

NADDI SOUNDS BUGLE FOR 2022 ASSEMBLY POLL HP

PIRAMAL GROUP GETS RBI NOD FOR DHFL TAKEOVER BUSINESS

IN WB, SHAH PROMISES TO BRING GROWTH BACK PAGE



FRIDAY | 19 FEBRUARY 2021

## PM for SAARC medical visa

Seeks seamless movement of health staff in emergency | Pak backs him

Tribune News Service

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18** India on Thursday mooted an ambitious regional cooperation plan for seamless movement of doctors, nurses and air ambulances between countries of the SAARC and Indian Ocean Region during medical emergencies noting that greater integration was critical to making the 21st century of Asia.

Addressing a workshop on "Covid-19 management, experience and the way forward" with 10 neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked experts to



### SOUTH ASIA FIGHTING COVID DECISIVELY

Many experts had voiced special concerns about the densely populated Asian region and the pandemic's impact on its population. But we all met this challenge with a coordinated response.

Narendra Modi, PRIME MINISTER

consider a special visa scheme for doctors and nurses so that they could travel quickly within the region during health emergencies

on the request of the receiving country. The Pakistan representative at the meeting is learnt to have supported India's stand on collabora-

ration and stated "hyper-nationalist mentality won't help". Pakistan said it would be part of any regional cooperation on the issue.

The PM earlier posed several searching questions to the delegates asking them if the civil aviation ministries of the 10 countries could coordinate a regional air ambulance agreement for medical contingencies and a regional platform for collating, compiling and studying data about the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines. "Can we similarly create a regional network for promoting technology-assisted epidemiology for preventing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

### MORRIS IPL'S COSTLIEST BUY EVER

**₹16.25 CR**

■ **CHRIS MORRIS** The South Africa all-rounder was bought by Rajasthan Royals at the IPL auction on Thursday. It was the most expensive buy ever, overtaking Yuvraj Singh (₹16 cr by Delhi Capitals in 2015)

■ **₹9.25 CRORE** K GOWTHAM The Ktaka spinner, bought by Chennai Super Kings, costliest Indian

CHRIS MORRIS

■ **₹5.25 CRORE** SHAHRUKH KHAN The Tamil Nadu player struck a good deal with Punjab Kings, over 51 times his base price of ₹20 lakh

■ **₹20 LAKH** ARIJUN TENDULKAR Son of Sachin Tendulkar, was bought by Mumbai Indians at his base price. Father and son will work together in the champion team

■ **₹17 CRORE** VIRAT KOHLI Retained by Royal Challengers Bangalore, remains the costliest player in the IPL

VIRAT KOHLI

### Army briefs envoys on J&K ground situation

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18**

Foreign envoys wound up their two-day trip to Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday with a briefing by the Army, which told them how Kashmiris were choosing to ignore Pakistan propaganda and giving democracy a chance.

The team of heads of Missions visited the 15 Corps headquarters in Badami Bagh Cantonment today and interacted with General Officer Commanding Lt General BS Raju and Inspector Gen-

## Committed to ensuring free Indo-Pacific region: Quad FMs

Tribune News Service



Blinken approaches Germany, France, UK

have also expressed interest in ensuring a rules-based approach to navigation in the Indo-Pacific. While France is active in the region, Germany

and the UK intend to deploy naval assets in the region.

"It was important for the international community that the direction of changes remains positive and beneficial to all," noted an Indian read-out of the virtual meeting that was attended by Foreign Ministers S Jaishankar, Marise Payne (Australia), Toshimitsu Motegi (Japan) and Antony Blinken (US).

The discussions on regional issues included a reiteration of their common vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, with clear support for ASEAN cohesion and centrality.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

**Not sharing contact list with FB: WhatsApp**

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18**

WhatsApp today published a detailed blog assuring users of privacy and security of their personal chats, saying it would gradually unveil features that would gently nudge consumers to accept its privacy update that triggered a massive backlash in January. The firm had to defer the policy update which, it said, would be effective from May 15.



Says chats encrypted, can't be read

"We do not keep logs of who everyone is messaging. We do not share contact lists with Facebook. This is our global approach."

"We are updating our terms and privacy policy. We cannot read or listen to your personal conversations as these are end-to-end encrypted. This will never change. We are only making it easier to chat with businesses to ask questions and get quick. Chatting with businesses is optional,"

The perpetrators of the Pulwama terror attack in February 2019 had used a similar tunnel, they were told. Later in Jammu, the envoys met L-G Manoj Sinha and discussed the challenges of development in the UT after August 5, 2019. — TNS

## Puducherry CM to face floor test on Feb 22

**PUDUCHERRY, FEBRUARY 18** Puducherry Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundarajan on Thursday ordered a floor test for the Congress government in the UT on February 22, to ascertain whether it has majority in the wake of resignations by the ruling party MLAs that has reduced its strength to 14.

Soundarajan's direction to Chief Minister V Narayansamy came after the Opposition "reiterated" its stand that the government has to prove its majority on the floor of the House. — PTI

### IN BRIEF

#### 'Metro Man' set to join saffron party

**NEW DELHI:** India's "Metro Man" E Sreedharan, who is credited with changing the face of public transport system in the country, is all set to join the BJP. **BACK PAGE**

#### Will stop shooting, Cong warns actors

**BHANDARA:** Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Thursday said if Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar did not take a stand on the fuel hike issue, their films would not be allowed. **PTI**

#### 12-yr-old autistic girl swims record 36 km

**MUMBAI:** Jiya Rai, 12, has created history by swimming 36 km in the Arabian Sea to create awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder. **PTI**

#### Commercial markets to shut on Feb 26

**NEW DELHI:** Traders' body CAIT on Thursday said all commercial markets would remain closed on February 26 in view of Bharat bandh' call. **PTI**

## Farmers derail railway traffic

Protests at 100 sites in Pb, Hry | Impact negligible: Govt

**CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 18**

The four-hour "rail roko" protest by farmers today brought the train traffic to a complete halt in Punjab and Haryana. Following a call given by the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, farmers organised protests at over 100 spots in both states. The nationwide protest was also staged at some places in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. However, in many states, it was a low-key affair.

The Railways claimed there was a negligible impact, although some trains were stopped by officials as a precautionary measure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



Farmers block a rail track in Patiala on Thursday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

#### TOOLKIT: NOTICE TO CHANNELS ON 'FIR LEAK'

The Delhi HC has issued notices to the News Broadcasting Standards Authority and some TV news channels on Disha Ravi's petition against "leaking" contents of toolkit FIR to the media.

## Union Minister admits stir behind BJP rout in Punjab

**JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 18**

The resentment against the farm stirs has hit the BJP's performance in the Doaba region. Not being able to bag even a single ward in Kapurthala, the party has bagged merely one ward each at Nawanshahr and Jalandhar.

Union Cabinet Minister Som Parkash said the farmer protests certainly had an impact on the MC polls.



Union Minister Som Parkash

#### Cong wins Mohali too; SAD, BJP draw a blank

**CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 18**

The ruling Congress in Punjab won the Mohali Municipal Corporation poll on Thursday. It won 37 wards. Independents bagged 13, while the SAD and BJP drew a blank.

Health Minister Balbir Sidhu's brother Amarjeet Sidhu, who is the mayoral candidate, won from ward number 10. — TNS

## Banks under lens in HP scholarship scam

#### FAKE ACCOUNTS

- ₹250-cr scholarship scam is being probed by the CBI
- 32,000 students did not get scholarship under various schemes
- 272 pvt educational institutions are under scanner in the case

agency in connection with the case. They have been reportedly asked to explain why the money was transferred to an account in the name of the Marketing Solution Skill Development Society from students' accounts. Over Rs 28 crore meant for granting post-matric scholarship to SC/ST/OBC students was disbursed to nine fake institutions in Una, Chamba, Sirmour and Kangra. These institutions, running without affiliation with competent

bodies, got funds meant for 8,800 students.

Fake accounts were opened in the names of students in six banks in HP and Punjab.

Three persons, including the wife of then Superintendent (Grade-II), Department of Higher Education, Arvind Rajta who dealt with disbursement of scholarship, have been arrested by the CBI. Sources said the CBI also raided the houses of these persons and their relatives and seized some documents.

misused, they alleged. Managers of three banks have been questioned by the

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Farmers squat on tracks during a four-hour rail blockade against the central government's agricultural laws in Amritsar; and (right) members of various farmer organisations block a railway track in Bathinda on Thursday. PHOTOS: VISHAL KUMAR & PTI

## Farmers mobilise support on tracks

**'RAIL ROKO'** After four-hour blockade, call for statewide kisan-mazdoor rally in Barnala on Feb 21

Tribune Reporters

JALANDHAR/BATHINDA, FEB 18

As part of the nationwide 'rail roko' stir against the central agricultural laws, various farm unions in the Doaba region today blocked trains at Kala Bakra, Phillaur, Phagwara, Kartarpur and Nizamdinpur and Jalandhar Cantonment railway stations.

In Jalandhar, along with a group of farmers, Bhartiya Kisan Union (Rajewal) leader Kashmiri Lal climbed atop the Kalka Express to begin the rail blockade.

SAD workers also joined the stir and organised sit-ins at various railway stations to express their support to the call given by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM). Farmers from the region blocked railway tracks here from 12 noon to 4 pm. While farmers under the banner of the Doaba Kisan Sangharsh Committee observed the 'rail roko' protest near the Kala Bakra railway station, BKU activists blocked trains at the Jalandhar railway station.

Doaba Kisan Sangharsh Committee president Harjinder Singh said 700-800 persons, including farmers and labourers, protested to support the farmers in their struggle. "Around 472 organisations have been protesting at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders, but the central government has turned a blind eye towards their genuine demands," said Harjinder.

In Bathinda district, members of various farm unions blocked railway tracks at different locations.

Farmers under the banner of BKU (Ugrahan) blocked tracks on the Bathinda-Jind railway line near Bhai Bakhtaur village, Bathinda-Ambala line near Bhuchro Mandi, Bathinda-Ferozepur line at Goniana Mandi and Bathinda-Bikaner line in the Sangat mandi area.

"From the obdurate stance adopted by the central government, it is clear that it wants to forcibly impose the anti-farmer laws on us. But with the massive support for the farm agitation both in



Protesters at the Jalandhar Cantt railway station. MALKIAT SINGH

### WON'T BUDGE UNTIL LAWS ARE REPEALED

• The countrywide 'rail roko' was just a trailer of what lies ahead. The government should not believe that the protest will end soon. We won't step back until the farm laws are repealed. Kashmiri Lal, BKU (RAJEWAL) LEADER

the country and overseas, spirits of the farming community are quite high and we will not leave Delhi borders until the government revokes these laws. We exhort each and every section of society to extend their

whole-hearted support to the movement," said Harjinder Baggi, a farm union leader.

In Mansa, farmers and other organisations joined hands to take part in the 'rail roko' agitation. BKU (Ugrahan) leader Ram Singh Bhaini Bhagha said: "We got a massive response to the 'rail roko' stir and people from all walks of life, including a large number of women, participated in the agitation. Now we have given a state wide call for a massive kisan-mazdoor rally in Barnala on February 21."

The rail traffic, to and from Rajasthan, was affected as farmers and trade union activists on Thursday blocked the Sriganganagar-Abohar-Bathinda track for four hours by staging a dharna at the Abohar railway station.

Sarpanch Union president Manoj Godara said the Union Government had been callous to farmers and labourers, who had been camping at the Delhi border for the past three months. On the call of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha,

farmers and workers had decided to stage a dharna at the local station from 12 pm to 4 pm, he said.

The protesters, who carried the banners of Krantikari Farmers Union, All-India Kisan Sabha, Dehati Mazdoor Sabha, Bhartiya Kisan Union, Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti, PSPCL Technical Services Union and other organisations, shouted slogans against the Prime Minister and other BJP leaders.

Farmer leader Subhash Godara said the "anti-farmers" laws would benefit the corporate houses. If these laws came into force, it would destroy not only the farmers, but also the labourers, artisans and the working class.

In Muktsar, a large number of farmers today squatted on railway tracks to lodge their protest against the central government. Notably, the train service has been suspended in Muktsar since the outbreak of Covid-19. The farmers' protest lasted for nearly four hours.

(With inputs from Abohar & Muktsar)

## Protest at 50 locations in Ferozepur division

Moga, February 18

Farmers on Thursday blocked trains at 50 locations in the Ferozepur railway division in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, confirmed the railway way authorities.

Divisional Railway Manager, Ferozepur, Rajesh Aggarwal said the trains were halted at railway stations in many cities and towns as a precautionary measure. Claiming that no train was cancelled, the DRM said, however, the journeys were delayed due to the farmers' agitation.

The Malwa Express was halted at Phagwara and Super Express at Jalandhar Cantt. Similarly, the trains were also stopped at Pathankot, Ludhiana, Barhi Brahman, Kathua and Vijaypur towns. He said the trains were stopped at their stations of halt at 12 noon. The trains resumed their respective journeys in the evening.

