



Ishant Sharma takes 2 scalps in powerplay while Mukesh Kumar (pic) shines with 3 wks as Delhi Capitals bowl out Gujarat Titans for 89 and win by 6 wks, P 17

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Ahead of parliamentary polls in Maldives, opposition parties have demanded a probe and impeachment of Prez Muizzu following a leaked report dating back to 2018 alleging corruption, a charge dismissed by him, P 16

Sindh high court directs Pakistan interior ministry to revoke its letter regarding suspension of social media 'X' within one week, after over two months of disruption in service, P 16

Aung San Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest as a health measure due to a heat wave, Myanmar's military govt says, P 16

Kylian Mbappe scores twice as PSG reverses its first-leg loss at home with a 4-1 win at Barcelona to advance 6-4 on aggregate and keep alive its hopes of a first European title, P 18



3 held for city cabbie's murder

Police Wednesday arrested three suspects for the murder of a cabbie near Red Fort on Monday. A fourth accused is absconding. The quartet, out to rob people, snatched his wallet and phone before shooting him. P 5

Man held for killing wife, brother-in-law

A n MCA graduate, 33, allegedly stabbed to death his wife, a 30-year-old teacher, and her brother, 17, with a screwdriver in Delhi's Shastri Nagar Wednesday. Cops are probing whether marital discord led to the murders. P 5

Faster security check at Noida airport?

O ver 80% flyers at the upcoming Noida airport will not have to take electronic devices and water bottles out of bags during security checks as the airport will have 3D computed tomography X-ray scanners. P 2

Cerelac contains sugar in India, not in Europe

N estle adds sugar to infant milk sold in poorer countries but not in its main markets in Europe or UK. This was revealed when a Swiss investigative group and IBFAN sent samples of Cerelac's baby food products to a Belgian lab for testing. P 10

Charred bodies of 3 Assam men found

Charred bodies of three youths from Assam's Goalpara were found on Wednesday along with a torched vehicle in Meghalaya's North Garo Hills district. The incident is suspected to have taken place on Tuesday night. P 11

DOOB-AI! UAE GOES UNDER



Dubai's giant highways were clogged by flooding and its airport, the world's busiest by international traffic, was in chaos as the emirate remained gridlocked on Wednesday, a day after up to 255mm rain, the most since records began 75 years ago, fell on UAE on Tuesday. At least one person was killed. Power outages were reported around Dubai, which was dotted with flooded areas and submerged cars. It also rained heavily in Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia & Oman. While there was speculation that the deluge could be due to cloud change, experts said it was likely the result of a regular, rainy weather system being supercharged by climate change. Air traffic to and from Dubai has been severely hit, with 30-40 India flights among those affected | P 16

It's an emotional moment: PM on Surya Tilak of idol



TMC manifesto vows to nix CAA and NRC, stall UCC

Kolkata: Pitting "#DidirShapoth" against "Modi ki Guarantee", Trinamool Congress unveiled an election manifesto Wednesday that promises to repeal CAA, discontinue NRC and stall implementation of UCC, if voted to office, reports Rohit Khanna. The party's list of welfare commitments includes 10 free LPG cylinders a year to BPL families and doorstep delivery of 5kg of rice a month to ration-card holders.

► 18 injured in Ram Navami violence in Bengal, P 8

Coming two days before Bengal goes to polls, the manifesto speaks of undermining of the "tenets of federalism, pluralism" over the past 10 years.

► TMC vows to tweak..., P 9

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

- Campaigning ends for first phase of polls in 102 seats | P 9
- Call off Cooch Behar trip on eve of Phase 1, it violates model code, EC advises Bengal governor Ananda Bose | P 8
- Electoral bonds world's biggest extortion scheme, PM 'bhrashtachar ke champion', Rahul Gandhi says at joint presser in UP with INDIA ally, SP's Akhilesh Yadav | P 11
- Why B'luru traffic dominates poll talk in Kerala | P 9
- In exile, OPS hopes fishing dispute with Lanka can resurrect his career | P 13
- Muslim silence speaks amid poll noise in UP | P 13

Bihar labourer killed by ultras in J&K, 3rd strike on non-locals this yr

Srinagar: Terrorists shot dead Raja Shah, a 35-year-old roadside food vendor from Bihar, at Jablipora in Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag Wednesday evening, marking the third attack on non-Kashmiri workers in the Union territory this year, reports Saleem Pandit.

Shah suffered critical gunshot wounds to his neck and abdomen and died en route to hospital, police said. While the motive remains unclear, initial reports indicate the involvement of terrorists targeting non-native residents in the area, amidst heightened security measures for the LS elections. Polling in Anantnag-Rajouri is scheduled for May 7. Authorities have launched an investigation to ascertain the motive behind these attacks.

Attack reignites fear, P 8

UPSC repeaters toppers: How to boost ranks

Raipur: The afternoon sun cast no shadows as security forces stealthily closed in on their target. They had marched through the night, seen the sun come up from behind some hills, climbed those hills, and now, 20 hours later, it was time to put fingers to triggers, reports Rashmi Drolia.

► Jamia's academy reels under fund crunch, P 2

Dead ahead were a group of 30-40 Maoists. The jaws could see them tidying up after lunch. "They were in a relaxed mood," said inspector Laxman Kewat, the Maoists' nemesis with 44 kills and six gallantry medals to his name, and the operation leader. What followed was a fierce 4-

HC acquits 2 men arrested 27 years ago for murder

Abhinav.Garg
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Almost 27 years after they were arrested and 23 years after they were held guilty of murder and handed life terms, Delhi high court acquitted two men after it found that the main evidence against them was they were "last seen" with the victim.

In a verdict earlier this week, a bench of Justices Subhash Kumar Kait and Manoj Jain noted, "It will not be safe to hold the accused guilty merely on basis of the 'last seen together theory', which is also not proved beyond a shadow of doubt."

Moreover, the accused and deceased used to work together and hence their being together cannot be said to be unusual, the court said.

It noted a person who cla-

'WEAK EVIDENCE'

► In 2001, a trial court held duo guilty of murdering their colleague, whose body was found on rail tracks in 1997

► HC says evidence that the 3 were last seen together is 'weak & insufficient to hold them guilty', particularly when motive is unclear'

► HC questions if the duo, who were branded 'guilty', were 'foolish enough to leave a knife at the spot', says this 'paradox is not digestible'

imed to have seen the men with the deceased before his death turned hostile during the trial. HC also took a dim view of police investigation while dealing with an appeal filed by Videshi Kumar and Ram Nath, arrested in 1997.

► HC highlights gaps, P 6

US won't get into remarks by PM, Rajnath on killings in Pak

New Delhi: Refusing to get drawn into remarks by PM Modi and defence minister Rajnath Singh on killings of terrorists in Pakistan, the US said it encourages India and Pakistan to avoid any escalation and find a resolution through dialogue.

"The United States is not going to get into the middle of this..." state department spokesperson Matthew Miller said at a news conference on Tuesday. He was asked if comments by Modi and Singh in the past few days can be seen as "confessions" about the killing of a pro-Khalistan leader in Canada, the alleged murder-for-hire plot in the US and killings in Pakistan.

Pakistan has alleged involvement of Indian authorities in operations on its soil to eliminate terrorists. TNN

► No sanction talk, P 10

IN THE COURTS

► A PIL, which seeks video conferencing arrangement for jailed CM Kejriwal to help him engage with cabinet ministers and ensure uninterrupted governance, is likely to be examined by Delhi HC | P 4

► In a habeas corpus petition before Guj HC judges, a Surat woman seeks custody of her abducted daughter as well as livestock, which, she claims, were stolen from her | P 11

► A woman can't be held liable for abetting suicide if a man ends his life due to 'love failure', says Delhi HC, granting pre-arrest bail to two | P 6

► A court in Delhi sentences a 28-year-old convict to three years' RI for sexually assaulting a girl | P 6

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PWD's plans to repair three flyovers remain on paper for nearly a year | 5

35.1°
MAXIMUM | **20.8°**
MINIMUM
FORECAST Generally cloudy sky. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 36°C and 22°C
SUNSET 6.49PM (THU) MOONSET 3.29PM (FRI)
SUNRISE 5.52AM (FRI) MOONRISE 2.01AM (THU)

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024



Woman can't be held liable if man dies by suicide due to 'love failure', says HC | 6

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AQI IN DELHI
ON WEDNESDAY
(MODERATE
CATEGORY)

Type II diabetes irreversible, but lifestyle changes may control it | 6



Ground Reality: 20,552 Borewells Extracting Water Illegally In City

Over 11,000 Sealed So Far; Northwest Delhi Sees Maximum Exploitation

Kushagra.Dixit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB) in a report to National Green Tribunal (NGT) has said that it has identified across Delhi, of which 11,197 had been sealed, while action against 8,178 is yet to be initiated.

