with a knack of producing the right ball at the right time. He has a whole palette of white-ball tricks to pick from, headlined by a knuckle-ball, and could put in an impressive shift with the new ball too. But in the 50-over format, he is primarily a bowler who can bat. In 10 innings, he has already smacked a half-century, averages 39.40 and scores at 127. But it's preposterous to consider him a like-for-like replacement for Pandya, for three reasons. A) He has never played under the all-rounder tag, which is a burden. B) Most of his runs have come in relatively pressure-free environments. Though useful, his runs did not make a massive difference in the end. C) There was no pressure of expectations. So, one will have to wait till he replicates those efforts in a crunch situation before a judgment could be passed.

A question of batting:
WASHINGTON SUNDAR

His utility with the ball, though different, is on par with peak Pandya. He can take the new ball, pick wickets, apply the choke in the middle overs and bowl in the last 10. He is a dogged batsman too, but the big question is whether he could orchestrate mayhem like Pandya. Sundar's strike rates in T20s (119) and List A (79) suggest that his approach is more orthodox than postmodern. But he is 22, with oodles of potential, and could be manufactured into a big-hitting all-rounder in the Pandya mould before the next World Cup.

Similar, not same:
RAVINDRA JADEJA

Whether Pandya plays or not, Jadeja is a guaranteed starter. With the ball, his role is different — he is a spinner and primarily a middle-over thrift merchant. Like Pandya, he can freewheel, but not from ball one. These days, he takes his time before teeing off. He has sacrificed some of his dash in his pursuit to transform into a Test-match all-rounder. In recent outings in 50-over cricket, Jadeja did rekindle some old enterprise, but can he whip up such fury on a consistent basis? Besides, the general feeling is that one needs two finishers/late-order explosive batsmen in a team.

A question of bowling:
DEEPAK HOODA

Hooda struck the right notes on his debut on Sunday, showing maturity under pressure while scoring an unbeaten 26. After an erratic phase, he has matured and seems equipped to deal with the quality at the international level, but the big question mark is whether he can bowl. A handy off-spinner, a regular in the Indian Premier League, after his action was cleared a few years ago, much depends on whether he could regularly chip in with a few stingy overs. India already have too many batsmen who don't bowl. Besides, he has yet to replicate his big-hitting skills at the international level. ODIs, when compared to IPL, are a different kettle of fish.

The outsider:
SHAHRUKH KHAN

The 26-year-old from Chennai could be destructive with the bat and is fairly consistent in this format (List A), but international cricket is a step up. The bowlers he encounters would be quicker and smarter. He has not made much of an impact in the IPL either. Besides, his all-round potential is limited, and is rarely summoned in domestic cricket. But if the selectors are in pursuit of someone who could go berserk without fussing around, he is an option. He needs grooming though.

None of these five names, or the recalled Rishi Dhawan or the snubbed Vijay Shankar, are quite like Pandya. But until Pandya starts doing what he does, the chase for a big-hitting all-rounder would be on.

TV: ***India vs West Indies, 2nd ODI, 1:30pm on Star Sports Network.***

China defends use of Korean dress in Olympic ceremony

REUTERS
SEOUL, FEBRUARY 8

THE CHINESE Embassy in South Korea on Tuesday defended the use of a Korean traditional costume in last week's Olympic opening ceremony in Beijing, after South Korean politicians and activists criticised what they called "cultural appropriation". read more

A woman wearing what appeared to be a Korean hanbok dress was among those representing China's different ethnic groups during the ceremony.

Some South Koreans have complained about recent Chinese assertions that various aspects of Korean culture are of Chinese origin. In apparent solidarity with the complaints, the top U.S. diplomat in Seoul donned Korean hanbok clothing while touring a historic palace and shared photos on social media on Tuesday with the hashtag #OriginalHanbokFromKorea.