The Dhanbad Express was regulated from the Ferozepur Cantonment railway station and Shaheed Express from Amritsar station. No train was cancelled or diverted from their original routes due to today's 'rail roko' agitation of the farmers, Aggarwal clarified.



Passengers stranded at the Amritsar railway station.

No train cancelled, diverted, says DRM

or diverted from their original routes due to today's 'rail roko' agitation of the farmers, Aggarwal clarified.

The railway authorities said the 'rail roko' agitation passed off peacefully. There was negligible or minimal impact on running of the trains. The train movement was normal now, a spokesman of the railways stated.

BKU (Ekta) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokri said they blocked the railway tracks at 22 places, including at Nabha, Mansa, Barnala, Bathinda, Ferozepur, Jalandhar and Tarn Taran. —TNS



MLA Parminder Dhindsa along with locals protest at Lehra in Sangrur. TRIBUNE PHOTO

## Poll outcome 'reversed', locals protest outside counting centre

Tribune News Service

SANGRUR, FEBRUARY 18

Alleging rigging in the Lehra Nagar Municipal Council elections, locals have been sitting on an indefinite protest outside the counting centre since Wednesday evening.

They have not allowed the Sangrur administration to shift the EVMs from Lehra to Sangrur and demanded "rectification" of results. The truck laden with EVMs is also stuck in the protest.

"Since the start of the election process, officers have been working as puppets of Congress leaders. In the morning, the candidates of Lehra Vikas Manch (LVM) from ward Nos 2 and 8 were declared winners and officers said they would give certificates later. But around 3.30 pm when winners were celebrating and distributing lados, officers

### NO LAPSE, SAYS DC

• Senior officers of the district are trying to convince residents to lift their protest. Results were declared after following mandatory procedure. If anyone has any problem, he can challenge the election.

Ramvir, SANGRUR DC

declared them losers," alleged LVM convener Varinder Kumar Goyal.

After receiving information about the change in results, locals reached the counting centre and started protesting. They also intercepted the truck laden with EVMs. The appeals of senior police and civil administration officials have failed to convince the protesters.

Local shopkeepers also

kept their shops closed on Thursday to express solidarity with the protesters.

"How the winners can be declared losers after just a few hours? It has been done on the directions of local Congress leaders who have lost base in Lehra. Being the local MLA, it's my responsibility to ensure justice. Officers can't go anywhere," SAD's Parminder Singh Dhindsa told the protesters. "Some candidates were declared losers after being declared winners. Congress leaders have misused power in all 15 wards to ensure victory of their candidates," said Jasbir Singh Kudiani, AAP leader from Lehra.

Now party general secretary Subhash Sharma said those who behaved like cowards and refused to contest the election on party symbol would face action. He also said they had started taking disciplinary action against the rebel candidates. —TNS

## Poor show by SAD in Sukhbir's LS constituency

MUKTSAR, FEBRUARY 18

The SAD failed to win even 15 per cent seats in the MC elections in the Ferozepur Lok Sabha constituency. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal is an MP from Ferozepur.

The constituency is spread in Ferozepur, Fazilka and

### Won just 38 of 265 municipal wards

some parts of Muktsar district. Notably, there are 265 municipal wards in this LS constituency, of which the SAD could win just 38. It means the party secured victory in just 14.3 per cent wards. Sukhbir had spent almost a week in these three districts to actively campaign for the party nominees. —TNS

## With 9 Inds, Cong gets majority in Moga

Tribune News Service

Moga, February 18

A day after the results of the Moga Municipal Corporation elections were declared, nine independent councillors joined the ruling Congress on Thursday.

The Congress had got 20 seats in a House of 50 wards. The ruling party was short of six councillors to get a majority. The SAD got 15 seats, Independents 10, AAP four and BJP one. Local Congress MLA Dr Harjot Kamal's wife Dr Rajinder Kaur had lost the election.

In an overnight exercise, the Congress managed to woo at least nine independent councillors who joined the party in the presence of PPCC president Sunil Jakhar in Chandigarh.

Dr Harjot Kamal said with today's development, the Congress had the support of 29 councillors. "Now, with a majority, we will elect our own mayor, senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor," he said.

The independents who

joined the Congress include Jaspreet Singh, alias Vicky Sarpanch, Gurpreet Singh Sachdeva, Surinder Singh Goga, Reema Sood, Payal Garg, Sukhbinder Kaur, Buta Singh, Tirath Ram and Parveen Makkar.

The MLA claimed he had

recommended party tickets to all independent councillors but they were denied these owing to factionalism in the party's local unit. "Had they been given the party tickets, the fate of the Congress would have been different," he said.

## ₹1 lakh given to Nodeep's family

MUKTSAR, FEBRUARY 18

The Bahujan Samaj Front today gave Rs 1 lakh to the mother of labour rights activist Nodeep Kaur, who is lodged in a Haryana jail.

An activist of the front, Sukhwinder Kotli informed mediapersons that the money was sent by some persons abroad which he handed over to Nodeep's mother Swaranjeet Kaur at Gandhar village here.

State leader of the front Kulwant Singh Tibba demanded the immediate release of Nodeep. —TNS

## Poll verdict shows who's the real captain, say ministers

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 18

Local Government Minister Brahm Mohindra today said the Congress government had left no stone unturned in providing amenities to the people of the state. In view of the pro-people policies of the state government, the voters had shown their confidence in the government.

He said, "The Punjab Government will continue its urban development work on a war-footing and will win the Assembly elections in 2022 just like the civic elections."

Cooperation Minister

Sukhjinder Randhawa said Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh had emerged as the real 'captain' and an undisputed leader of the state.

Health Minister Balbir Sidhu said the rejection of the SAD, AAP and BJP was a clear sign of the things to come. He said the demand of farmer unions to repeal the farm laws was not being taken seriously by the Modi government and the SAD had firmly supported these laws before breaking the alliance with the BJP, due to which the people of Punjab wiped out these parties.

State leader of the front Kulwant Singh Tibba demanded the immediate release of Nodeep. —TNS

# Govt plans 50% quota for women as civic body chiefs

RAJMEET SINGH

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 18**  
Empowering women on the ground, 50 per cent posts of mayor in Municipal Corporations and president in other civic bodies could soon be reserved for the elected women candidates in the recently held civic body polls.

Ahead of electing the mayor or the president, the Capt Amarinder Singh-led government is likely to bring amendments to the legislation in the upcoming budget session to implement the reservation for women. The

## BUDGET SESSION LIKELY FROM MARCH 1

- At a meeting scheduled for Friday, the Cabinet is likely to propose to the Governor to hold the budget session from March 1-10
- Being the last budget by the Congress government, which would face the state Assembly polls early next year, announcements related to unfulfilled prom-

ises made in 2017 and fresh populist measures are expected to be made

- With the farmers' agitation still continuing, the government will again bring the state amendment Bills to negotiate the central Acts as the Governor had failed to send the earlier Bills to the President

likely to be taken up tomorrow at the Cabinet meeting.

In the recently held civic body polls, women candidates have been elected in nearly 1,100 wards. In Congress alone, 675 women candidates have been elected. Irrespective of the political affiliation, women mayor or president could be elected unanimously.

A source said the decision to increase the reservation for women was taken soon after the Congress came to power. The decision saw increased participation by women voters in the recently held civic body polls.

existing 33 per cent to 50 per cent by amending the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911, and the Punjab Municipal Corporation Act, 1976. The issue is

## Farm stir to blame for BJP's Doaba debacle: Minister

AParna Banerji

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 18**

The resentment against the farm stir has hit the BJP's performance in the Doaba region. Not being able to bag even a single ward in Kapurthala, the party has bagged merely one ward each at Nawanshahr (Bangla Nagar Council) and Jalandhar (Nurmahal) while it has bagged seven wards in Hoshiarpur (three at Mukrian and four at Hoshiarpur MC).

Union Cabinet Minister Som Parkash said the farmers' protests certainly had an impact on the MC polls.

While at the Hoshiarpur Municipal Council, senior BJP leader Tikshan Sud lost from ward No 5; at Kapurthala, where BJP failed to open an account, former district BJP chief Purshotam Passi lost.

Farmers protested outside the house of former state

## BJP WILL BOUNCE BACK, AS ALWAYS

“The farmers' protest certainly affected the poll. But, wins and losses are a part of election. Though we have lost, the party has majority in Parliament. This election won't pose a problem for the future. The party will bounce back, like always. Som Parkash, UNION CABINET MINISTER

## GOVT THREATENED NON-CONG CANDIDATES

“Congress' hooliganism was quite evident. Right from delaying the election to discrepancies during delimitation, Congress used various tactics to win. The government machinery worked to threaten non-Congress candidates. Our candidates weren't allowed to

campaign. Tikshan Sud, BIP LEADER

Cabinet minister Manoranjan Kalia in Jalandhar and obstructed meetings and visits of various senior BJP leaders. Sud even faced protests wherein dung was dumped at his house following which he had also lodged an FIR against several farmers.

Sud said, “I don't think

farmers' stir was a big factor in the local bodies' election. AAP and SAD had been backing farmers from day one. They would have triumphed. The parties used farmers to garner political mileage. The BJP has learnt the lesson and will come with more preparation for the 2024 elections.”

## SAD to challenge poll result in HC

ABOHAL, FEBRUARY 18

The Shiromani Akali Dal has decided to challenge the poll results of some Municipal Corporation wards here in the High Court. Youth Akali Dal district president Harvinder Singh Harry alleged that votes of dead residents and even those who had left the town long back were polled. He displayed a list of such voters and claimed that the

## 'EVMs TAMPERED WITH'

A day after the Congress dealt a blow to its opponents by bagging all 29 MC wards at stake, Gurdaspur SAD chief Gurbachan Singh Babbar alleged the 'seals of a majority of the EVMs were tampered with by the henchmen of Cong MLA Barindermeet Singh Pahra'.

messages were sent to the State Election Commission repeatedly, but no action was taken. Harry's spouse was defeated by 57 votes. “We will approach the High Court to seek justice,” he added.

— OC

SAD chief Sukhbir Badal had addressed 10 corner meetings in a pre-election campaign but 20 of its candidates got votes in two digits only. — OC

## BJP appoints Sampla as SC panel chief

DEEPMALA KAUR

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 18**

After being denied a Lok Sabha seat from Hoshiarpur in 2019, former Union MoS Vijay Sampla has now been rewarded by being appointed as the Chairman of the National SC Commission.

Sampla received the official letter to join the office of the Joint Secretary, Minister of



Vijay Sampla was denied a Lok Sabha seat in 2019.

Social Justice and Empowerment, yesterday. His nephew Ashu Sampla confirmed having received it. Sampla and

his supporters, who had two weeks ago celebrated the expected appointment, are keeping it low for now. The family is in mourning as Sampla lost his mother recently.

After facing defeat in the local body polls, even the BJP leadership is in no mood to make it big. Ashu said the joining would also remain a low-key affair and might happen sometime in the next week after all the rituals in the family were over by Saturday.

Sampla, who had seen a huge rise in his political career since his victory in the parliamentary polls of 2014, had been lying low for the past two years. A Dalit face of the party, he had not only got the Union Minister of State post, but also got appointed as the state president of the BJP.

Directorate of Film Festivals  
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Government of India



68<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards

# 68<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL FILM AWARDS 2020

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## NOTICE

Irrigation & Water Resources Department  
Request for Proposal - RFP  
"WATER SECTOR PROJECT"

### Request for Proposal - RFP\*

“Selection of Support Agency (SA) for Assisting SPMU in Implementation of Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal JAL) Haryana”

1. Irrigation & Water Resources Department, Panchkula, Haryana intends to select a “Support Agency (SA) for Assisting SPMU in Implementation of Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal JAL) Haryana.”

2. In this RFP, agencies can participate as “Support Agency (SA) for Assisting SPMU in Implementation of Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal JAL) Haryana” to

a. Provide technical and process management support to I&WR for rolling out and effective implementation of Atal-Jal in 36 Blocks of 13 Districts identified under Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal), a Central Sector Scheme (CSS) of Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India with World Bank Assistance. This will be done by developing necessary strategies, guidelines manuals & tools, designing and facilitating workshops, technical support, capacity building of key stakeholders, providing hand holding support to district and GP level institutions, process, progress and performance tracking, documentation support etc.

b. Provide additional support and information as required to District Program Management Units (DPMUs) for implementing the program, and

c. Any other work related to Atal Bhujal Yojana as solicited by the State Program Management Unit (SPMU)

d. The copy of this Advertisement, scope of work and necessary instructions for uploading of RFP is available on [hid.gov.in](http://hid.gov.in) and <https://etenders.hry.nic.in/>. Online applications shall be submitted on the above said portal from 19/02/2021 on 13:00 Hrs. to 12/03/2021 on 13:00 Hrs.

3. All the eligible agencies are invited to submit their proposals for the mentioned RFP. Interested bidder must provide all information sought in the RFP document along with information indicating that they are qualified to perform the Services (description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff etc.).