Of total illegal borewells, the highest number—9,128—is in the northwest Delhi, of which 5,901 had been sealed, DJB said.

This was followed by 6,681 in Southwest Delhi, of which 2,434 had been sealed. There are 2,185 such wells in West Delhi, of which 1,573 were sealed.

The report submitted by DJB pointed out that out of the 11 revenue districts, only Northwest didn't have any illegal borewell.

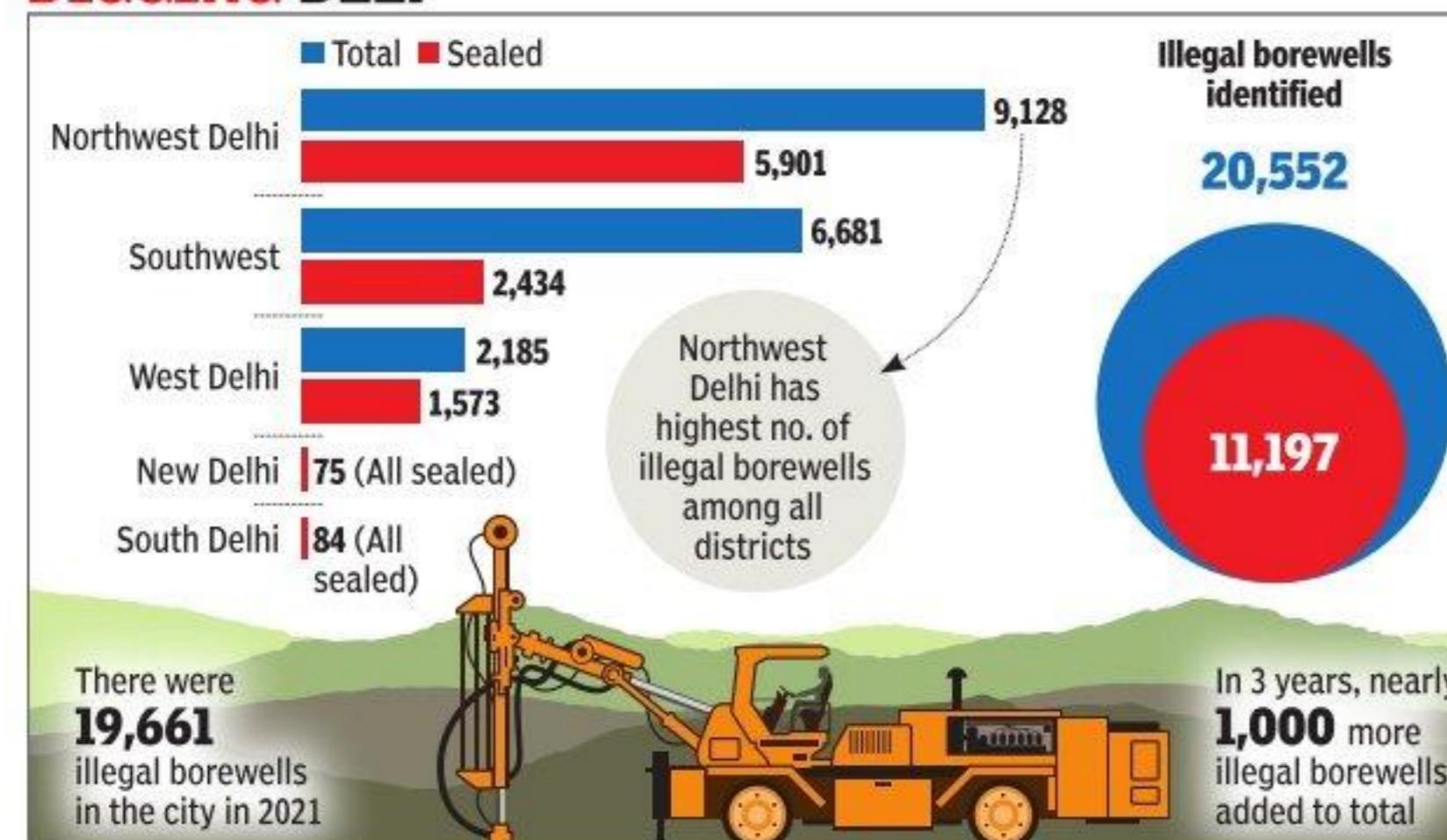
It added that 100% of the illegal borewells extracting groundwater were sealed in New Delhi (75) and South Delhi (84) districts.

In 2021, DJB had informed NGT of 19,661 illegal borewells in the city. The number increased by about 1,000 in three years.

The submission, dated April 15, came in response to an Oct 2022 petition filed by a city resident pointing out the illegal extraction of groundwater in south Delhi's Ayanagar.

Following the petition,

DIGGING DEEP



the tribunal asked Delhi govt to share data on illegal borewells and their status. The applicant had pointed out that approximately 50 illegal borewells were operational in his area and supplied the filtered RO water to nearby residents at a huge cost.

Meanwhile, NGT had also ordered Delhi govt to call a meeting of departments in which it was pointed out that illegal groundwater extraction was being done due to unreliable supply.

"Illegal borewells are a product of unreliable water supply and hence Delhi Jal

Board was directed to efficiently plan, supply potable water and plug leakage. DJB was also directed to efficiently plan for, regulate and manage exploitation of groundwater in consultation with CGWA, as per the statutory obligation enshrined in the DJB Act 1998," DPCC said, while sharing minutes of the meeting held on April 12.

Delhi's environment department had stated that Delhi govt would not give permission for groundwater extraction in areas of the city where the water table was overexploited. It also said that it would create a portal displaying the permissions given to borewells and a map displaying each borewell and its status.

"The Delhi Jal Board or revenue department will initiate action on illegal borewells, particularly focusing on areas that are over-exploited or where extraction of water is being used for profiteering. Further, they would accord permissions only where water table is satisfactory and potable," said the submission.

According to a Central

TIMES VIEW: Groundwater is a precious resource and cannot be exploited ruthlessly. The audit is welcome but the city also needs a proper survey of the city's illegal borewells and must find ways to stop them. One must keep the long-term picture in mind. A rainwater harvesting mission, where RWAs, colleges, schools are engaged, can help in the groundwater table's upkeep.

Ground Water Board's assessment, out of the 34 tehsils in Delhi, 13 are over-exploited, 12 are critical and four are semi-critical in terms of groundwater sources.

Delhi govt in its submission said the website that will display data on all borewells will be created by DPCC. The portal will display the borewells that have been sealed and the Environmental Damage Compensation (EDC) imposed in each case.

"DPCC has been directed to effect recovery of EDC imposed.... DPCC along with district magistrates have been directed to focus their efforts on where groundwater is under stress," the submission said.

It also stated that Rs 70.65 crore had been imposed as total environmental damage compensation (EDC) in Delhi against the violators of which only Rs 53.7 lakh had been collected from 121 violators.

mostly at water treatment plants (WTPs), underground reservoirs (UGRs). There are standalone wells too.

In two packages prepared in Oct last year, already existing wells at WTPs and UGRs were to be covered under the quality and quantity check, and then later the standalone ones, which are the highest in numbers, a DJB official said. A pilot to start the work in Sonia Vihar area was also planned.

"However, as of now, only 33 tubewells located in Haiderpur and a few in Bawana have flow meters.... The quality of water extracted from these wells in many areas is in question right now. An assessment has been ordered," the official said.

The plan was also to have a quality control check, which would show groundwater recharge patterns, the health of the system, and polluting parameters of a tubewell, all in a control room being watched over by officers of the quality control wing.

The areas of Palam, Mehrauli, Chhattarpur, Sangam Vihar, Deoli, Najafgarh, Baprola, Kakrula and parts of Burari are heavily dependent on tubewells and are the ones that are overexploited in terms of water extraction. The existing wells are set up

consistent at 136 MGD over the last two years. Last year, during summer, govt emphasized the need for quality control for tubewells and directed officials to install flow meters on all existing wells so that the exact amount of water extracted can be determined.

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Flow meters have already been installed at WTPs and UGRs, which help DJB in tracking the water released from the plant and reaching the reservoir. This system further helps in tracking the water lost in transmission.