"What comes to mind when you think of Korea? Kimchi, K-Pop, K-dramas ... and of course Hanbok #OriginalHanbokFromKorea," Chargé d'Affaires Christopher Del Corso tweeted.

The U.S. Embassy did not immediately elaborate on the thinking behind Del Corso's posts. A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Seoul released a statement saying the hanbok belongs to ethnic Koreans everywhere, including in China and on the Korean peninsula.

"It is not only their wish but also their right for representatives of all ethnic groups in China to wear national costumes to attend the Beijing Winter Olympics," the spokesperson said. "The Korean people in China and the north and south of the Korean Peninsula share the same origin and have a common traditional culture including clothing."

South Korea Foreign Ministry estimates there are about 2.5 million people of Korean heritage living in China.

The embassy spokesperson said China respected the historical and cultural traditions of South Korea, and hoped that South Korea would also respect the feelings of all ethnic groups in China, including Koreans.

A woman wearing a Korean hanbok was among those representing China's different ethnic groups at the ceremony.

ACE OF MACE

Asian champ Sobti, who boomed on small screen as Bhim, passes away

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 8

BACK IN the late 1980's when four-time Asian Games gold medallist and Commonwealth Games silver medallist Praveen Kumar Sobti was cast as Bhim in the BR Chopra-epic Mahabharat, the six feet and five inches tall former Indian Discus and hammer thrower would call fellow athlete and former Indian athletics coach Bahadur Singh multiple times.

"Praveen would say that we will get to see him on TV every week for long and sounded very excited. In 2020, when Mahabharat was re-run by Doordarshan during the lockdown, we again saw all the episodes and would share a laugh," remembers Singh. On Thursday, 74-year-old Praveen Kumar breathed his last at his Delhi home and his demise meant that India lost a Track & Field star, who ruled Asia in Throws back in the 1960's and 1970's.

Born on September 6, 1947 at village Sarhali in Amritsar district, a young Kumar's first tryst with sports would begin in the form of games like kabaddi and other rural games. While his father Kulwant Rai was a police inspector, Kumar had a well built physique in his junior days in school and would start discus throw and hammer throw at the village school on the insistence of school principal Harbans Singh. Kumar would become the national champion in hammer throw in junior nationals in Calcutta in 1963 before winning a bronze medal in the senior nationals in 1965.

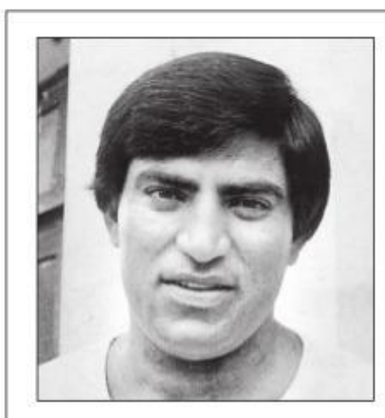
The same year, Kumar would create a new national record in hammer throw during the Indo-Russian Athletics meet. "I first met Praveen in the Punjab Schools camp at Shimla in 1962. He was a very tall youngster and when one of our coaches asked him about his height, he told him, "I am two inches taller than the tallest tug of war participant from our village," It showed his confidence," remembers former triple jumper Mohinder Singh Gill, two-time Asian Games medallist and two-times CWG medallist.

Starting 1965, Kumar would remain the national record holder in discus throw for 15 consecutive years and became national champion in both discus throw as well hammer throw six times in nationals. In 1966, Kumar would become the second Indian athlete to win a medal in Commonwealth Games when he won the silver medal in the CWG at Kingston, Jamaica where he threw the hammer to a distance of 60.12m.

Three months later, Kumar would become the Asian Games champion in discus throw with a throw of 49.62 m apart from winning the bronze in hammer throw with a distance of 57.18m.

Between his 1966 Bangkok Asian games gold and 1970 Asian Games discus throw gold medal with a distance of 52.38 m, Kumar would finish 20th in hammer, with a throw of 60.84 m in 1968 Mexico Olympics.