4. An Agency will be selected under Quality Cost Based Selection (QCBS) procedures and would be required to submit a Full Technical Proposal in a format as described in this RFP, in accordance with the policies of the Government of Haryana.

5. The Department reserves the right to verify the particulars furnished by the applicant independently. If any information furnished by the applicant is found to be incorrect at a later stage, the Agency shall be liable to be debarred from all future bidding in the Department. Besides blacklisting of the Agency, the legal action will also be initiated, and allotment shall be liable to be cancelled.

6. Detailed NIT, Bid Documents, EMD and Cost of Bid Document etc. can be seen at the website <https://etenders.hry.nic.in/> and can be downloaded from the same. The Bid Documents can be purchased only online from 19/02/2021 on 13:00 Hrs. to 12/03/2021 on 13:00 Hrs.

7. “Note”: Any corrigendum(s) to the Request for Proposal shall be published on the website only.

Sd/- Project Director-cum-Nodal Officer (ABhY)  
I&W.R.Deptt., Haryana.

[www.puda.e-auctions.in](http://www.puda.e-auctions.in)

## PDA announces e-auction of GROUP HOUSING, COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL SITES at

## PATIALA

### COMMERCIAL SITES

(Booths - 32, SCO - 16, Double Storey Shops - 14, SCF - 6 & Shops - 3)

STARTING FROM ₹ 10.60 Lac

### RESIDENTIAL SITES

STARTING FROM ₹ 15.00 Lac

₹ 25.04 crore

Possession on 25% payment

Balance payment in easy installments at interest rate 9.5% p.a.

59

1

GROUP HOUSING SITE

59

1



# Farm stir won't slacken during harvesting, Tikait tells Centre

DEEPMALA DESWAL

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

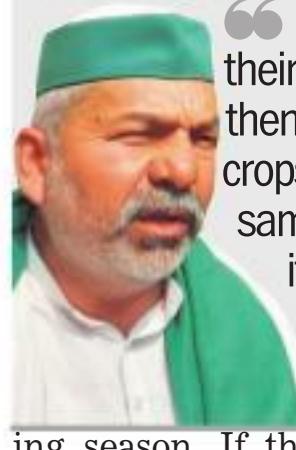
HISAR, FEBRUARY 18

Toughening his stand on the three farm laws, BKU leader Rakesh Tikait today urged farmers to be ready to sacrifice the produce for one season by setting the standing crops on fire to keep the peasantry alive for the next 20 years.

In a strongly worded statement during the 'kisan mahapanchayat' at Kharak Punia village in Hisar district, Tikait made it clear that the agitation would not weaken till the government accepted their demands.

"The government should not be under the impression that the movement will weaken during the harvest-

## AGITATION WON'T END IN TWO MONTHS



**Farmers will harvest the crops to keep their annual quota of grain at home and then destroy the rest. We will harvest the crops and continue our agitation at the same time. The government is mistaken if it thinks that farmers will return home and the agitation will end in two months.**

Rakesh Tikait, BHARATIYA KISAN UNION LEADER

ing season. If the government tries to create hurdles, be prepared to set the crops on fire," he said.

"Farmers will harvest the crops to keep their annual quota of grain at home and then destroy the rest. We will harvest the crops and continue our agitation at the same time," he said.

He asserted that the government was mistaken if it

thought that farmers would return home and the agitation would end in two months.

Accompanied by BKU leaders Gurnam Singh Charuni and Yudhvir Singh, Tikait addressed 'mahapanchayats' at Kharak Punia and Balsamand villages.

"We are out to change the scene across the country. We need one month to correct the powers that be. We will

not return without course correction of the ruling party. Farmers in West Bengal are also in crisis and we will have to fight for them as well," Tikait said.

"Refuel your tractors and be ready facing Delhi's direction. You can get a call to move at any time as that will be decided by the committee of farmer unions," he said.

Tikait said after Haryana, they would hold panchayats in other parts of the country, including West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. He said farmers had earlier given a call for a tractor rally in Delhi and the next time, they would go to the national capital with their agricultural implements.

Pradeep, son of the deceased, said his father had been visiting the protest site at Singhu regularly and had stayed at a protest site near Rasoi village for the past four days. He said his father's condition deteriorated on Wednesday night, after which they took him to the General Hospital, where doc-

# Rats nibble at body in hospital, kin protest

MUKESH TANDON

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SONEPAT, FEBRUARY 18

Rats have reportedly nibbled at the body of a farmer who died at the Singhu border on Wednesday night after it was kept in the mortuary of the General Hospital here.

The shocking incident came to light on Thursday morning after family members of the deceased farmer found big injury marks on the eyes and feet, with blood oozing out of these injuries.

The family members created a ruckus in the hospital for negligence and demanded stringent action against the person responsible for negligence. The deceased was identified as Rajender Saroha, a 70-year-old farmer of Baiyanpur village in the district.

Dr Jaswant Singh Poonia, Civil Surgeon, and Dr Jaibaghwan, Principal Medical Officer, reached the mortuary and pacified the protesters. They assured them of action for the negligence, following which the family received the body. Dr Jaibaghwan said an inquiry has been ordered and stringent action would be initiated against the employee found guilty.

A panel comprising Dr Ginni Lamba and Dr Sandeep Lathwal, Deputy Medical Superintendents; and Dr Sushil Jain, Senior Medical Officer, was constituted and ordered to submit an inquiry report within two days, he added.

tors declared him dead.

He said the body was kept in a freezer at the mortuary of the General Hospital. He said they spotted rat bite marks with blood oozing out when they arrived for postmortem examination on Thursday.

As local village residents and members of the Saroha khap came to know about the incident, they started protesting and demanded action against the employee responsible for negligence.

Earlier, ED had filed a prosecution complaint against the accused before the special court in Panchkula under various Sections of the PMLA.

Besides Hooda, who was the chairman of Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) when the allotments were made, the other accused included former HUDA Chief Administrator Dharam Pal Singh Nagal, former administrator HUDA Surjit Singh, former Faridabad Zonal Administrator HUDA Narinder Kumar Solanki, former Chief Controller of Finance HUDA Subhash Chandra Kansal and for-

# Hooda, 21 others summoned in plot allotment case

BHARTESH SINGH THAKUR

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 18

The Special Court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), Haryana, on Thursday summoned former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda and 21 others in Enforcement Directorate's industrial plot allotment case which included three IAS officers and allottees.

The accused included Anupama Sud, Kanwar Preet Sandhu, Renu Hooda, Mona Beri, Aman Gupta, Nandita Hooda, Ashok Verma, Dr Ganesh Dutt Rattan, Pandeep Kumar, Dagar Katyal, Lt Col OP Dahiya (retd), Pawan Kansal and Manjot Kaur. One plot was allotted to M/s YPT Entertainment House Private Limited, which is made an accused along with its then Director Sidharth Bhardwaj. Nandita Hooda's firm M/s Chandigarh Softtech Pvt Ltd has also been named as accused. The accused have to appear in the Special Court on March 5.



mer Superintendent HUDA Bharat Bhushan Taneja.

The accused allottees included Anupama Sud, Kanwar Preet Sandhu, Renu Hooda, Mona Beri, Aman Gupta, Nandita Hooda, Ashok Verma, Dr Ganesh Dutt Rattan, Pandeep Kumar, Dagar Katyal, Lt Col OP Dahiya (retd), Pawan Kansal and Manjot Kaur. One plot was allotted to M/s YPT Entertainment House Private Limited, which is made an accused along with its then Director Sidharth Bhardwaj. Nandita Hooda's firm M/s Chandigarh Softtech Pvt Ltd has also been named as accused. The accused have to appear in the Special Court on March 5.

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# The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

## Watershed acquittal

Court order will embolden victims of sexual misconduct

**A** DELHI court's order acquitting journalist Priya Ramani in a defamation case filed by former Union Minister MJ Akbar, whom she had named and shamed in a tweet in October 2018, will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for countless victims of sexual misconduct, especially at the workplace. The court has rightly observed that the 'right to reputation' cannot be protected at the cost of the right to life and dignity of a woman, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution, and the right to equality and equal protection before the law, enshrined in Article 14. Ironically, it was the victim, not the perpetrator, who was made to stand up in the court as an accused in this high-profile case.

The verdict is expected to embolden many other women to come forward and identify predators who misuse their positions of power to leave them scared and scarred for life. It has given fresh impetus to the #MeToo movement, which seemed to be losing momentum of late. The allegations of sexual misconduct against Hollywood movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, levelled by no less than 80 women, had unleashed the worldwide #MeToo storm in October 2017. In February-March last year, Weinstein was convicted and sentenced to 23 years in prison for sexually assaulting two women.

The Delhi court's observation that a woman has the right to put forward her grievances before any platform of her choice even after decades is also of great import. It's the fear of infamy, besides retaliation from the influential offender, that forces many victims to keep suffering in silence for years. Priya's acquittal, however, is only half the battle won. The victory will be conclusive only when all the Harvey Weinsteins get their comeuppance. For that to happen, we have to start with creating an enabling environment for women to speak about their ordeal. Also, there is a need to raise awareness about the legal weapon at their disposal — the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. Implementation of the law in letter and spirit can not only curb miscarriage of justice but also act as a strong deterrent.

## Unnao shamed, again

Yogi govt must prevent repeat of earlier mistakes

**E**VEN as the memory of the horrific 2017 Unnao gangrape case is fresh, this Uttar Pradesh town has been rocked again for the same reprehensible reason: heinous crimes against women. Three cousins, aged 13, 16 and 17 years, who had gone out to gather fodder were found lying unconscious in the fields when the family went searching for them as they had not returned home. Two girls are dead and the third is battling for her life in a hospital. The gritty survivor must be given the best medical aid, even an air ambulance to fly her to AIIMS, New Delhi, if need be. Going by the audacity shown by the accused in earlier such cases to threaten and intimidate victims and witnesses, the teenager must be protected against any such moves.

It is essential to prevent a repeat of the sequence of events of the 2017 rape case that smacks of a shoddy probe and an attempt to shield the main accused, expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar, and his accomplices. Frustrated by the tardy progress and hurdles in her quest for justice, the poor rape victim even attempted to immolate herself in front of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence on April 3, 2018. Her father who had been, in a bizarre twist, arrested was found dead in police custody the next day. The road to Sengar's eventual conviction by the CBI in December 2019 was littered by another suspiciously disgraceful act: when they were headed to the court, a truck-car collision left the girl and her lawyer critically injured and her two aunts dead.

Equally shameful is last September's brutal gangrape of a Dalit woman in Hathras. The authorities' actions, beginning with a delayed FIR, once again reeked of protection of the upper-caste accused. The late-night cremation of the victim, allegedly without the family's approval by the UP Police, sparked nationwide protests. Hopefully, the chastised Yogi government will bring the guilty to book this time. Only certain and swift punishment can bring down the crime rate.

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Tyranny naturally arises out of democracy. — Plato

### ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

# The Tribune.

LAHORE, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1921

### The Duty of the Council.

THE duty of our councillors is quite clear: They are the custodians of their own rights and of public money and a just regard for either demands that they should mark their disapproval of the action taken by His Excellency in the matter of appointments in the only manner open to them. They cannot compel His Excellency to consult them, nor can they prevent him from appointing whomever he pleases and as many persons as he likes. But it is for them to vote the salary, and there is nothing to prevent them from voting a small or even a nominal salary. If they think that there is not adequate work for Council Secretaries, a nominal salary is what they should vote. If, on the other hand, they think that there is work enough for two, but not for four, they should vote half the salary that they would otherwise have done. They can also take similar action to mark their disapproval of either the method of the appointment or of the persons actually selected. All this is within their constitutional power, and no one can complain of their using this power in what they consider to be the best interests of those whom they represent. We will only ask them to bear one thing in mind. The Council Secretaries will be Government servants. Unlike the ministers, they will form no part of the Government and will have no part in the determination of policy. Unlike the ministers, they will be concerned not only with the transferred but also with the reserved subjects, subjects the administration of which is to be controlled not by the Legislative Council, but by the bureaucracy. Lastly, unlike the ministers, not only their appointment and dismissal but even the work they have to do is to be determined by the Governor. In the circumstances, it is the duty of the Council to see that the discretion of the Governor is not used to reduce the independence of the Council or its powers.

# Champions of a cause

Activist Disha Ravi's arrest is an attempt to silence any opposition to the govt



TRYSTS AND TURNS

JULIO RIBEIRO



NEW 'ENEMY': The government has opened up another front — this time it is environmentalists and the youth. REUTERS

Activists are a thorn in the side of the government. If they could be silenced because of fear, there would be very little opposition to whatever plans it has of reshaping India.

**T**HE Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT), an NGO set up in Mumbai some 20 years ago, works mainly with college youth and aspires to turn them out into good human beings and citizens steeped in values of truth, honesty, compassion, justice and service to others. Many of these students display leadership qualities that the NGO tries to nurture. The story of Disha Ravi would interest the PCGT's trustees. She had a particular interest in environmental issues and, simultaneously, she possessed a determination to make a difference in that field. The PCGT has no expertise, neither does it possess the wherewithal to advise an environment activist on how to pursue her dream, but it is her leadership qualities that it would nurture and encourage.