DJB recently told National Green Tribunal that there are at least 20,500 illegal tubewells, of which around 11,000 have been sealed. DJB operates 5,169 tubewells.

The tribunal wanted to know why DPCC allowed the guesthouses to continue ex-

tracting the groundwater.

"There is nothing on record to show that the project proponents who have made voluntary disclosure are keeping any record of withdrawal of water from borewells or they have put any meter for that purpose at the point of withdrawal," NGT said.

The tribunal said in its April 14 order that this meant that by revoking a closure order, the concerned authority "has permitted unlimited withdrawal of groundwater to the project proponent without putting any condition and without any regulation".

It said that "such unregulated withdrawal of groundwater... has serious effect on the groundwater level in the area." It added that the compensation for such an act either needed to be recovered from DPCC or the project proponents.

The tribunal was informed that none of the 536 guesthouses or hotels had consented to extract groundwater.

Paharganj is one of the city's water-stressed areas, according to a 2023 report by Central Ground Water Board.

Delhi govt has come up with the VDS in 2014, under which residents disclosed that they were extracting groundwater using borewells.

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Bharadwaj: Verify Claims Of Non-Availability

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has directed chief secretary Naresh Kumar to visit state-run hospitals and mohalla clinics every day to verify claims of non-availability of essential medicines and consumables, and submit a daily report.

In a file noting, Bharadwaj said that while the chief secretary and the health secretary asserted that every patient was receiving essential medications or suitable alternatives from hospitals, ground reports indicated a "distressing scarcity of free medicines".

"In order to get a first-hand and true experience with respect to shortage of essential medicines and consumables in hospitals, it is directed that instead of taking shield of different rule positions, the chief secretary should personally visit one Delhi govt hospital and one mohalla clinic during OPD (outdoor patient department) hours — 8am to 2pm," the noted stated.

The note, said officials, was written by minister on April 12, four days after the issue was discussed in Delhi Assembly. Bharadwaj mentioned on the file that the chief secretary was trying to find "new excuses" to stay away from the responsibility of overall supervision of health department.

He said the chief secretary referred to a general order issued in May 2023 that routine files should not be routed through him but ignored two specific directions issued in March regarding the shortage of medicines.

Bharadwaj alleged that CS initially did not respond to the minister flagging the shortage of medicines, but, as an afterthought, made a "frivolous excuse" that all routine files of departments were not being routed through him so he couldn't supervise the availability of medicines and consumables.

The minister said routine files of departments were never routed through the top bureaucrat during the tenure of earlier chief secretaries.

While mentioning that the supervision over department secretaries was always the responsibility of CS, the minister said specific directions regarding availability of medicines needed to be complied with and without any excuses.



BHARADWAJ'S FILE NOTING SAYS

To get a first-hand and true experience with respect to shortage of essential medicines and consumables in hospitals, it is directed that instead of taking shield of different rule positions, the chief secretary should personally visit one Delhi govt hospital and one mohalla clinic during OPD hours — 8am to 2pm

was yet to share the roster of his visits and the daily report.

The note, said officials, was written by minister on April 12, four days after the issue was discussed in Delhi Assembly. Bharadwaj mentioned on the file that the chief secretary was trying to find "new excuses" to stay away from the responsibility of overall supervision of health department.

He said the chief secretary referred to a general order issued in May 2023 that routine files should not be routed through him but ignored two specific directions issued in March regarding the shortage of medicines.

Bharadwaj alleged that CS initially did not respond to the minister flagging the shortage of medicines, but, as an afterthought, made a "frivolous excuse" that all routine files of departments were not being routed through him so he couldn't supervise the availability of medicines and consumables.

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While mentioning that the supervision over department secretaries was always the responsibility of CS, the minister said specific directions regarding availability of medicines needed to be complied with and without any excuses.

Abhinav.Rajput
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New Delhi: BJP has so far received more than 15,000 suggestions from the public as part of its exercise to seek feedback for a Delhi-specific manifesto.

The party, which launched the campaign last month, had also sought people's views on Viksit Bharat ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. BJP is expected to come up with a vision document for Delhi in the first week of May after reviewing the suggestions.

Sources in the party said the suggestions cover various subjects, including bringing down pollution and enhancing road and metro infrastructure. Most complaints were related to issues faced by people in getting registry done in unauthorised colonies, followed by sealing of local shopping centres.

As of March 1, a total of 4.75 lakh people living in

unauthorised colonies have applied to Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for ownership rights of their houses under the PM Uday Yojana. While 56,306 cases have been disposed of, conveyance deeds and authorisation slips have been issued in 22,034 other cases. The remaining applications are in various stages, according to officials.

DDA had earlier stated that it had taken various initiatives in the recent past to motivate nearly 40 lakh people living in 12.5 lakh houses and 1,731 unauthorised colonies to participate in the scheme, which was launched four years ago. However, the numbers haven't been encouraging. Residents said they faced hurdles in fulfilling terms and conditions, such as attaching a power of attorney. While the scheme provides ownership rights, it lacks other benefits, like adding recreation spaces and parks, they said.

Another complaint pertained to the sealing of local shopping centres. Thousands of properties have been sealed in the national capital over the past six years by a monitoring committee. Until last year, 5,639 properties remained shut. Although a judicial committee had passed an order on de-sealing, the civic body has filed an appeal with Supreme Court, saying that it would lead to revenue loss.

BJP sources said several people also praised central



BJP claimed to have received 15,000 suggestions from the public so far

govt for infrastructure development, including the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways, Pragati Maidan tunnel and the proposed Delhi-Mumbai expressway. They suggested that more flyovers and expressways should be built in the city. People also urged govt to take stringent steps to control pollution in Delhi.

A BJP functionary said that 30% of the complaints were related to civic issues, be it overflowing drains, poor condition of colony roads or erratic water supply

condition of colony roads or erratic water supply. "Even though we have stated the suggestions should be related to issues concerning Centre, several people have complained about municipal issues. Many said that garbage remains littered in the area," he said.

There was repetition in terms of issues flagged as well as suggestions given by them, said functionaries. "We expect there would be about 500 standalone issues on which we would do further brainstorming about what has to be included in the vision document for Delhi," the functionary said.

Women's wing leads AAP outreach in city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The women's wing of Aam Aadmi Party has been at the forefront of going door to door and establishing contact with households and talking about the development and welfare works done by Kejriwal govt in Delhi.

Its members are also trying to emotionally connect the women with the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal and how someone who provided them with good education for their children, healthcare, 24x7 electricity, free water and free bus rides had been put behind bars in a "fake" case.

A senior functionary said the office bearers of the wo-

men's wing were holding 1,000-1,200 meetings every day with women from all sections. "We have already held over 20,000 meetings and hope to complete 45,000 by the end of this month," said a functionary.

AAP claimed that feed-

back was being taken from women on various govt initia-

tives — free travel in buses, ma-

hila mohalla clinics and pro-

posed financial aid of Rs 1,000

— to empower them. It clai-

med most of the women had

appreciated the work done by

CM Kejriwal and agreed that

his arrest was wrong. "The

women of Delhi are extremely

impressed by the patience and

courage shown by Arvind Kej-

riwal's wife Sunita after his

arrest," the party stated.

Women constitute a litt-

le less than 46% of 1.47 crore

electorate in the capital.

With more women coming

out to vote and even domi-

nate political discourse at

home, they are now at the

centre-stage of various

schemes and policies.

Functionaries said the

wing was holding meetings

in parks, markets and at ho-

uses of some residents to

explain the schemes and poli-

cies started to empower

women. "Free ride for wo-

menn in buses, which has im-

mensely benefitted working

women and students from

poor families, instal-

lation of CCTV cameras and

streetlights, special ma-

hila mohalla clinics are

some such steps," said a

functionary. "Mahila Sam-

man Rashi Yojana, which

promises to improve the

economic condition of poor

women, is another step to-

wards it."

The website has several

videos, also posted on a You-

Poll-ready: AAP launches website titled 'Ram Rajya'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday launched a website called "AAP ka Ram Rajya" ahead of the Lok Sabha elections to showcase the work done by its govt in Delhi and Punjab that they believe is akin to "Ram Rajya".

Addressing a joint press conference, AAP functionaries urged people to check out the website and vote on the basis of the work done by their govt on the ground.

They said chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had accom-

plished wonderful things — good schools, mohalla clinics,

free water and electricity and

free bus rides for women — in

the last 10 years to realise the

dream of "Ram Rajya", and

the Bhagwant Mann govt too

had done similar work in Punjab in the last two years.