"During the camp for Mexico Olympics at Railway ground in Delhi, we would often go to watch Parveen practice. We were juniors then and Praveen would make sure that he spent some time with us after his practice and would give us autographs. Later, I got a chance to be his room-mate in many competitions including 1970 Asian Games and he would always cheer us with jokes. He would also never forget to pat us after a bad race too. At the camp, he would often pick 1500 m distance runner Edward Sequeria on his shoulders and would pose for photographs," remembers five-time Asian Games medallist athlete Sriram Singh.



PRAVEEN KUMAR SOBTI
1947-2022

Sobti won discus throw gold medals at the 1966 and 1970 Asian Games. *SAI Media*

In 1969, Kumar would also go to USA to compete in the USA vs CCCP vs CWG team games where he would stay with long-time friend and team-mate Mohinder Singh Gill. Gill, who shifted to USA in 1968 to study at the California State University and train there, also got Kumar a scholarship from the university but Kumar refused to study there and returned to India. Gill along with Kumar was one of the four Indian athletes who won gold in 1970 Asian games.

"Praveen was a big star of his times. Being the Asian Games champion, he was always eager to win more and practiced a lot. In 1969, when he was part of the CWG team and visited Los Angeles, I got him to meet the officials at California State University and he also got the scholarship. He worked in BSF at that time and university officials told him that they would get him a job too. But he refused saying he has promised a girl in India to return and then marry her," remembers Gill.

Kumar would also compete in Munich Olympics apart from 1974 Asian Games at Manila, where he was the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent.

A back injury meant that he finished second with a throw of 53.64 m in discus throw in Manila followed by him winning the gold in Asian Championships in 1975.

A friend in need

Though Kumar competed in 1978 Asian Games too and ended his 15-year-long career in 1980 with a bronze medal in an International meet in Scotland in 1977 (being his last international medal), Bahadur Singh remembers one incident in particular. "In 1977, the Indian team went to England for an international meet. The federation officials only arranged for air travel and when some athletes refused to go, Praveen assured all that he would take care of food and accommodation. Whichever city we went in England, his friends hosted us and treated us like VIPs," shares Singh.

Gill too remembers one incident of Kumar's disarming naivete and innocence despite his huge physique. "Once we went to Madras for an international meet and stayed in a five star hotel. Praveen washed his feet in the sink and it broke. We paid fine and for the next few days, Praveen did not take a bath in the bath tub fearing that if it broke, then who would pay the fine to the hotel? Many female fans in Chennai would meet him and I would play the role of translator for him," says Gill.

Post his athletics career, Kumar would start his career in Bollywood debuting with his first movie Raksha in 1981. Though Kumar, who knew actor Ashok Kumar, would act in more than 50 movies, his most memorable innings on the celluloid was as Bhim in BR Chopra's Mahabharat.

Fan-favourite

Cast by actor Gufi Paintal for the role, Praveen would become the favourite of TV watching public. "I had finalised Puneet Issar for the role of Bhim but he wanted to play the role of Duryodhna. It was Puneet who suggested the name of Praveen ji. At first, he struggled with dialogues and would speak in heavy Punjabi accent during screen test. He would read Mahabharat in Hindi multiple times to improve. He would also make us laugh with his jokes. During the scenes of Mukesh Khanna lying on arrows as Bhishma, Praveen would say," *Eh chiita kukad uthda hi nahi. Kadon uthega* (This white rooster does not wake up. When will he wake up?) making Khanna laugh," recalls Paintal.

Praveen, who retired as a deputy commandant from BSF, also joined politics and joined Aam Aadmi Party and later BJP. Survived by his wife Bina Devi and daughter Nipunika, Praveen had been suffering from back issues since many years and faced difficulty in walking.

"I met him last in the 2010 CWG games and we would share about the days when he would eat 40-50 chicken wings during dinners post competitions. He loved sports, food as well as his family and friends and that's the way we would remember him," says Gill.

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