The country needs enthusiasts in different fields and disciplines. Environmental issues, particularly climate change are matters of concern. Every child in school knows about 'sustainable development'. They understand that runaway development without concern for nature is the cause of climate change and manmade disasters, like the one that struck Chamoli district in Uttarakhand last week.

Disha Ravi is one of the thousands of young people who have been conditioned by their teachers in schools to think of the plight of future generations. But she is one in a thousand who had adopted this concern as her mission in life. The PCGT would commend her for her commitment to a worthy cause. The Modi-Shah duo should do likewise. That great statesman-politician, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, would have done that!

Because she was gifted with special qualities of leadership (just as Modiji is gifted in the arena of politics) and because of her deep concern for the future of our planet (a quality she shares with Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg), Disha motivated her friends in Bengaluru, and later, through a movement of youth christened Fridays for Future (FFF), to stand up for nature and prevent it from being ravaged by undiluted 'development'.

It is understandable that a government bent on 'development' should take note of a little wisp of a girl who, like her role model, Greta Thunberg, was attracting the attention of young people in Delhi and other parts of the country. The Indian government, used to having its own way because of the overpowering presence of its undisputed leader would have marked her out for eclipse in the not-too-distant future.

The opportunity seems to have arrived sooner than expected. The farmers' protest, which I am certain Disha would not have been too concerned about, was seen as a god-sent opportunity by organisations of Sikhs

settled abroad to revive interest in the Khalistan movement since the farmers enjoyed the support of a majority of people of the land.

A certain Mo Dhaliwal, a naturalised Canadian of Sikh descent, allegedly approached the innocent girl activist and lured her to join him to fashion a 'toolkit' for the farmers' agitation. A toolkit explains to the ignorant what the agitation is all about and draws up an action plan for the farmers and others to follow.

This toolkit was shared by Disha with her friend, Greta, who, in turn, tweeted approval publicly, thus bringing the toolkit to the notice of our intelligence agencies. Rejoicing at this unexpected 'gift' that fell into its lap from Sweden, the government and its striking arm, the Delhi Police, bided their time till the weekend to arrest the exuberant Disha, aged 22, in Bengaluru. They whisked her away to Delhi without obtaining a transit remand from a local Magistrate as more responsible police forces are wont to do and are expected to do.

Disha is not a criminal! If anything

she is like a policewoman ferreting out crimes against nature. If activists like her are going to face charges of sedition, the future of this great country is bleak, too bleak to imagine! Already, parents in Delhi are reported to have decided to stop their children from attending the weekly sessions of FFF that had made them aware of the dangers of interfering with the environment beyond a point.

Perhaps, the government wanted this young girl's efforts to stop. Her work was presenting too many obstacles to 'development'. Children were being influenced to the point of being 'brainwashed'. In July 2020, the Delhi Police had taken down the website of the FFF (India) but restored it soon when protests mounted. What probably irked the government is that the FFF had taken a strong stand against the draft Environmental Impact Assessment notification of 2020 that reduced public consultation on projects and allowed 'post-facto' environmental clearance.

By putting Disha away, the government could kill more than one bird with a single stone! It would prevent her movement against environmental damage from spreading, it would saddle the farmers' protests with a Khalistan tag because of Disha's unintended association with Dhaliwal of the Poetic Justice Foundation, a pro-Khalistani Sikh group, and, perhaps unintentionally, also discourage the tribes of activists who abound all across the country and take up a whole range of issues.

The activists are a thorn in the side of the government. If they could be silenced because of the fear that the government has generated everywhere in the land, then there would be very little opposition left to whatever plans it has of reshaping India. And if it required a 22-year-old enthusiast to be sacrificed for the cause, so be it!

The government has opened up another front after their campaign against farmers, journalists and Muslim lovers! This time, it is environmentalists and the youth.

## Decades later, their toil continues

### SURINDERJIT SINGH SANDHU

**I**N Amritsar, there is a village named Gummala. Very few know that it was earlier called Gummata Wala. Gummata is a dome-shaped structure. At this Gummata in the village, peasants who were unable to pay land revenue used to be herded and subjected to the worst kind of torture during the Mughal period.

Although the British constructed canals, made large areas of land cultivable and turned the disbanded robust army of the Khalsa Raj into firebrand farmers, the overall condition of the farmers remained pitiable as the Pagri Sambhal Jatta movement of 1907 indicates.

Renowned wrestler and actor Dara Singh has written in his autobiogra-

phy that during his childhood, he noticed that his father would regularly go to the DC's office to get some land re-transferred to some of his relatives. His father came to know from the Nambardar that the amount of his land revenue had increased as his relatives had transferred some land in his name. It was after protracted litigation that his father succeeded in transferring back the land to his relatives to be able to pay the land revenue.

Land revenue during that period was about Rs 2 per annum, and the worth of the land was not deemed equal to this meagre amount as people did not want to have the land even for free. The only relief which the farmers acknowledge till date was the indebtedness legislation, framed in the 1930s by Sir Chhotu Ram, whose birth

anniversary is traditionally observed on the day of Basant Panchami.

Partition had devastated the farmers of West Punjab, who got only 1/5th of the land they had to abandon. In the 1960s began the Green Revolution in Punjab. Though it made the country self-sufficient in foodgrains, it did not bring commensurate prosperity for the farmers.

I am witness to a large number of villagers, including those who owned more than 50 acres, fleeing whenever the tehsildar visited for the recovery of land revenue. Even their utensils used to be attached and taken to the tehsil office. One of my relatives, who had 75 acres, once came to me when I was occupying a senior position in the revenue department and said, 'Bhaji, tusi tehsildar nu keh deo ke 3 mahinayand di

mohlat de dwe, karza moh dyange, je ulne andar kar ditta tan barhi bezi honi ae, tuhamu pata ee ae ke ilaqe vich saadi changi limbupchani bani hoyee ae.'

I told him to pay the partial amount immediately, and for the rest the tehsildar will not pursue recovery.

A large number of rural families are sustained by the income of their sons who serve in the Army, some of them even rising to very senior positions. The brilliant sons and daughters of these farmers, despite heavy odds, have been excelling in sports and bringing medals. But since 1995, a large number of farmers have committed suicide because of debt.

This mainstay of national honour and dignity, which has been in constant misery, must be treated better by one and all.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### BJP in Bengal

Refer to 'BJP exposes chinks'; the article has brought out the numerous challenges confronting Mamata Banerjee on her home turf, but has missed out two important points that might prove to be a dampener for the BJP's poll prospects. The BJP has yet to finalise a CM face. Secondly, the party has opened its doors to renegades, turncoats and politicians with dubious credentials, who do not inspire confidence among the ordinary voter. Instead of highlighting the various shortcomings of the TMC rule and the yawning gap between promise and performance, the party has been indulging in unnecessary verbal jousts with the ruling dispensation and character vilification. There is still enough time for the BJP to offer an alternative development blueprint to convince the voters about its intentions.

AMIT BANERJEE, NEW DELHI

#### Digitalising economy

Due to Covid-19 as well as after the mission of 'digital India', our economy is back in the fast lane towards creating jobs and work electronically. The foremost example is the work-from-home facility being provided by several companies. Technology has proved to be a

boon as well as bane for the economy. It made work and life easy, but there are various risks such as identity theft, card detail theft and fraud. India is among the top-ranked nations with regard to cyber crime. There is a high chance of personal information theft due to a weak infrastructural base. Digitalised economy does not only affect privacy, but also puts the weaker classes at a disadvantage since not everyone can afford to use technology due to rising inflation and other problems. This is creating a chasm among various sectors of the economy. People as well as the government should pay attention towards every aspect so that positive growth is possible.

GARIMA KANSAL, RATIA

#### Teachers' role

Refer to 'Unexpected lesson in empathy'; teaching is a never-ending saga of learning between the teacher and the taught. These days when the Internet rules the roost and the market is flooded with misinformation, teachers' intervention is of utmost importance to separate facts from fiction and to inculcate critical thinking. Technology can enhance learning but cannot supplant a teacher. They should go beyond their syllabus, and imbibe

values of head and heart in students. It is the passion, boundless energy and a zest to make a difference in society that should be the guiding force behind any profession rather than a last-resort career option.

VIJAY SINGH ADHIKARI, NAINITAL

#### Warning bells for BJP

Reference to 'Mandate for liberal policies'; the people of Punjab punished political parties for their role in the enactment of the three farm laws. The BJP is responsible for promulgating these laws. It has been nearly uprooted. The SAD, which had supported the Bills in the initial stage, was a distant second. The AAP's double standard is responsible for its low score. The BJP must read the writing on the wall.

FAQIR SINGH, DASUYA

#### Victory of people

Apropos of 'Congress sweeps the polls', the results were expected. The Congress has won the election overwhelmingly, pushing the rival SAD to a humiliating second spot. The benefit of the farmers' agitation has gone in favour of the Congress. The resignation of Harsimrat Badal from the coveted post of central minister did not help as the resignation was not timed well. The stubborn attitude of

the Modi government on the new farm laws has not benefited it either. The Assembly elections are not far away. There is a lot of responsibility on the shoulders of the Congress government. People have high hopes and their votes cannot be taken for granted. Due to 50 per cent quota, some women have been elected for the first time and people expect a significant role from them. It is expected they will play an assertive role and will not become puppets in the hands of their husbands.

JATINDER BIR SINGH, LUDHIANA

#### Ramani's acquittal

Refer to 'Ramani let off, court junks MJ Akbar's suit'; Ramani's acquittal in the criminal defamation case filed by Akbar proves who was the offender and who the victim. The acquittal by the Delhi trial court also indicates that Akbar was trying to mislead the court by filing a defamation case instead of accepting his fault. He probably felt that he could use courts to turn a decision in his favour but it has been proved incorrect. It is laudable that Ramani stood her ground. The court order also noted that women's right to speak up about violations are not restricted by the passage of time. The order deserves praise.

DEVENDRA KHURANA, BHOPAL

# Reading tea leaves of Biden's China policy



YOGESH GUPTA

FORMER AMBASSADOR

**U**S President Joe Biden's telephone conversation with China's President Xi Jinping on February 10, according to the US media reports, was "a sharp confrontation in a polite and civil manner". While Xi spoke in a conciliatory tone underlining the importance of a healthy bilateral relationship, Biden raised "fundamental concerns" about China's coercive and unfair economic practices, the crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang and its assertive actions in the region, including Taiwan.

The two leaders also exchanged views on preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons (reference to seeking China's cooperation in constricting North Korea's and Iran's nuclear weapon programmes) and cooperation on climate change and global pandemics.

China had been eager to start a dialogue with the Biden administration early on to repair the bilateral ties, which had reached its lowest point during the Trump administration. Xi Jinping had thought of sending his Politburo member and senior diplomat, Yang Jiechi to Washington to interact with Biden's team, but the

latter's response was cold as President Biden first wanted to consult the US allies and partners.

In his statement at the Department of State earlier, Biden had warned that while "we need not have a conflict with China, there would be extreme competition". The competition, it was elaborated, would be comprehensive to ramp up all round pressure on Beijing. The Biden administration would hold China to account for its political persecution and human rights abuses; on the economic side, it would escalate pressure on Beijing to reform its economy which President Trump tried but failed; tariffs on China's exports and sanctions on export of sensitive US technologies to China would continue for the present.

On the military side, the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and the visit of warships to Taiwan Strait have been expanded and the US army has resumed "Yudh Abhyas" exercise with the Indian Army in Rajasthan. The Biden administration has made it clear that it would stand up for its allies and partners which face China's bullying.

Unlike Trump, Biden is proceeding in a systematic and consistent manner to consult US allies and partners, important members of the Republican and his own party and various government departments on the contours of his new China policy. During a visit to Pentagon last week, Biden announced the setting up of an inter-agency China task force headed by Ely Ratner, one of the best China specialists in Washington to coordinate the work of various departments dealing with political, economic,



technology and military issues and formulate a coherent policy to win the competition against China.

It will also examine the current deployment of the US intelligence and military assets globally and how these should be reconfigured on ground on the basis of its new foreign policy and security priorities. The new policy will be based on consultation with and spell out the role of US allies and partners. It will submit a report in four months on a set of recommendations on key priorities and decisions to delineate a way forward on China-related issues.

Earlier, in a telephone conversation on February 8, President Biden and

Prime Minister Modi had agreed to work together for a rule-based international order and a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific (IP). Biden had told PM Modi that the US would build "a stronger regional architecture through the Quad" (US, Japan, India and Australia), ostensibly to counter China's influence in the region. A virtual meeting of the Quad Foreign Ministers on February 18 is the first after the Biden administration assumed office.