AAP govt in Delhi had in-

voked Lord Ram while presen-

ting its budget in the Delhi As-

sembly in March, saying that

its policies were influenced by

the idea of "Ram Rajya".

The launch senior AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh claimed the world was learning from the work done by Kejriwal and AAP govt



At the launch, senior AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh claimed the world was learning from the work done by Kejriwal and AAP govt

Tube channel with the same name, of various schemes and policies launched by AAP govt in Delhi and Punjab and people's positive feed-

back on them.

Singh said this was the first time that Kejriwal was not among his people on Ram Navami and alleged that he was sent to jail in a "baseless" case on the basis of statements from "false" witnesses.

"In Arvind Kejriwal's concept of 'Ram Rajya', no one is big or small and the idea is to work in the interest of all. Keeping this in mind, AAP's Lok Sabha campaign website has been launched on Ram Navami," Singh said. "People should see that work, know about it and then join us," he said.

The press conference was attended by Delhi ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj. Atishi said AAP wanted to spread the public welfare done by its govt across the country and the world through this website.

"Just like Lord Ram fulfilled all his promises amid hard-

ship, Kejriwal is fighting all the difficulties and working for the people and fulfilling his promises in the same manner," Atishi said as she recited a verse from Ramcharitmanas.

Explaining the concept of "Ram Rajya", Bharadwaj said AAP's vision was to have a "moral, well-fed state where people do not suffer".

AAP functionary Jasmini Shah said there was information on the work by the Kejriwal govt with "verified data and facts", not political statements.

Delhi BJP president Vi- rendra Sachdeva said AAP had earlier made statements against the Ram temple and even Kejriwal opposed it. In 2023, when Kejriwal realised that the people were enthusiastically welcoming the temple, his party quickly changed its stance overnight and started portraying themselves as supporters of temple construction.

He said their website launch is "deeply hurting" to the people of Delhi.

BJP hits back after AAP says EC its extended wing

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: AAP on Wednesday alleged that Election Commission was working like an "extended wing of BJD". The comment came after the poll panel ordered social media platform 'X' to take down select posts of the party for model code of conduct violations. The Election Commission ordered 'X' to take down certain posts by US Congress, N Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar deputy chief minister Samrat Choudhury for poll code violations.

BJP chief national spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said: "It is the country's misfortune that EC is working as an extended wing of BJD. We have filed two complaints with EC but no action

has been taken," she said. "What lie is there in our post that we have been asked to remove it? Why haven't we been given a chance to be heard? If this isn't dictatorship, then what is it? Shouldn't Election Commission be considered impartial? Is this a level playing field for elections, where BJD can write anything on social media and we can't even write the truth?" she alleged.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Kapoor said the impartiality of EC was globally recognised.

"Before raising questions, AAP functionaries shouldn't forget that they themselves have won three elections in Delhi and one in Punjab under this Election Commission," he said.

Petition in HC for virtual conference facility for CM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A plea seeking to facilitate chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in running a govt from jail is likely to be examined by Delhi High Court next week.

Filed by a lawyer, the PIL seeks virtual conferencing arrangements for Kejriwal to engage with cabinet ministers, ensuring uninterrupted governance.

The PIL also seeks to restrain media houses from sensationalising speculation about Kejriwal's resignation and the imposition of President's Rule.

It alleges that BJP's Delhi unit was creating undue pressure for Kejriwal's resignation, otherwise gravest repercussions may arise by repeating the same modus operandi for making any minister resign," the plea says urging expedited consideration from the court.

TIMES TRIBUTES RATE CARD

Rules effective 6th June 2019

Gang Finds Opportunity In Mishap, Cabbie Pays With Life For Resisting

Incident Caught on Cam; Woman Among 3 Held, Another Suspect Absconding

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Police on Wednesday arrested three suspects for the murder of a 36-year-old cab driver near Red Fort earlier this week. A fourth accused is absconding. The victim was shot dead during a robbery bid, police said.

The accused have been identified as Ruksar alias Anita (28), who lives near Shastri Chowk in Khajuri Khas; her stepbrother Sajid (19); and their associate Salman (24), a resident of Loni with a history of two criminal cases.

The incident had taken place on Monday when the cab driven by Mohammad Saqib hit an e-rickshaw near Red Fort. Three men allegedly thrashed Saqib and shot him in the abdomen when he fought back. The accused fled soon afterwards.

Two teams formed under ACP (operations) Dharmendra Kumar analysed CCTV footage and criminal dossiers. "One CCTV clip captured the entire incident, including the collision that led to the altercation between the drivers, the arrival of the suspects and the cabbie's murder," an officer said.

Deputy commissioner of police (north) Manoj Meena said the CCTV footage also showed Anita's alleged accomplice, Firoz, arriving on a scooter and shooting Saqib.

"The scooter's number plate was found to be fake. While three accused, including Anita, Firoz and Sajid, fled towards Old Delhi railway station, Salman disappeared into the crowd," he added.

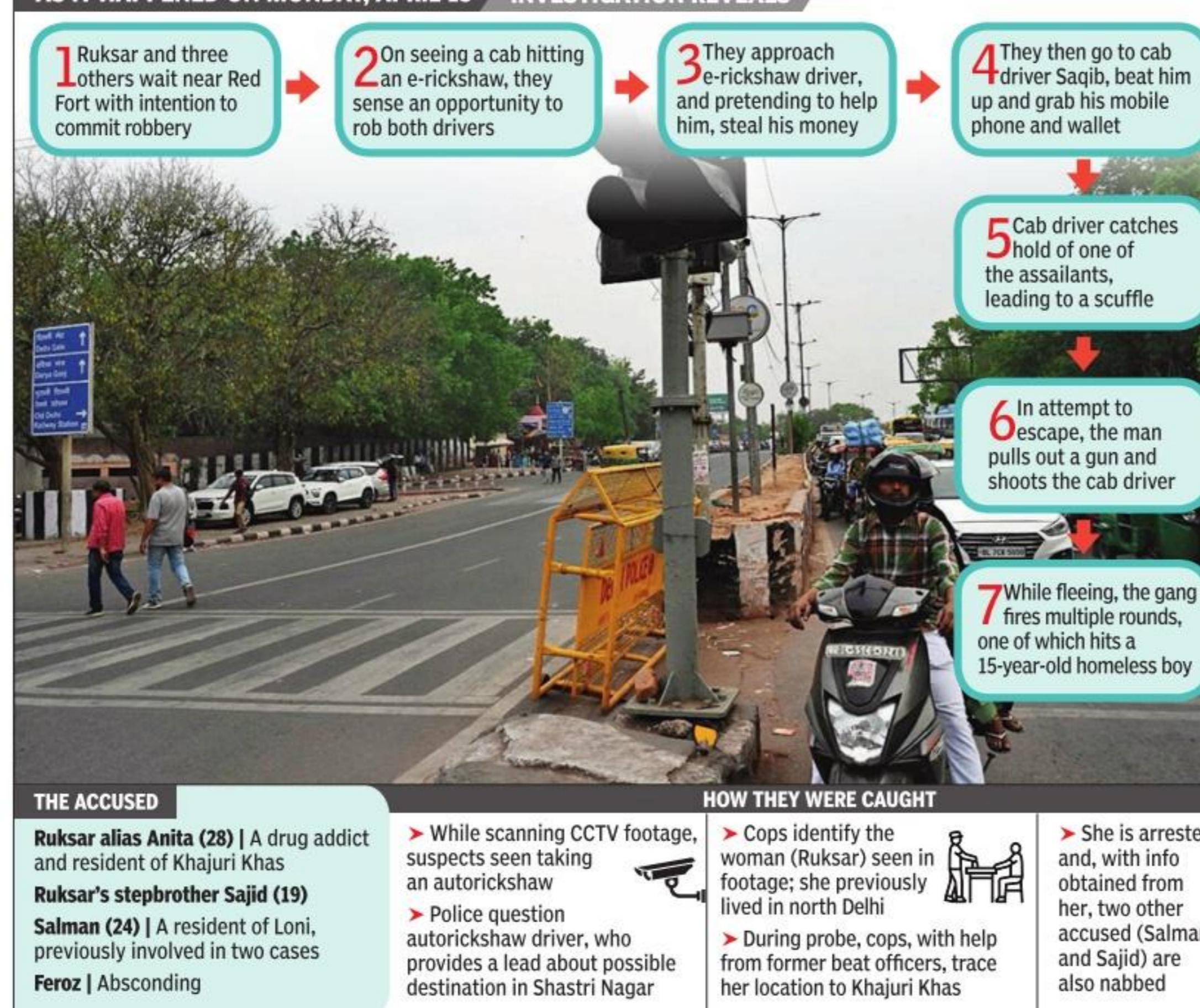
Additional CCTV footage revealed that the accused had taken an autorickshaw. Police questioned the driver, who said he had dropped them off in Shastri Nagar area.

"In the footage, we found a clear picture of Anita. She used to live in north Delhi

MURDER NEAR RED FORT

AS IT HAPPENED ON MONDAY, APRIL 15

INVESTIGATION REVEALS



THE ACCUSED

- Ruksar alias Anita (28) | A drug addict and resident of Khajuri Khas
- Ruksar's stepbrother Sajid (19)
- Salman (24) | A resident of Loni, previously involved in two cases
- Feroz | Absconding

HOW THEY WERE CAUGHT

- While scanning CCTV footage, suspects seen taking an autorickshaw
- Police question autorickshaw driver, who provides a lead about possible destination in Shastri Nagar
- Cops identify the woman (Ruksar) seen in footage; she previously lived in north Delhi
- During probe, cops, with help from former beat officers, trace her location to Khajuri Khas
- She is arrested and, with info obtained from her, two other accused (Salman and Sajid) are also nabbed

33-year-old kills wife, her brother using screwdriver; marital discord suspected

Ashresh Marupaka
@timesgroup.com

MARRIAGE TURNS SOUR

PCR call received at | 10:11am

When | April 17

Where | WB Block, Shakarpur, east Delhi

Victims | Kamlesh Holkar, a school teacher, and her 17-year-old brother

Suspect | Holkar's husband, Shriyansh Kumar (33); he coached MCA students online

► Police claim screwdriver used as weapon

► Woman's family alleges domestic violence as reason behind murder



"There are a lot of contradictions in the narration given by the family members. It is suspected the crime scene may have been tampered with. The role of all family members is being investigated," stated the DCP.

The deceased were identified as Kamlesh Holkar (30), a teacher by profession, who lived with his family in Shakarpur, and her brother, Ram Pratap Singh (17), a native of Mathura. Police received a PCR call around 10:11am informing them about a person being injured during a fight at a house in Shakarpur. A police team reached the spot and came to know that two people were allegedly murdered using a screwdriver.

The woman's husband, identified as Shreyansh Kumar (33), was missing from the house. He later joined the investigation and confessed to the crime, cops said. Deputy commissioner of police (East) Apoorva Gupta said they have arrested him.

PWD's plans to repair 3 flyovers remain on paper for nearly a year

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Public Works Department (PWD) announced plans to carry out repair work on four flyovers last year as the structures had deteriorated over time. Despite the plans being in place, no work has started yet.

The structures are Tilak Nagar metro station and district centre flyovers on west Delhi's Najafgarh Road, Sarita Vihar flyover and Akshardham flyover.

The initial approvals for the repair work of the first three flyovers were granted between May and June 2023, and the tender was also floated. However, nearly a year has passed since then, but PWD has not moved further.

According to officials, without approval from all the authorities concerned, the work cannot be executed. "The green light is required from the traffic police for Sarita Vihar. The permission was sought in May last year,

but it has not come yet," said a PWD officer on the condition of anonymity.

The department usually replaces the expansion joints of a flyover after a certain period to strengthen an elevated road. As per the plan, the concrete structure will be repaired along with expansion joints, bearings, etc.

According to the proce-

dure set by govt, any infrastructural project that involves traffic diversions has to be finally approved by PWD minister before the work starts on the ground, and these three flyovers have received the nod. To avoid any inconvenience to commuters, PWD officials are directed to complete the maintenance work within

the stipulated time.

The Akshardham flyover, which is part of Noida Link Road connecting Noida to Delhi, was also part of a PWD repair and maintenance plan announced in Dec, but it has not started yet.

Earlier this year, under a road strengthening project for the entire Delhi, PWD has identified flyovers that are to be repaired on a priority basis. Most of these flyovers have been constructed at the time of Commonwealth Games 2010 and have weakened over time.

According to officials, PWD will also work on lane marking, whitewashing of parapet walls, and painting of kerbstones and railings, along with filling the gaps in the greenery on central verges and roadsides.

Last year, PWD minister Atishi directed officials to follow global standards of street design. For the resurfacing of arterial roads, Rs 80 crore was allocated in Dec.



Sarita Vihar flyover is among the four identified for repairs

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Woman loses ₹44L in share market trading scam, one held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 41-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly cheating a woman from south Delhi of nearly Rs 44 lakh under the guise of share market trading. Suspect Ramesh Kanna was nabbed from Bengaluru following the complaint by a 48-year-old woman, police said.

The woman was shown a fake portfolio on a website that appeared to be increasing in value, while in reality the suspect was allegedly siphoning off her funds, a senior police officer said.

"The victim had stated she came across an advertisement on social media regarding stock market investment. On clicking it, she was directed to a social media group where she was allured for investment in the stock market. She was shown a fake portfolio on a website in which the amount was piling up and she was cheated of Rs 43,76,080," said Ankit Chauhan, DCP (south).

A case was registered under relevant sections of the IPC at the cyber police station. During investigation, it was found that the money had been transferred to five accounts in different states across the country. "Call details and money transactions were analysed, and a money trail of the cheated amount was established. One of the accounts was found to be registered to an address in Bengaluru, with the linked number registered under a fake ownership and switched off," the DCP added.

The surveillance and technical analysis pinpointed suspect's location in Bengaluru. "A police team conducted raids in various parts of the city and Kanna was arrested while attempting to flee to Chennai," DCP Chauhan said.

During interrogation, Kanna revealed that he came in contact with someone in Chennai who offered him lucrative returns in exchange for arranging fake SIM cards and bank accounts. "As per their deal, he would receive Rs 20,000 for each account and 15% of every transaction credited to those accounts. To earn easy money, he began providing these accounts. Investigations are underway to nab the main accused," added the DCP.

Fire at west Delhi bldg

New Delhi: A fire broke out at a three-story building in west Delhi's Hari Nagar. Initial probe suggests that short circuit might have been the cause.

On receiving the news, the family members of the victims' family reached Delhi from Mathura. Talking to TOI, they alleged she was subjected to domestic violence, which had escalated into the gruesome murder.

Ravindra Singh, a relative, said, "This was a planned murder. The last time I met Kamlesh, I told her to register a complaint of domestic violence. She was well-educated and a teacher. Had she complained on time, we would have never seen this day."

Singh alleged that her husband would restrict her from stepping out of the house or going to Mathura to meet her family. "Amidst the tensions, even her brother lost his life. What was his fault?" Singh said.

Another relative, Gobind Baghel, also claimed that the victim was "definitely troubled" by her husband".

DCP Gupta said the bodies had been taken to a hospital for postmortem.

"On the premise that facility of having access to personal computer given to inmates, the jail superintendent concerned is directed to get uploaded the chargesheet and RUDs (relied upon documents) of the instant case... and consequently, the accused may have access to such documents during the time that is permitted for accessing such PCs during judicial custody," the court said in the April 15 order.

It also allowed Arora to take a pen drive inside Tihar Jail to read the chargesheet. The judge said that though the jail manual prohibited inmates from carrying a pen drive into prison, an accused should not be denied an opportunity to cull out relevant pieces of information from the chargesheet to prepare his defence while in judicial custody.

"In the opinion of this court, the actual prayer of the accused is not to have a flash drive with him physically but to have access to the complaint (chargesheet) and RUDs," it noted.

Advocate Yash Kadyan, appearing for Arora, submitted that the documents filed by Enforcement Directorate (ED) ran into thousands of pages and could not be transported to him.

Opposing the plea, special public prosecutor Manish Jain argued that Arora had been provided a hard copy of the documents and such electronic devices came under the category of prohibited articles as per Delhi Prison Rules 2018.

On April 3, the court took cognisance of the 8,000-page chargesheet, with 140 operational pages apart from annexures.

Besides Arora, contractor Anil Kumar Agarwal, former NBCC general manager DK Mittal, one Tejinder Singh and NKG Infrastructure Limited have been named as the accused in the chargesheet.

Default bail plea of Unitech's former promoters rejected

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

ceases to exist, and his further detention during the trial is governed by Section 309 of CrPC.

The court also said there was sufficient material available on record to proceed against the accused in the case.

"Accordingly, both the applications of accused persons, namely Ajay Chandra and Sanjay Chandra, for seeking default bail under Section 167 (2) CrPC are dismissed. It has been abundantly established that the investigation qua the applicants was concluded with the filing of a supplementary prosecution complaint and further investigation in this case is only pending qua other persons and further proceedings of crime," said the court.