It is believed that President Biden's remark about the transformation of Quad as a security framework to confront China spurred rethinking in Beijing on its immediate disengagement of military forces in Ladakh. Presi-

dent Xi who has been working for dividing the US-led transatlantic alliance for sometime by entering into trade and investment agreements with several Asian and European Union states before Biden's taking over, took this initiative in the hope that India would not agree to the US proposal of transfiguration of Quad as a security framework directed against Beijing and would distance itself from the US. A thaw in China's relations with India would permit Beijing to focus its attention exclusively on its competition with the US, Xi thought.

The checkmating of China's deceptive advance into the Indian territories in Pangong Tso, Galwan valley, would side with the US. China would continue to buttress its economic, technological and military capacities in the hope that it would outmatch those of the US in course of time as it thinks time is on its side. Also, that many allies and partners of the US would not agree to sacrifice their economic interests with Beijing for supporting the US to protect its global supremacy.

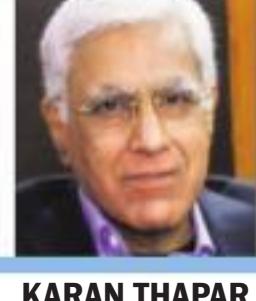
Hot Springs and Gogra Post by our armed forces, our efforts to modernise the border infrastructure, augment the force and armour strength in the region and firm stand taken by our leadership sent a clear message to China that its deceptive forays would not yield much dividend.

Xi is trying to reduce tensions with countries against which it had provoked conflicts earlier. Besides statements, China will be carefully watching the actual moves of the US, its allies and partners on the ground. China is happy at Biden's statement that he would not be pursuing a military conflict with her.

The competition between the US and China will be long term and depend on whether the US and its allies can undertake much-needed economic, technological and military renewal to stay ahead of China, whether they can put enough pressure on Beijing to reform its unfair economic practices and thwart its aggression in the region.

**ACTION PLAN:** Biden has warned that even if there is no conflict with China, there would be competition to build pressure on it. REUTERS

## Judges deliver justice, they don't embody it



KARAN THAPAR

SENIOR JOURNALIST

**I**f it wasn't disturbing, it might be funny. Late Tuesday evening, the Supreme Court announced it had suo motu registered a criminal contempt case against Rajdeep Sardesai for two tweets last August. Although Attorney General KV Venugopal had earlier refused consent, the court, it seemed, was exercising its right to take cognisance. Hours later, the court's registry clarified this was "an inadvertent mistake".

I would say the issue at the heart of the law of contempt is a simple and straightforward one. Are judges special or is justice special? It's an interesting question and not because it's a tricky one.

Let's examine it in the light of two cases where charges of contempt have been filed and are being heard — the case of comedian Kunal Kamra and that of cartoonist Rachita Taneja. I'll give you the details so you can judge for yourself whether they amount to contempt, satire or humour.

In Kamra's case, it was a matter of two tweets and a gesture. The first tweet said: "Honour has left the building (Supreme Court) long back". The second said: "The Supreme Court of this country is the most supreme joke of this country." Do these tweets really amount to contempt or are they better understood as satire or even a reflection of what the Indian public thinks?

The gesture is more tricky. It's both clever and questionable. At one level, the raised index and middle finger of Kamra's left hand is a V-sign. However, the accompanying message could convert this into a rude gesture. Actually, crude might be a better word. But is



**KEY QUESTION:** The issue at the heart of the contempt law is whether judges are special or is justice special. PTI

that contempt? Even if it is, it's too immature to be taken seriously. Judges — and not just because of their age — should rise above it.

Let's now turn to Kamra's defence. "I believe that constitutional offices — including the judicial offices — know no protection from jokes". But he goes further... "jokes are not reality and don't claim to be so." And then tellingly, adds: "Just as the Supreme Court values the faith public places in it, it should also trust the public not to form its opinion of the court on the basis of a few jokes on Twitter."

This is what former Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi said to me in a recent interview: "I don't think it's contempt... the tweets of Mr Kamra may be in bad taste but they are not contempt... people are entitled to speak their mind... we should shrug our shoulders and move

away. These things happen but move on."

The other case concerns two cartoons by Rachita Taneja. In one, a figure with a mike says to the Supreme Court, whilst the BJP looks on, "Tu jaanta nahi mera baap kaha hai". In the other, there's a drawing of the Supreme Court with an orange flag and the caption says, "Sanghi Court of India". Is that contempt or satire or criticism?

I haven't seen Taneja's defence, but let me quote Mukul Rohatgi's opinion. These cartoons are "definitely not contempt but satire". He said: "The Attorney General should not have granted permission (for prosecution)... by taking notice of these matters, you are giving importance to something that doesn't deserve it."

Now let's return to the question I started with: Are judges special or is justice special? I would venture to suggest Kamra's and Taneja's fate depends on

how the Supreme Court answers this question. Obviously, I don't know but I can tell you how the concept of contempt has evolved in Britain, where it originated, and how British judges view it today.

The concept is centuries-old British law abolished in 2013. At the time, the British Law Commission said the purpose was not just "preventing the public from getting the wrong idea of judges... but where there are shortcomings, it's equally important to prevent the public from getting the right idea." In other words, one intention was to hide judicial corruption. The concept, therefore, clashed with the need for transparency but also freedom of speech.

As far back as 1968, Lord Denning, Britain's former Master of the Rolls, had this to say of the Law of Contempt: "Let me say at once that we will never use this jurisdiction as a means to uphold our own dignity... nor will we use it to suppress those who speak against us. We do not fear criticism, nor do we resent it. For there is something far more important at stake. It is no less than freedom of speech itself. It's the right of every man, in parliament or out of it, in the press or over the broadcast, to make fair comment, even outspoken comment, on matters of public interest... we must rely on our own conduct itself to be its own vindication."

In 1987, after the Spycatcher judgment, when the *Daily Mirror* called British Law Lords "You Old Fools", or in 2016, after the Brexit ruling, when the *Daily Mail* called three judges "Enemies of the people", the British judiciary consciously and sensibly ignored the headlines and did not consider con-

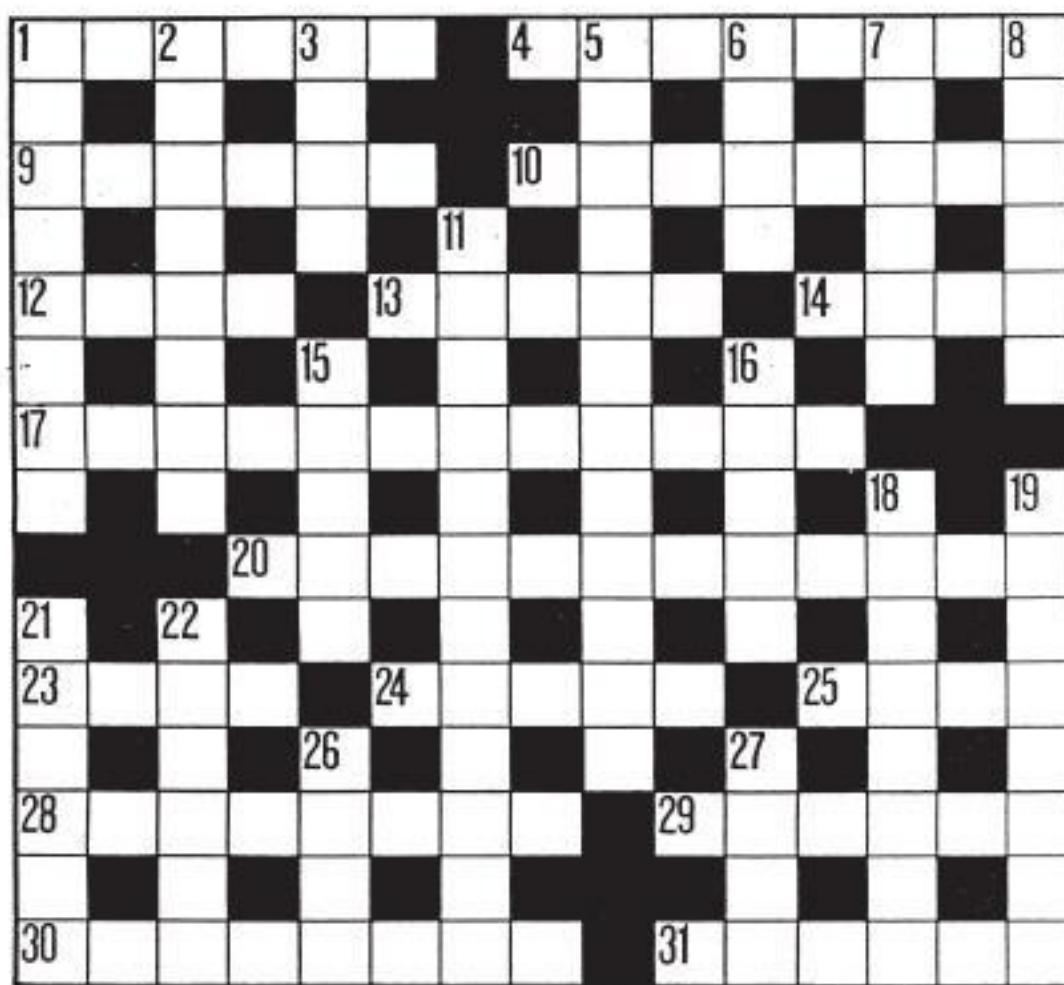
tempt prosecution. In fact, Lord Templeton's comment on the Spycatcher headline is worth recalling: "I cannot deny that I am old; it's the truth. Whether I am a fool or not is a matter of perception of someone else... there is no need to invoke the powers of contempt."

A similar position was adopted in a 2008 lecture by our own Justice Markandey Katju: "If a person calls me a fool, whether inside court or outside it, I for one would not take action as it does not prevent me from functioning, and I would simply ignore the comment or else say that everyone is entitled to his opinion. After all, words break no bones."

More importantly, Justice Katju added: "The test to determine whether an act amounts to contempt of court or not is this: does it make the functioning of judges impossible or extremely difficult? If it does not, then it does not amount to contempt of court even if it's harsh criticism... the only situation where I would have to take some action was if my functioning as a judge was made impossible... after all, I have to function if I wish to justify my salary."

I think that answers the question I began with. Whilst justice is important, judges must not take themselves too seriously. Even if their amour propre is offended, it does not mean the institution has been questioned or justice brought into disrepute. Judges deliver justice, they do not embody it. They should never forget that their court is supreme because it's final, not because it's infallible. When it's their lapse, they can be criticised, but of course, politely and fairly.

### QUICK CROSSWORD

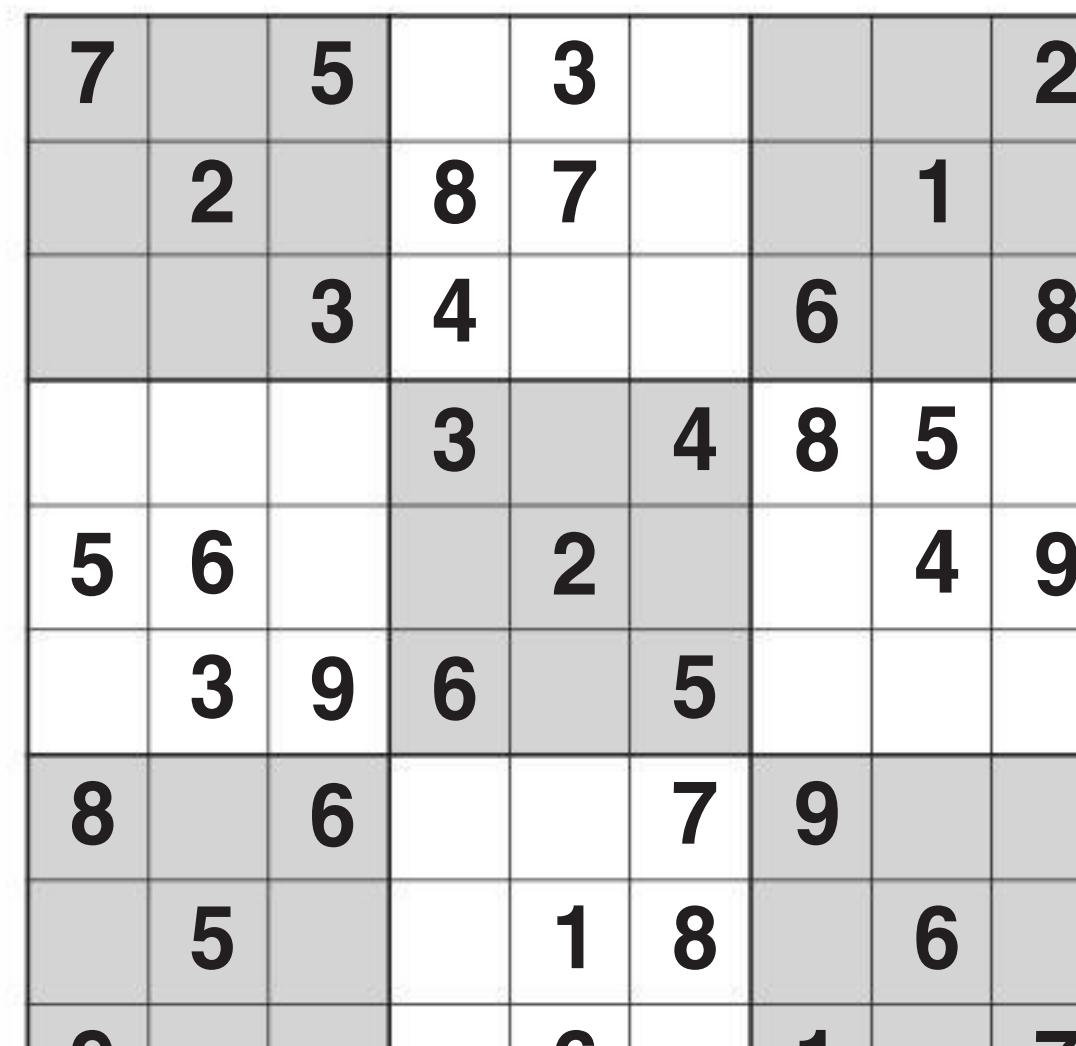


YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

**Across:** 1 Rapid, 4 Cripple, 8 Far, 9 Off chance, 10 Example, 11 Blunt, 13 Tripod, 15 Strain, 18 Chaos, 19 Defiant, 21 Never mind, 23 Nub, 24 Lenient, 25 Petty.

**Down:** 1 Reflect, 2 Per capita, 3 Droop, 4 Coffe, 5 Inhibit, 6 Pun, 7 Erect, 12 Up against, 14 Observe, 16 Notably, 17 Addict, 18 Canal, 20 Fed up, 22 Van.

### SU DO KU



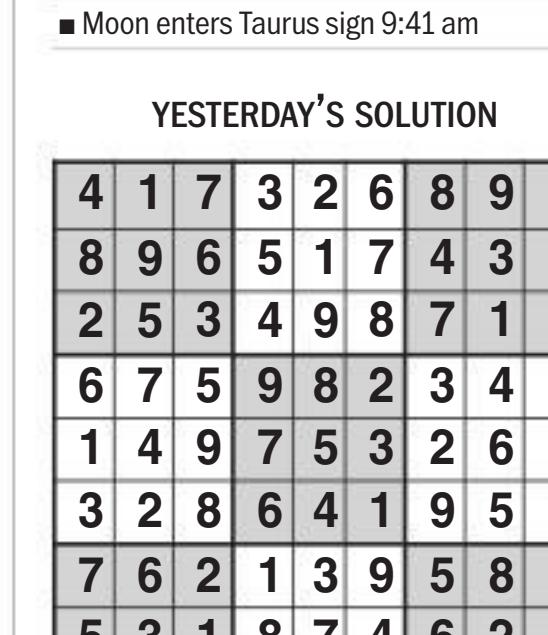
V. EASY

### CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 19, 2021, FRIDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat	2077
■ Shaka Samvat	1942
■ Magh Shaka	30
■ Phalgun Parvish	8
■ Hijri	1442
■ Shukla Paksha Tithi 7, up to 10.59 am	
■ Indra Yoga up to 4.31 am	
■ Kritika Nakshatra up to 5.57 am	
■ Moon enters Taurus sign 9:41 am	

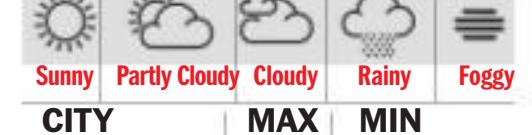
### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



### FORECAST

SUNSET: FRIDAY 18:14 HRS

SUNRISE: SATURDAY 06:58 HRS



CITY MAX MIN

Chandigarh	27	11
New Delhi	28	10
Amritsar	23	10
Bathinda	25	11
Jalandhar	24	10
Ludhiana	25	11
Bhiwani	27	11
Hisar	26	9
Sirsa	26	10
Dharamsala	18	6
Manali	17	2
Shimla	17	7
Srinagar	17	-01
Jammu	24	11
Kargil	05	-11
Leh	06	-10
Dehradun	25	10
Mussoorie	15	5

TEMPERATURE IN °C

**CLASSIFIEDS****SITUATION VACANT**

Lawrence Global School, Patiala-Sirhind Road, Fatehgarh Sahib requires Junior Co-ordinator/ Activity Incharge, Counsellor (mother, Primary, Trained Graduate) Teachers. Candidates must possess excellent communication skills and experience. Send your resume by 21.02.2021 at lgs.fatehgarh@gmail.com or walk in interview directly in School campus on working days. (CL20098224)

**Shanti Devi Arya Mahila College**, Dinanagar, Distt. Gurdaspur (Punjab) requires lady Principal on regular basis. Qualification and grade as per UGC/ Punjab Govt./ GNDU/ DPL norms. Reservation as per Punjab Govt. rules. Apply within seven days to Secretary of the college with passport size photograph and certified copies of testimonials, with a copy to Dean College Development Council, GNDU Amritsar along with bank draft of Rs 1000/- + GST 18% = 1180/- in favour of Registrar, GNDU, Amritsar. Contact No.: 98146-53621. Those who had already applied earlier need not apply. Secretary, SDAM College, Dinanagar. (CL20098001)

**The Enlightened College of Physical Education**, Jhumri, Mansa (Pb). Required Principal (01), Associate Professor in Physical Education (02), Assistant Professor in Physical Education (05), Assistant Professor in Computer Science (01), Assistant Professor in English (01), Assistant Professor in English (01) on regular basis. Qualification and Grade as per UGC/ NCTE/ Pbi. Uni/ Pb. Govt. Norms. Submit application to college within 10 days through registered post or by Email: egjphumri@gmail.com. A copy be sent to Dean College Development Council, Punjab University, Patiala. Ph. 98076-74000. (CL20098206)

**SGS DAV Centenary Public School**, 15-HMH, Tibbi Road, Hanumanagar Town (Raj), Affiliated to C.B.S.E. New Delhi. Affiliation No. 1730205. D.A.V. College Managing Committee, New Delhi. Teachers required for Session 2021-2022. PGTS- Physics, Chemistry, Information Practice, Economics, History, Political Science, TGT: English, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, PRTS- English, Maths, Social Science, Science, Computers, Art & Craft, Dance, Pre-Primary teachers, PTI. Other: Office Assistant, LDC, Receptionist, Library Assistant. Qualification as per CBSE norms however for PRT & TGT posts CTET is compulsory. Salary as per DAV norms. Interested candidates can send their resume at e-mail address: Principal (CL20098365)

**MEDICAL/SURGICAL**

**New Lifeline Hospital**, Zirakpur announces extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) facility. ECMO is a true life saver. ECMO is the ultimate life support system for heart, lung and liver failure patients. Many precious lives can be saved both in adults and children. 98141-04203. (CL20097821)

**BUSINESS**

Table space 1000 per month. Learn website free. Global Mall Soma Fatehbad, Haryana. 98105-70740, 98105-71993, fatbehbad.net allfreemail.net (CL20097854)

**PROPERTY FOR SALE**

Chandigarh Sector 16 second floor apartment 3 BHK/ tastefully built/ ample parking, 99150-01900/ 98722-5755. (CL20097760)

**LAND FOR SALE**

Prime location! 10300 gaj, corner, on 40' road, surrounding farmhouses, Sector 9, New Chandigarh (T-Point), 94785-01691. (CL20097972)

**LOST & FOUND**

It is notified for the information that my original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main Secondary & Senior Secondary Examination of years 2004 & 2006 and Roll Nos. 2149834 & 224885 respectively issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Pukhli Singla, 2007/1, Old Lal Bagh, Patiala (Punjab), Mob: 9888902656. (CL20098205)

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

I, Jasvir son of Nazar resident of Mohalla, Jalandhari Gate Nurmalah, (Jalandhar), have changed my name Jasvir to Jasvir Sondhi. (CL20097358)

I, Parveen s/o Nathu Ram r/o # 48, Vikas Nagar, Mauli Jagran, Chandigarh- 160047 have changed my name to Parveen Kumar. (CL20097871)

I, Rashmi W/o Rajneesh Kumar R/o House No. 2502, (First Floor), Sector 35C, Chandigarh, have changed my name to Rashmi Kumari. (CL20098225)

I, Tej Partap S/o Joginder Singh R/o Bartoli, Distt. Kurukshetra, have changed my name Tej Partap to Tej Partap Singh. Please all concerned note. (CL20098242)

I, Satish Kumar s/o Krishan Dutt H.No. 908L T5 Sector 3 Talwari, Distt. Hoshiarpur, declared that my son Ranjan Sharma and his wife Amita Sharma are not under my control. So, I disinherit them from my all moveable and immovable property. In future my person deal with them it's self responsible. (CL20098191)

I, Kushan Lata is legally wedded spouse of No. 1046772P Hav. Sunil Kumar Village Sulpur PO Bhamla Tehsil Sarkaghat District Mandi, have changed my name from Kusum Lata to Kushan Lata, Vide Affidavit dated 17.12.2020. Before Distt. Court Hamirpur (HP). (CL20098267)

I, No. 4006859N Ex. NK (TS) Satish Kumar s/o VPO Bhali Sub Tehsil Kotla, Tehsil Jawali Distt. Kangra H.P. declare that my wife's name and Dob is wrongly entered in my Army record as Anjali Rana, 27.05.1986, whereas her correct name and Dob is Anjali Devi, 20.06.1986. Concerned note. (CL20098299)

I, Service No. 9118838N Rank REN Name Arun Singh of Unit 11 Jakli c/o 56 APO do hereby declare that in my service documents records the name of my brother is wrongly written as Ajay Singh CHIB instead of correct name Ajay CHIB as per 10th mark card school documents records vide affidavit dated 02.02.21 before Judicial Magistrate 1st class Akhnoor. (CL20098067)

**TENDER NOTICES**

**Bhai Bala Ji Hostel** under Nishan-E- Sikhi International School, Khadur Sahib, Distt. Tarn Taran invites quotation for session 2021- 22 from vendors before 28.02.2021 to run the laundry (including soap & surf) for strength around 140 students. Draft of Rs. 20,000/- as Security to be deposited along with quotation. For any information Ph: 098152-72823. (CL20097777)

**Bhai Bala Ji Hostel** under Nishan-E- Sikhi International School, Khadur Sahib, Distt. Tarn Taran invites quotation for session 2021- 22 from vendors before 28.02.2021 to run the mess for strength around 140 students. Draft of Rs. 50,000/- as Security to be deposited along with quotation. For mess menu and other information Ph.: 098152-72823. (CL20097777)

**For Circulation and Advertisement booking** and other related queries please call at following numbers from Monday to Saturday between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.

Circulation: 0172-2670319, 2670250, 2670442  
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Advertisement: Classified: 0172-2670257, 2670338  
E-mail at classified@tribunemail.com

Display: 0172-2670256, 2670342  
E-mail at advt@tribunemail.com

**COURT NOTICES**

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)  
In the Court of Sh. Kushal Singla Civil Judge, Junior Division, Chandigarh.

Kunal Chauhan Versus Chander Prabha @ Payal

CNR No.: CHCH02-000849-2019

Next Date: 31.05.2021

Publication issued to:

Chander Prabha @ Payal w/o Sh. Kunal Chauhan r/o Aadityapuram Krishna Colony, Bhind Road, Distt. Gwalior, M.P.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s)

could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/

respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 31.05.2021 at 10.00 a.m.

For details logon to:

https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district\_notice&district=chandigarh

Dated, this day of 16.02.2021.

Sd/- Civil Judge, Junior Division, CL20097653 Chandigarh.

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)

In the Court of Sh. Gurbhinder Singh Johal Civil Judge

Junior Division-3, Patiala.

Punjab and Sind Bank Vs.

Harpreet Singh Virk

CNR No.: PBPT02-001463-2020

Next Date: 12.03.2021

Suit for recovery of Rs. 13,68,682

Publication issued to:

Harpreet Singh Virk

Father:- Gurdial Singh r/o 74, Maharaja Narinder Enclave, Sirhind Road, Patiala.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s)

could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/

respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 12.03.2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to:

https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district\_notice&district=gurdaspur

Dated, this day of 05.02.2021.

Sd/- Civil Judge, Family Court, CL20093068 Gurdaspur.

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)

In the Court of Ms. Amandeep Kaur Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division), Dasuya.

Dalvir Singh, aged about 23 years son of Late Daljeet Singh son of Jagtar Singh, resident of Village Bassi Jal Khan, Tehsil Dasuya, District Hoshiarpur.

...Plaintiff Versus

Amrik Singh s/o Jagtar Singh, resident of Village Bassi Jal Khan, Tehsil Dasuya, District Hoshiarpur and others. ...Defendants

Suit for declaration

CNR No. PBHOA-000758-2019

Next Date: 09.03.2021

Publication issued to:

Harpreet Singh Virk Son:

Gurdial Singh R/o 74,

Maharaja Narinder Enclave

Sirhind Road, Patiala.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s)

could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/

respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 09.03.2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to:

https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district\_notice&district=patiala

Dated, this day of 04.02.2021.