ED had recorded the case in 2018 based on over 60 FIRs registered against the accused for various offences, including cheating, criminal conspiracy, taking undue advantage by influencing public servant, and bribing public servant.

Rain over 2 days may give relief from increasing heat

Jatin Kumar



QUENCHING THIRST

Temperature might rise slightly on Thursday, to fall again on Friday.

"There are chances of very light rain to drizzling in some parts of the city on Thursday. The chances of rain with strong wind reaching up to 30-40 kmph is more on Friday. The maximum temperature may thus see slight dip," said an IMD official.

29-yr-old woman jumps off second floor, dies

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mukherjee Nagar around 3:20pm. A team was immediately dispatched to the scene, the officers stated.

Upon arrival, the police team transported the woman to a nearby hospital, where the doctors declared her dead on arrival.

During the initial investigation, it was found that the woman had been staying in the PG for the last few months. "As of now, no foul play has been suspected, but further investigation into the matter remains underway," the officers said.

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Type II Diabetes Irreversible, But Lifestyle Changes May Control It

Sustained Weight Loss, Certain Modifications Can Decrease Severity: Docs

Anuja Jaiswal
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: If you think that a temporary adjustment in lifestyle—changing eating habits and workouts—can reverse Type II diabetes, you are mistaken. Though scientifically, diabetes is irreversible, sustained weight loss and sustained changes in lifestyle can, however, result in remission, decrease in the severity of the disease and prevent complications.

Reversal of diabetes is scientifically impossible and remission, with the possibility of a relapse, is the only probability, say medical experts. Dr SV Madhu, director and professor of endocrinology, University College of Medical Sciences, pointed out that since Type II diabetes is a disease triggered by an unhealthy lifestyle, there is scope of remission if that lifestyle is changed. "However, it needs substantial weight loss of 15kg or more, especially in those who are overweight or obese," said Madhu.

The definition of remission so far is focused on nor-

WHAT TO DO

- Measures for weight loss in people with type II diabetes & obesity
 - Low-calorie diet | 800 calories or less each day under expert supervision
 - Usually 200 grams or more of carbohydrates are consumed by an individual daily
 - Usually an individual consumes 1,600-2,000 calories in a day
 - Intense exercise programmes to be combined with diet plan
 - Low carb diet | 20-30g under expert supervision
 - Bariatric surgery

Reversal is not a permanent state or cure

It's a remission with possibility of relapse

Only brings sugar level lower than the diabetes threshold, but a permanent lifestyle change is a must



mal blood glucose levels and no requirement for medication, said Dr Jasjeet Singh Wasir, director endocrinology & diabetology, Medanta Medicity. Added Dr V Mohan, chairman, Dr Mohan's Diabetes Speciality Centre and Madras Diabetes Research

only manage to bring diabetes down to lower than threshold level. If you don't follow the regime as a permanent lifelong lifestyle measure, you are likely to suffer again," he said.

There are five groups of people with Type 2 diabetes who can achieve remission, revealed Dr Mohan. These five can be identified as ABCDE. "A refers to A1c (glycated haemoglobin), which shouldn't be very high," he explained. "B stands for body mass index. The more obese the patient, the higher the chance of remission with weight loss. C stands for C-peptide, a measure of insulin secretion. If it is good, remission becomes easier. D stands for duration of diabetes—the shorter the duration, the more likely the disease will go into remission. E stands for an enthusiastic individual who is keen to achieve remission."

However, Mohan cautions that if diabetes comes back after remission, it does so with a vengeance.

Dr Anoop Misra, executive chairman & director, diabetes and endocrinology,

Foundation: "Overall, less than 5% achieve remission." He added that it counts as true remission when the blood sugar value dips below 5.6.

Madhu pointed out that there always is a chance of a relapse after remission. "It is not permanent, not a cure. We

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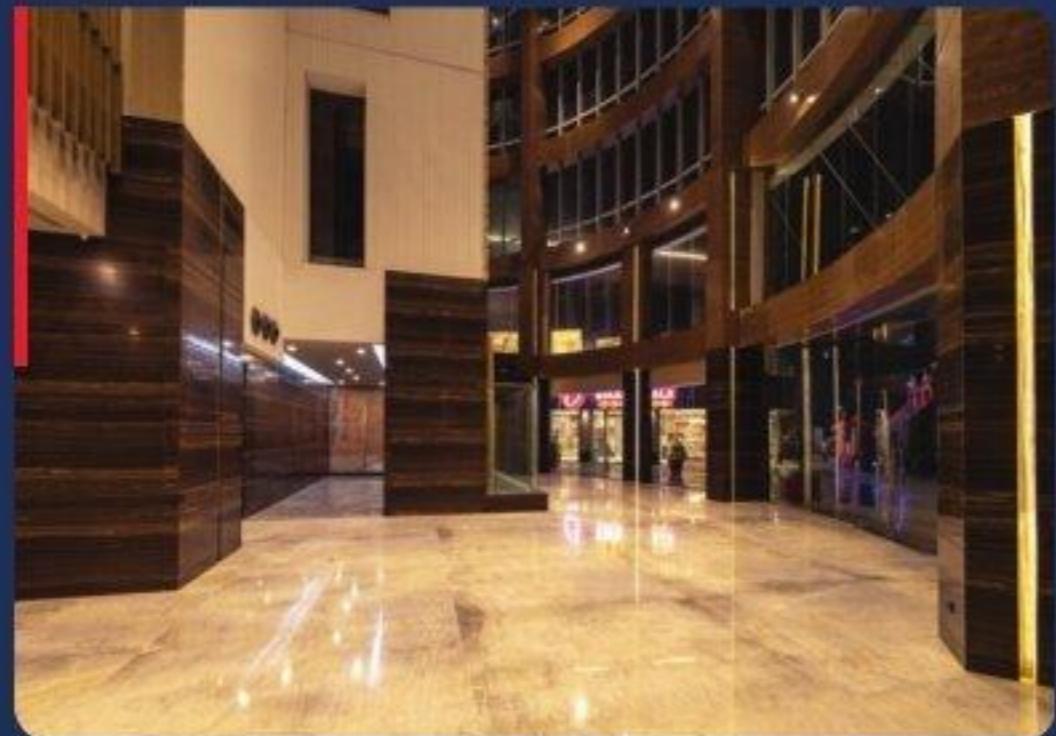
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Upcoming Diplomatic Enclave Dwarka

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* THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024



LALU APPEALS TO SARAN VOTERS TO BLESS CANDIDATE ROHINI, DAUGHTER WHO DONATED HER KIDNEY TO HIM

Ragpicker's daughter beats odds, makes it to Indian Navy

Pune: A Maharashtra safai worker's 20-year-old daughter has beaten 400 odd Agniveer aspirants to a berth in the Indian Navy as a cadet, using adversity and her mother's "never-say-die attitude" as the wind in her sails to fulfil a long-cherished dream, reports Swati Shinde Gole.

Shweta Pandit, whose mother Jyoti is part of a cooperative of self-employed safai workers called SWaCH in Pune's Wanowrie, has been deputed to INS Chikka in Odisha for training before she officially wears the Navy whites as a commissioned cadet.

Given her background, Shweta's journey to success has been all about weathering the storm. At one point, the student of Sadhana Girls School in Hadapsar couldn't afford private tuition to prepare for the entrance exam. Undeterred, she turned to online tutorials.

With the challenging fitness test looming, Shweta, an NCC cadet, sought her brother's help. "Both would be up at 4:30 am and go for a run and other exercises," Jyoti recalled.

Charred bodies of 3 Assam youths found in Meghalaya

Shillong: Charred bodies of three youths from Assam's Goalpara were found Wednesday along with a torched vehicle near Wageasi in Meghalaya's North Garo Hills district, close to the inter-state boundary, reports Manosh Das.

The incident is suspected to have taken place on Tuesday night. Two of the deceased have been identified as Jomor Ali and Noor Mohammad.

The youths, who were travelling towards Duhdhoi from Shillong, were abducted by miscreants between Rogni Alda and Rongmil (areas bordering East Garo Hills and North Garo Hills). DCP Vibhor Agarwal said a probe was underway, but no one had been arrested yet.

A cop said two of the victims were wanted by police. One was accused in a car-lifting case, the other had cattle theft cases pending against him.