Sd/- Civil Judge, Junior Division-3, CL20097803 Patiala.

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)

In the Court of Sh. Gurbhinder Singh Johal, Civil Judge

Junior Division-3, Patiala.

Punjab and Sind Bank through Branch Manager

Versus

Harpreet Singh Virk

CNR No.: PBPT02-002193-2020

Next Date: 12.03.2021

SUCC

CNR No.:

PBAS02-002570-2020

Next Date: 09.03.2021

Notice to:

General Public

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s)

could not be served. It is ordered that respondents

should appear in person or through counsel on 09.03.2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to:

https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district\_notice&district=amritsar

Dated, this day of 03.02.2021.

Sd/- Civil Judge, Junior Division-3, CL20097834 Amritsar.

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)

In the Court of Sh. Kushal Singla

Civil Judge, Jr. Div., Chandigarh.

Rakesh Soni Versus

Kamal Kumar

CNR No.: CHCH02-002731-2020

Next Date: 31.03.2021

Publication issued to:

1. Sh. Kamal Kumar Bhambula s/o Sh. Ram Lal Bhambula. 1st Address: Second Floor, SCO No. 130-131, Madhya Marg, Sec-8C, Chd. 2nd Address: H.No. 249/15, Preet Nagar, Ladowala Road, Jalandhar City.

2. B.N. Worldwide Education Services through their proprietor Mr Kamal Kumar Bhambula s/o Sh. Ram Lal Bhambula, Second Floor, SCO No. 130-131, Madhya Marg, Sec-8C, Chd.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s)

could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/

respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 31.03.2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to:

https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district\_notice&district=jalandhar

Dated, this day of 11.02.2021.

Sd/- Civil Judge, (Junior Division), CL20097893 Jalandhar.

DISCLAIMER

# Only 2 of 5 MPs attend delimitation panel meet

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

## ALL THREE NC LEADERS SKIP DELIBERATIONS

**“**It (Delimitation Commission) is a constitutionally constituted body. Any stand taken against it is itself unconstitutional. When a member refuses to attend the meeting, he is denying the voices of his electorate to be heard in this forum.



Talking to media after the meeting, Jitendra Singh noted that proceedings were smooth and fruitful, but hit at the NC leaders saying: “It is a delimitation exercise and not a platform for political posturing. It does not even get registered with the Election Commission.”

The Union Minister said, “It (Delimitation Commission) is a constitutionally constituted body. Any stand taken against it is itself unconstitutional. When a member refuses to attend the meeting, he is denying the voices of his electorate to be heard in this forum.”

He went on to add: “On one hand, these members stand in Parliament and say that we should have an elected Legislative Assembly in J&K but when a positive headway is made in that direction, they refuse to cooperate. They owe an answer to people, who have sent them to Parliament.”

The commission on its part said an overview on the process of delimitation based on “the Jammu and

Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019 and Delimitation Act-2002” was presented before the members, which included details of various sections of these laws related to the exercise with respect to the UT of J&K.

The two associate members appreciated the commission’s efforts and suggested that delimitation of constituencies shall be as far as practicable, be for geographically compact areas and while delimiting them regard shall be given to physical features; existing boundaries of administrative units; facilities of communication and public convenience,” it said, adding that suggestions were also made to give special attention to the difficult terrains, while mentioning that they would put forward more suggestions in coming days.

Beside Justice (retd) Desai, the other members of the commission are Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and State Election Commissioner of J&K KK Sharma.

## Warlike stores found in Reasi

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

in Reasi district and the operation was launched after that, the Army said on Thursday.

The warlike stores were spread over a large area in the remote uninhabited forests of Makkhdhar in Reasi. Terrorists are in acute shortage of weapons and are desperate to try and disrupt peace and development.

An Army spokesperson said a “huge cache of arms and warlike stores were recovered from the hinter-

lands of south of the Pir Panjal ranges of Reasi district”.

A team of the Army and J&K Police cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to find out the warlike stores and sanitise the area. The spokesperson said the huge cache of arms recovered comprised of AK-47 rifles, SLR rifle, .303 rifle, two pistols with magazines, ammunition, four UBGL grenades, box of AK-47 ammunition and radio sets.

FROM PAGE 1

## Farmers derail rly traffic

“Not a single case of stoppage of train by the agitators was reported in most zones. The stir passed off peacefully,” a spokesman said.

Sukhdev Singh Kokri of the BKU (Ugrahan) said their activists blocked rail traffic at 22 places in 15 districts. He said their call got a huge response from people from various walks of life.

Jagmohan Singh of the BKU (Dakaunda), which held protests at 40 places in Malwa, urged people to reach Tikri and Singhu to strengthen their movement. In Haryana, farmers squatted on rail tracks in Karnal, Jhajjar, Hisar, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Sirsa, Ambala and Kurukshetra. — TNS

## Committed to ensure free, open Indo-Pacific region: Quad FMs

“It was noted that the Indo-Pacific concept had gathered growing international support, including in Europe,” added the ministers.

The ministers exchanged views on combating the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, maritime security, high availability disaster recovery (HADR), supply chain resilience and counter-terrorism.

In discussion pertaining to Myanmar, India reiterated the need to uphold the rule of law and democratic transition. “Noting

that regular Quad consultations hold value, the ministers agreed to continue these useful discussions,” said the Ministry of External Affairs.

Meanwhile, Jaishankar will visit Maldives and Mauritius next week. In Maldives, he will review bilateral ties and progress of ongoing bilateral projects, besides holding discussions on the pandemic situation.

In Mauritius, he will call on the President Pritivirajsing Roopun and Prime Minister Pravind Jagnauth. — TNS

## PM for SAARC medical visa

future pandemics?” the PM asked the delegates of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and India.

Modi hailed the Asian region’s collaborative response to the pandemic, recalling the March 2020 meeting of SAARC leaders where a Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund was established with India’s initial contribution of \$10 million.

“If the 21st century is to be the Asian century, it cannot be without greater integration among the countries of South Asia and the Indian Ocean

island countries. The spirit of regional solidarity you have shown during the pandemic has proven that such integration is possible... Many experts had voiced special concerns about the densely populated Asian region and the pandemic’s impact on its population.

Barring Pakistan that has procured Covid vaccine from China, other attending countries have received Indian support. The PM also suggested today that countries of the region share successful public health policies and flagged Ayushman Bharat and Jan Arogya schemes as success stories from India.

This deserves to be applauded. Today, the hopes of our region and the world are focused on rapid deployment of vaccines. In this too, we must maintain the same cooperative and collaborative spirit,” he said.

The Prime Minister said collaboration was a valuable take-away from the pandemic. “Through our openness and determination, we have managed to achieve one of the lowest fatality rates in the world.

## NIA arrests Kishtwar resident for harbouring Hizb militants

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18

The NIA today said it had arrested a terrorist harbourer and logistics provider of Hizbul

Mujahideen in a case pertaining to the snatching of a service rifle from the escort in-charge of the District Magistrate of

Kishtwar in March 2019. Tarag Hussain Giri, a resident of Kishtwar district, was arrested on Wednesday on the charges

of his alleged role in harbouring terrorists and providing logistic support to Hizb operatives in J&K, said a senior NIA

official. The accused was remanded in police custody for five days by the Special NIA Court, Jammu. — TNS

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HOUSING - 1 BRANCH)												NOTIFICATION OF THE SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT												
Khasra No.			Area K-M			Khasra No.			Area K-M			Khasra No.			Area K-M			Khasra No.			Area K-M			
9/1	0-12	2/1/1	0-12	23/3/1	1-14	6/2	2-12	64	1-7	348	1-14	425	13-13	496	0-9	438	0-11	507	2-0	438	0-11	507	2-0	
11/1/3	0-9	2/1/2	1-14	23/3/2	0-4	7/1	1-0	69	2-4	350 min	2-19	426	1-15	497	0-2	430	3-1	501	0-15	430	3-1	501	0-15	
11/2/2	2-7	2/2	4-8	24/1	1-16	7/2	2-19	74 min	4-12	356 min	1-1	427	0-15	498	2-0	1634/431	2-2	502	0-16	1634/431	2-2	502	0-16	
12/2	7-8	9	5-2	24/2	5-14	7/3	3-13	75 min	5-15	361	0-11	428	0-19	499	0-8	1635/431	2-10	503/1	1-7	1636/432	3-0	503/2	1-5	
13	8-0	10/1	3-0	25	1-13	8/1	4-12	85/2/2 min	0-10	44/23/1	3-14	429	8-9	500	0-5	1637/432	5-10	504/1	2-9	433	1-10	504/2	1-17	
14/1	7-8	10/2	3-18	26	1-3	8/2	1-8	88 min	9-0	& 23/2	7-19	434	3-1	501	0-15	1638/432	2-1	505/1	0-15	1639/442	1-7	511	0-10	
14/2	0-12	10/3	1-2	34/4/1 min	0-10	8/3	1-14	89 min	7-16	center	7-19	435	0-17	505/1	1-0	1640/442	1-1	512	0-17	1641/442	1-1	512	0-17	
15	8-0	11	8-0	4/2	3-4	8/3	0-6	90 min	11-8	rasta	7-19	436	0-12	505/2	1-9	1642/442	2-1	505/2	1-9	1643/442	1-1	512	0-17	
16/1	4-4	12	3-16	4/3 min	1-16	9	8-0	91	4-15	43/4/1	1-7	437	1-11	506	1-8	1643/442	4-2	507	1-8	1644/442	4-2	507	1-8	
16/2	3-16	19	0-18	5	7-11	10/1	1-10	93 min	19-4	& 4/2	1-7	438	1-10	504/2	1-17	1645/442	4-2	508/1	2-16	1646/442	4-2	508/2	3-1	
17/1	3-16	20	8-0	6/1	5-0	10/2	2-0	327/1 min	0-3	34/20/3	7-19	439	1-7	505/1	0-15	1647/442	4-2	508/1	2-16	1648/442	4-2	508/2	3-1	
17/2	0-6	21	5-18	6/2/1	1-13	10/3	1-0	343 min	4-2	& 35/16/1	7-19	440	0-11	509 min	3-14	1649/442	4-2	511	0-10	1650/442	4-2	511	0-10	
17/3	3-10	19/1/1	6-4	6/2/2	1-7	11/1	2-0	346	2-8	Center	7-19	441	0-1	510	0-11	1651/442	4-2	512	0-17	1652/442	4-2	512	0-17	
18/2	3-12	2/1	5-7	8/1	1-7	12/1	6-12	347	1-10	Rasta	7-19	442	0-12	505/2	1-9	1653/442	4-2	513	0-17	1654/442	4-2	513	0-17	
19	8-0	2/2	2-13	8/2	5-0	12/2	1-8	348	2065-11	Total	7-19	443	1-11	506	1-8	1655/442	4-2	514	3-0	1656/442	4-2	514	3-0	
20/1	4-0	3	8-0	9	6-3	13	8-0	349	343 min	4-2	& 35/16/1	7-19	444	0-11	507	2-0	1657/442	4-2	515	0-17	1658/442	4-2	515	0-17
20/2	2-19	4/1	3-8	10/1 min	3-2	14/1	2-0	350	42/20/3	7-19	445	0-1	508	2-0	1659/442	4-2	516	0-17	1660/442	4-2	516	0-17</td		



# Pain & gain

Osaka to meet Brady in final as Williams exits in tears; Djokovic downs Karatsev's



Naomi Osaka is greeted by Serena Williams after their semifinals match; (below) Jennifer Brady beat Karolina Muchova 64-36 64. REUTERS

MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY 18

Naomi Osaka ended Serena Williams' bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title with an imperious 6-3 6-4 win today, a victory that booked her spot in her second Australian Open final and left the American great in tears.

In a rematch of their tumultuous 2018 US Open decider, Osaka underlined her status as the new queen of women's tennis and soaked up the cheers from the Rod Laver Arena crowd as fans returned to the Grand Slam after a five-day lockdown. "It's just always an honour to play her and I just didn't want to go out really bad. I just wanted to try my best," Osaka said after her 75-minute match on a steamy afternoon. Osaka, the 2019 champion, will meet Jennifer Brady, who ensured there would be at least one American in the final after battling to a 6-4 3-6 6-4 win over Karolina Muchova in the other semi today.

It will be a rematch of last year's US Open semifinals, where Osaka edged Brady in three sets on the way to her third Grand Slam triumph.



Djoker the stroker

Defending champion Novak Djokovic declared himself fighting fit for the final after ending the incredible run of Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev with his "best match" of the tournament. The Serbian world No. 1 eased into his ninth decider at the Melbourne Park with a 6-3 6-4 6-2 win under the lights at Rod Laver Arena and will battle either Stefanos Tsitsipas or Daniil Medvedev for the title. Djokovic's tournament appeared on a knife edge when he suffered an abdominal injury during his third round match against Taylor Fritz less than a week ago. — Reuters

## DIRECTORATE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS, ARCHAEOLOGY AND MUSEUMS, PUNJAB

PLOT NO. 3, SECTOR 38-A, CHANDIGARH

Tender/Reference No: 10 Date : 18.02.2021

### NOTICE RE-INVITING OFFLINE BIDS

Director Cultural Affairs, Punjab invites sealed bids from eligible Consultants/Consultancy firms for the following work:

S. No.	Name of Work	Bid Security/ Earnest Money (Rs.)	Last date and time for submission of sealed bids
1	Providing Comprehensive Technical & Interior Design Services for Development of a State of the Art 'PANORAMA' at the Bhagwan Valmiki Ram Tirath Sthal Complex at Amritsar	2.00 Lakhs	12.03.2021 upto 03:00 PM
i) Date & time of opening of Technical Bid			12.03.2021 at 3:30 PM
ii) Interested bidders can have the tender document by paying the fee amounting to Rs. 2500/-.			

Note: Addendum/Corrigendum, if any, will be issued on Punjab Tourism website i.e. [www.punjabtourism.punjab.gov.in](http://www.punjabtourism.punjab.gov.in) only.

DPR/Pb/1611 Sd/- DIRECTOR

## NORTHERN RAILWAY

### TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DEN-IV/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) with closing date 15.03.2021 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time. Contractors are allowed to make payments against these tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

S.N.	Tender Number	Details Of Tender		
		Advertised Value	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1		21.06.11.732.73	60 days	18 Months
				Bid Starting Date:- 01/03/2021, Bid Closing Date 15/03/2021
				Similar Nature of Civil Work: Any Civil work other than Track work. Similar Nature for Track Work: CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including Raising of track, screening, distressing of Track, Pre & Post works for track maintenance machine like tamping machines/ballast Screening/regulating machines & TTR by T-28 Similar Nature of Electrical OHE Work: "Design, supply, erection testing & commissioning of 50 Hz, single phase 25 KV AC OH E" Similar Nature of Electrical General Work: "Design, supply, manufacture, supply, erection, testing & commissioning of 11KV or above sub-station with HT panel complete or a part of it with or without APFC panel". Similar Nature of Signal & Telecom Works :- Any CLS or RI or EI or IBS/IBH or ABS work involving Indoor/Signalling system. OR Any such work involving activities as given in the name of the tendered work.

359/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

## NORTHERN RAILWAY

### E-TENDERING

OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. NIT-27/UMB-2020-21 DATED 18.02.2021  
Open tenders through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Engineer/Coordination, Northern Railway, Ambala from the willing contractors for following work upto 15:00 hrs. on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter.

S. No.	Name of Work	Approx. Cost (Rs.)	Period of Completion	Date of closing & opening
1	i) Repair to water supply pipe line, broken floor, door, windows, etc of staff quarters at NLDM & RPAR in the section of SSE/W/RPAR under ADEN/SIR ii) Repair to boundary walls with released PRC sleepers, KRLI, RPAR & MNPR under ADEN/SIR	5939178	06 Months	16.03.2021
2	Annual repair, white washing, C/washing and painting to staff quarters & service buildings under Zone Rajputra for the period ending 30.06.2021 in the section of SSE/W/Rajputra under ADEN/Rajputra	10578579	12 Months	16.03.2021
3	Pre & Post Attention work in c/w Deep Screening of track with BCM (50.0 KM) on UMB-LDH section in the section of ADEN/RPJ under SR. DEN-IV/UMB.	12974377	06 Months	16.03.2021
4	Through Turn out Renewals with CS, CMS, TWS over Ambala division under SR.DEN-IV/UMB (51+50=101 nos.)	10379538	06 Months	16.03.2021
5	Track works in c/w Electronic interlocking at KART, RPAR & NGWN stations on SIR-AADR section under ADEN/SIR	10825437	12 Months	16.03.2021
6	Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) of existing GPS tracker GT 300 FOR two years in Ambala Division in the section of SSE/TP/UMB under DEN/Track/UMB	2074862	24 Months	16.03.2021

NOTE : 1. Tenderers are required to upload scanned copies of all related eligibility documents including PAN/TIN/GST as per conditions. 2. Tenderers should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of works tenders. 3. For detail, please log on IREPS website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) 4. GST will be levied as per GST Act 2017

# IPL AUCTION

MORRIS COSTLIES AT 16.25CR | GOWTHAM FETCHES 9.25 CR

### Chennai Super Kings

Purse Used: ₹82.45 crore  
Purse available: ₹2.55cr

Player	Cost
K Gowtham	9.25 crore
Moeen Ali	7 crore
C Pujara	50 lakh
KB Varma	20 lakh
CH Nishaanth	20 lakh
MH Reddy	20 lakh

### Royal Challengers Bangalore

Purse Used: ₹84.65 crore  
Purse available: ₹3.5 lakh

Player	Cost
Kyle Jamieson	15 crore
Glenn Maxwell	14.25 crore
Dan Christian	4.8 crore
Sachin Baby	20 lakh
Rajat Patidar	20 lakh
M Azharuddeen	20 lakh
Suyash Prabhudesai	20 lakh
KS Bharat	20 lakh

### UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

#### PORTO AT ADVANTAGE AS THEY STUN JUVENTUS

Porto scored at the start of each half to beat Juventus 2-1 in the first leg of the Round of 16 of the Champions League. Mehdi Taremi gave Porto the lead after just 63 seconds after a defensive mixup by Juventus gifted him an easy finish, and Moussa Marega netted 19 seconds into the second half. Federico Chiesa scored what could prove to be a vital away goal for Juventus in the 82nd minute.

#### SEVILLA HIT YELLOW WALL

Erling Haaland (*in pic*) scored twice as Borussia Dortmund ended Sevilla's nine-game winning streak with a 3-2 come-from-behind victory. The hosts took the lead early through Suso Fernández on Wednesday but Dortmund rallied with a goal by Mahmoud Dahoud and Haaland's double before halftime at the Ramón Sánchez-Pizjuán Stadium. Luuk de Jong scored Sevilla's late second goal to improve the Spanish team's chances in the return leg. APP



PRDH-1004/11/4/2021/1845/31/4

PRDH-1004/11/5/2021/1853/31/4

PRDH-1

# In West Bengal, Shah vows to fast-track development

Assures 33% reservation for women, relief scheme for fishermen

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18**  
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday urged people to install a powerful "engine" in West Bengal to fast forward the state's pace of development.

Addressing a rally at Namkhana in Kakdwip subdivision of South 24 Parganas district of the state, Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a "great engine" for development.

"However, Modi can't do much if the state government keeps putting hurdles before him," Shah said, urging people to bring the BJP to power in the state so that the state government could work in tandem with the central government.

Shah, who was speaking after kicking off the fifth and final "parivartan yatra" of the BJP at Namkhana, promised that a number of welfare schemes for



Union Home Minister Amit Shah interacts with people at Narayanpur village in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, on Thursday. PTI

fishermen would be launched by the BJP if it came to power in Bengal. A scheme like the Kisan Samman Nidhi would also be launched for the fishermen to give them Rs 6,000 each year, Shah announced.

He said the BJP would have a separate ministry under the MoS to ensure that the fishermen got the right price for

their produce. He also promised to introduce the Seventh Pay Commission scales for state government employees and set up a committee to address the issue of salaries of teachers. He said 33 per cent reservation for women would be introduced if the BJP came to power in Bengal.

## DIDI TRAINS GUNS AT HOME MINISTER'S SON

■ Hitting out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah's 'Didi-Bhaijo' jibes, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Thursday challenged him to contest an election against her nephew Abhishek Banerjee and then think of fighting her.

■ Lashing out at Shah, she asked, "How come your son Jay became a part of the cricket administration and made hundreds of crores?"

■ Mamata was addressing party workers at Pailan near Kolkata on Thursday. TNS



## PM: Correcting historical neglect of Assam, N-East

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said his government was correcting the historical neglect of Assam and the northeast and fast tracking infrastructure projects lying dormant for years.

Launching the Mahabahubrahmaputra initiative to improve connectivity of the northeast, the PM today laid the foundation stone of India's longest bridge (19 km), virtually.

The bridge will connect Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari in Meghalaya. The PM also took part in the ground-breaking ceremony of a two-laned Maujli bridge to connect Maujli to Jorhat in Assam.

He said the four-laned bridge would run across the Brahmaputra river from Assam to Meghalaya. The project was felt necessary after a boat carrying 350 persons capsized in the Brahmaputra in 2012. The PM said currently it takes two and a half hours to cross the river for people travelling from Dhubri to Phulbari and the bridge would cut a distance of 250 km to 19 km. — TNS

## Kerala poll: 'Metro Man' Sreedharan to join BJP

VIBHA SHARMA  
TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18**  
In what is being seen as a major fillip to the party's prospects in Kerala, India's "metro man" E Sreedharan is all set to join the BJP.

Kerala state party president K Surendran said Sreedharan (88), who is credited with changing the face of public transport system in the country, will officially join during the "Vijaya Yatra", which the saffron party is launching with the aim to expand footprint in the southern state.

Beginning on February 21 from Kasaragod, the yatra will culminate at Thiruvananthapuram in the first week of March. While Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the yatra, Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to be present at its culmination.

Sreedharan also expressed willingness to contest the polls "if the BJP asked him to".

"It is for them to decide



At 88, Sreedharan is possibly oldest entry into the saffron party

the constituency. A lot of development works can be done and I hope to do it by joining the BJP," he added.

He also criticised other political parties for showing India in a bad light and "failing to do any good to Kerala".

Speculations are rife that Sreedharan, who is currently overseeing the rebuilding of the Palarivattom flyover, could be the BJP's Chief Ministerial candidate in the Assembly elections.

The BJP is also trying to project two former DGPs with "clean image" Senkumar and Jacob Thomas.

## IN BRIEF

### Uttarakhand floods: Death toll rises to 61

**JOSHIMATH:** With the recovery three more bodies on Thursday, the toll in the flashfloods rose to 61. The Chamoli district administration has said a team of the State Disaster Relief Force installed an early warning system with water sensor in Rishiganga near Raini village. "The device will raise the alarm when the water level rises in the river. This will enable people to move to safer places in time in the event of any calamity," said an official. TNS

### 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' to be held online

**NEW DELHI:** Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal on Thursday announced the commencement of the registration process of the fourth edition of PM's interaction programme with schoolchildren, teachers and parents — "Pariksha Pe Charcha" 2021. It is an annual event where the PM responds to questions related to examination stress and related areas posed by students. He said this time the event would be held virtually. TNS

## No injury marks on Unnao victims' bodies: Autopsy

**UNNAO (UP), FEBRUARY 18**

The police today registered a case of murder in connection with the deaths of two teenage girls, whose bodies were found in a field here, even as a post-mortem revealed no injury marks.

Printed and published by Rajesh Ramachandran for The Tribune Trust

Printed at The Tribune Press, Sector 29-C, Chandigarh.

Published at The Tribune, Sector 29-C, Chandigarh.

RNI No. 15/57.

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Telephones: 0172-2655066-72

Circulation: 0172-2670419, Advertisement: 0172-2670256, 257

Editor: Rajesh Ramachandran\*

\*Editor for purpose of PRB Act, 1967

## Bhim Army chief, five PIOs on TIME's list of emerging leaders

**NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 18**

Five Indian-origin personalities, including Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK's Finance Minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine's annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are shaping the future".

The 2021 TIME100 Next, released on Wednesday, is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders



who are shaping the future. "Everyone on this list is poised to make history. And in fact, many already have," Dan Macsai, editorial director of the TIME100, said.

Other Indian-origin personalities on the list are Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, doctor and Executive Director of non-profit Get Us PPE Shikha Gupta and founder of non-profit Upsolve Rohan Pavuluri.

Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad is also on the list. Aazad (34) is the leader of the Bhim Army, which runs schools to help Dalits escape poverty through education, the TIME profile on him says. — PTI

## SC shuts case probing plot to implicate former CJI Gogoi

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 18**

The Supreme Court on Thursday closed the suo moto proceedings initiated to probe into an alleged larger conspiracy to implicate former CJI Ranjan Gogoi in a sexual harassment case in 2019, saying there was no need to keep the matter pending as recovery of electronic evidence was unlikely.

A Bench headed by Justice SK Kaul, however, said there

were reasons to believe that some judgments had led to a conspiracy being hatched against the then CJI.

The Bench also took note of the fact that the top court's in-house inquiry, which probed into the allegations of sexual harassment levelled by a dismissed woman employee against Justice Gogoi, had in May 2019 given a clean chit to him, saying there was no substance in the allegations. TNS

### Notice to Centre, EC on PIL seeking e-vote

**New Delhi:** The SC on Thursday issued notices to the Centre and Election Commission on a PIL seeking exercise of franchise through postal ballots or e-voting for people outside their constituency. A Bench asked the Ministry of Law and Justice and EC to respond to the PIL filed by K Sathyam after his counsel submitted that the electoral laws needed to catch up with technology. TNS

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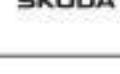
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