(With inputs from agencies)

Accident victim not wearing seat belt gets car maker relief

New Delhi: National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission set aside an order of Maharashtra State Consumer Commission directing a car manufacturer to pay Rs 1 lakh compensation for non-deployment of airbags during a crash. NCDC arrived at the decision after finding the driver was not wearing his seat belt, which was one of the reasons for non-deployment of airbags in the crash, reports Dipak Dash.

Though NCDC took note of the consumer's argument that a seat belt does not need to be used for airbag activation, it observed his claim lacked supporting evidence. It also turned down state commission's finding that manufacturing defects led to non-deployment of airbags on the same ground.

PERFORMANCE REPORT

	April 2014-March 2024	July 2005-2014
Cases recorded (ECIR)	5,155	1,797
Searches	7,264	84
Arrests	755	29
No. of convictions	36	0
No. of people convicted	63	0
Prosecution complaints	1,281	102
Interpol red notices	24	0
Extradition requests	43	0
Assets attached	₹1,21,618cr	₹5,086cr
Assets confiscated	₹15,710cr	0
Properties restituted	₹16,404cr	0
Currency frozen	₹2,310cr	₹43 lakh
ECIR (Enforcement Case Information Report) is ED's version of FIR	Prosecution complaint is similar to chargesheet	PMLA was enacted in 2002 and implemented from July 1, 2005, to check serious crimes of tax evasion, generation of black money and money laundering

A Bridge Too Far: Locals Blame Stalled Project For Jhelum Tragedy

Sanctioned In 2016, It's Not Yet Ready, Forcing People To Rely On Boats

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Srinagar: Bridges aren't just structures, they are promises standing on piers. Some turn into enduring landmarks, a few age ungracefully, others fall into disuse, and the odd one remains a monument to despair. Seven years in the making, with two disconnected decks on either side and a yawning gap of indifference in between, the one over the Jhelum in Srinagar's Gandalb is a bridge of sighs.

Around 8 am on Tuesday, tragedy struck this backwater of Jammu & Kashmir's capital city when six of 15 people — five of them children headed to school — drowned after the boat ferrying them across the swollen river capsized. Three people are still missing.

"This is on those responsible for the bridge remaining incomplete all these

years," said Ghulam Mohammad of Batwara, from where the victims hailed. "It's a shame people living on Srinagar's outskirts still have to cross a river by boat to get to work or school."

Gandalb's seemingly unending wait for a 110-metre bridge, just about the length of a football pitch, contrasts with Srinagar's development into a Smart City with modern amenities since 2019. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti was J&K's CM when a footbridge was sanctioned in 2016 to fulfil a long-standing demand of residents. Work commenced the next year with a budget of Rs 4.7 crore, only for the plan to hit a roadblock.

"The width of the bridge was 5.9 feet in the original blueprint, but residents of the area approached the authorities with a request to widen it into a motorable span. The basic parameters changed, and the sanctioning



TROUBLED WATERS: Inconsolable relatives at the funeral on Wednesday of those who drowned a day earlier

process had to start all over again," Sajad Ahmad Naqeeb, chief engineer of roads and buildings, told **TOL**.

The official blamed the unavailability of "dedicated funding" for the expansion's failure to receive immediate sanction. By the time the new design and budget were ap-

proved in 2019, Mufti was no longer CM. The bridge's width was recalibrated to 3.9m (13ft).

Just as construction was to start, J&K plunged into uncertainty in the wake of Article 370 being nullified. Then came the pandemic-induced shutdown the following year.

"Since 2019, and multiple

interruptions later, two of the three planned spans of the bridge have been built. The third span should be completed in June," Naqeeb said.

Mohammad Latif Dar, a resident of Gandalb, said people of the area had submitted a couple of memorandums to the authorities,

complaining of the pace at which work had progressed over the past seven years.

"The unfinished bridge is a testament to the gaps between development promises and reality. What can be worse than schoolchildren drowning just 3km from the smart city hub of Lal Chowk because their area doesn't have a bridge over a river that is often in spate?" he said.

The Kashmir Valley has had heavy rainfall in the past four days, causing the Jhelum to swell. The boat that capsized was going against the current, officials said.

Twins Tahir and Mudasir Fayaz, 12, drowned along with their mother Firdousa Mohammad Azan, their friend, isn't ready to reconcile to the reality that the brothers he would play and go to tuition with almost every day won't return. "We used to call them Dolu and Bolu because they were a spitting image of each other in height and shape," said Azan, also 12.

A witness to Tuesday's boat capsizing said he would forever be haunted by the

sight of flailing hands piecing out of the waters.

Rescue workers retrieved four school bags close to Chatabal, 10km downstream from Gandalb. A picture of the muddied bags hung on a wooden door was widely shared on social media, accentuating outrage over the tragedy.

Some residents said the bridge remaining incomplete after seven years wasn't the only travesty. Gandalb purportedly has a lone functional govt primary school with poor infrastructure, forcing families to send their children to institutes across the river.

Bashir Ahmad, who lives in the locality, said one of his neighbours recently took his child out of the primary school and enrolled him in Kendriya Vidyalaya No-1 at Batwara. "This primary school had been established in 2011 but never got an upgrade," said Altaf Ahmad, another resident.

The school has three classrooms, 87 students & six teachers. Director of school education Tassadug Hussain Mir wasn't available for comment.

Groups clash in WB district on Ram Navami; 18 injured

Crude Bombs May Have Been Used, Say Cops

Sukumar Mahato | **TNN**



Devotees take part in a Ram Navami procession at Berhampore Wednesday

Berhampore: Eighteen people, including two minors and several police personnel, were injured and a number of shops damaged as violence erupted Wednesday evening after a Ram Navami procession went past a mosque in Beldanga town in West Bengal's Mursidabad district.

A police team led by Mursidabad DIG Syed Waqar Raza rushed to the spot. At the time of filing report, central forces were patrolling the area.

TMC's temple run, P9

Bengal Police was yet to issue a statement on what led to the incident. Sources said police had to resort to lathi-charge and fire tear gas shells to keep two warring groups from clashing. Locals claimed 20 people had been detained for questioning.

The in-charge of the local Shaktipur police station was

among the injured, while several others sustained sharp cuts on arms and legs. Police said some injuries could be due to crude bomb splinters.

Some of the injured were taken to Mursidabad Medical College and Hospital for treatment. According to local sources, a few participants in the Ram Navami procession brandished swords and hurled mud pellets at the mosque, which led to the clashes. Others, however, claimed the procession was attacked unprovoked. Cops present at the spot were outnumbered and attacked, before additional

forces arrived, they added.

Violence had broken out in the same zone three days back, prompting the panel on Monday to transfer Mursidabad DIG Shri Mukesh, and replace him with Raza. Till Tuesday, Section 144 was clamped in the area.

After the DIG's transfer, CM Mamata Banerjee had said EC would be responsible if fresh violence broke out.

Reacting to Wednesday's clashes, Bengal LoP Suvendu Adhikari claimed that police had "joined" miscreants and asked Election Commission to intervene immediately.

Mamata's call for peace draws BJP's fire

New Delhi: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday drew flak from BJP for her call to maintain peace during the Ram Navami celebrations, with BJP accusing her of singling out Hindu festivals, reports **Manash Gohain**.

"Why are similar calls not issued for festivals of other communities?" asked BJP spokesperson Sudhanush Trivedi. He said the suggestion that celebrations of Hindu festivals led to violence was an affront to "India, its culture and the festival itself".

"Banerjee's statement on social media urging peace is disrespectful to the festival of Ram Navami. While on other religious occasions you preach peace, here instead of giving the message of prosperity, you are asking to maintain peace. By doing this you are trying to insult Indian and Sanatan culture," the spokesperson said.

Similarly, Ayan Jain, who leaped from an impressive AIR 87 to an outstanding 16, attributed his success to a meticulous analysis of previous years' question papers, said the IIT-Delhi graduate from Bhopal.

Other notable achievers include 35-year-old Sameer Khode from Nagpur, who ascended from rank 551 to 42. "I

From 236 to No. 1: What UPSC topper did different this time

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



Throughout my preparations, my basic focus was on identifying mistakes and rectifying them, said Aditya Srivastava.

worked more on bringing in my personal opinion and experiences in the optional subject (political science). I also made use of data sets wherever possible, instead of just quoting theories, said Khode.

Ashish Patil, a 26-year-old from Kolhapur, climbed from rank 563 to 147. He underscored the importance of fine-tuning study methods and bolstering confidence. Offering advice to aspiring candidates, Bhavesh Khayalia from Hisar in Haryana, who surged from rank 334 to 36 in his third attempt, emphasised a shift in focus towards presentation and precision in answers.

For the three toppers from Gujarat, it was their third attempt. Vishnu Sasi-kumar, Anjali Thakur, and Atul Tyagi secured ranks 31, 43, and 62, respectively.

Maha Speaker creates stir in BJP, says he's part of Gawli party now

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Mumbai: In a statement that has created a stir in political circles, state assembly Speaker and South Mumbai Lok Sabha aspirant **Rahul Narwekar** has said he was a new member of the Arun Gawli-founded Akhil Bhartiya Sena (ABS) family and would support his daughter Geeta Gawli in becoming next mayor of Mumbai. Narwekar, whose candidature hasn't been declared by BJP, made the statement at a meeting with ABS office bearers in Byculla Monday.

Geeta was being wooed by both Shiv Sena and BJP as the two parties vied to take control of the civic body, but had extended support to BJP in the end.

I will not leave ABS's endeavour. The love that ABS workers got from Geeta Gawli and 'Daddy' (Arun Gawli), they will get the same love from me. Today, a new member has joined ABS family, assume

this. I am not just asking for support for (myself) for LS elections, but I will support my sister (Geeta Gawli) till she becomes the mayor of Mumbai," Narwekar added.

He is the eldest daughter of Arun Gawli, was the lone ABS corporator in Mumbai civic body elections in 2017. Geeta was being wooed by both Shiv Sena and BJP as the two parties vied to take control of the civic body, but had extended support to BJP in the end.

HC allowed Gawli's petition challenging rejection of his claim for premature release in view of a Jan 10, 2006 govt notification. Govt has been directed to decide on his release within four weeks.

Attack reignites fear of J&K targeted killings

Continued from P1

Authorities have launched an investigation to ascertain the motive behind these attacks, reminiscent of earlier instances, such as the targeted killing of two young men from Punjab, Amritpal Singh and Rohit Maisi, in Srinagar on Feb 7. On April 8, a tourist taxi driver from New Delhi suffered bullet wounds in Shopian district.

These attacks reignited concerns about the resurgence of targeted violence against non-natives in Kashmir Valley, following a relatively calm period in 2023. In 2022, a total of 29 targeted killings were reported in J&K, including five of Kashmiri Pandits.

Sources said EC, in a communication to the governor during his "unexpected proposed visit" without any imminently known requirement would be a diversion for the district authorities and the law and order machinery, it said. **TNN**

posed in his programme, in view of the MCC, restrictions in force due to the 48-hour silence period and April 19 being election day.

EC noted that the entire district administration and police force would be fully occupied in election management on April 18-19. The need to provide any official protocol or security cover to the governor during his "unexpected proposed visit" without any imminently known requirement would be a diversion for the district authorities and the law and order machinery, it said. **TNN**

He had been facing pre-trial incarceration for five-and-a-half years, said his counsel Anand Grover, while seeking his bail in SC. He said that several co-accused had already been granted bail for delayed trial. **TNN**

He had been facing pre-trial incarceration for five-and-a-half years, said his counsel Anand Grover, while seeking his bail in SC. He said that several co-accused had already been granted bail for delayed trial. **TNN**

While there were no confiscations of assets during UPA's term, ED confiscated assets worth Rs 15,710 crore in the last decade. So far, ED has returned more than Rs 16,000 crore to banks and other victims after disposal of assets, all in the last few years.

ED arrests in

TMC outdoes BJP temple run on Ram Navami

A Sign Of Fear, Not Devotion: Saffron Party

Rohit Khanna & Sujay Khanna | TNN

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress rolled out Ram Navami processions with gusto in Bengal on Wednesday, appearing to take BJP by surprise a day after CM Mamata Banerjee publicly sounded a warning about the saffron party's alleged ploy to "engineer riots" on the sidelines of the celebration.

As candidate after candidate from TMC marched to the chants of "Jai Shri Ram", a chorus that has had Mamata in a flap on several occasions, BJP's Suvedu Adhikari termed the party's Ram Navami overdrive "a sign of fear and not devotion".

Some BJP functionaries admitted they didn't expect TMC to organise a celebration of this scale.

The role reversal — TMC going on a Ram Navami overdrive and BJP accusing it of "using religion for political gain" — capped a high-voltage campaign for the first phase of Lok Sabha elections this Friday.

Three seats — Alipurduar, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri — will be part of the 102 constituencies in 21 states and UTs going to polls in the first phase.

Mamata Banerjee has repeatedly accused BJP of getting Election Commission to schedule the start of elections two days after the festi-

Antics & gimmicks: One bares sole while another sells saag

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Tiruvannamalai/Tirupattur: From wearing a garland of chappals to milking a cow in public, Lok Sabha poll campaigners in Tamil Nadu have resorted to various antics to draw voters' attention.

Tiruvannamalai independent candidate R Jagannathan, 47, wore a garland of his poll symbol, "chappal", and sauntered the streets of the constituency, canvassing for himself, promising "all-round development of the region". His inflexible promises include raising MGNREGA workdays to 365 days from 100, improving road and rail services, and introducing helicopter services across India for devotees of Tiruvannamalai Arunachaleswar Temple.

"My wife, mother, relatives, and friends asked me to change my poll symbol. But I stuck with "chappal" as I believe the 15.5 lakh voters in my constituency will relate to it. And voters are happy," said Jagannathan, a milk vendor.

It is not just Jagannathan. As the campaign for April 19 polls ends at 6pm on Wednesday, candidates and



R Jagannathan, an independent candidate, sports a garland of 'chappals', his poll symbol, for campaigning in Tiruvannamalai

party functionaries are out on the hustings with unique canvassing methods.

Vandavasi DMK MLA S Ambethkumar campaigning for party's Arni candidate M S Dharamivendhan sold leafy greens at a vegetable market, surprising many acquaintances. He said it was his way of grabbing attention and letting people know he is always ready to lend a hand.

Similarly, DMK's Vandavasi town secretary Dayalan milked a cow during a rally for Dharamivendhan.

Some candidates cooked chicken pakora and sold le-giyam (jam), halwa, and jasmine garlands.



DMK MLA S Ambethkumar selling leafy greens while canvassing in TN's Arni

Edappadi K Palaniswami falling at the feet of V Sasikalal when she announced his name for the CM post in 2017 after J Jayalalithaa's death. Sasikalal is now EPS's subject of scorn. EPS retaliated in kind, showing pictures of Udhayanidhi and MK Stalin with PM Narendra Modi, implying they have a secret pact with BJP.

DMK and BJP have locked horns by sharing decade-old videos and images. DMK's IT wing has been posting videos of Modi, when he was Gujarat CM. In those speeches, Modi criticised the UP govt for depreciation of Indian rupee and lesser financial devotion for states — something

At a more high-profile level, two leaders are slugging it out with 'visual evidence' of each other's past. Sports minister Udhayanidhi Stalin was the first to flash photographs of AIADMK general secretary

Naveen to fight from 2 seats to counter BJP

Bhubaneswar: Falling back on a strategy that paid off in 2019, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik will contest from two constituencies this time, too. Apart from Hinjili, his fortress for over two decades, he will also be in the fray from Kantabangi assembly segment under Balangir Lok Sabha constituency in western Odisha, reports **Ashok Pradhan**.

The BJD chief's move, announced Wednesday, is aimed at countering BJP's growing influence, and is expected to have an impact on the overall dynamics in the state. Besides connecting with voters, BJD believes his decision will also boost the morale of party workers in the region.

TOI Presents A Series That Looks At Polls & People's Issues Through The Lens Of A Family

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Gagsona (Muzaffarnagar): As one leaves the municipal limits of Meerut and enters Muzaffarnagar, a quiet, almost quaint village lies at the border between the two districts in UP. It's the place Rajpal Singh Arya, a 74-year-old farmer with 25 bigha land calls home. "I've been here forever," he says, smiling broadly at the sight of his five buffaloes. "I know almost everyone in Gagsona."

There is little sign of the impending Lok Sabha elections in Gagsona, a small hamlet with around 3,500 people, 1,700 votes "and 12 major castes". But like most others in the village, who till even 30 years ago used a barter system to get by, Arya knows what he wants and what he doesn't.

Taking out a charpai on which his grandchild, daughter-in-law and wife plonk themselves, the farmer says, "See, politicians should have one mantra in their heads and hearts — improve schools, build hospitals. We are nothing without good health and education."

A few villagers troop in from Arya's gate that opens into a courtyard with a tractor parked on one side and a milk processing unit on the other. Besides farming, the family also sells milk at the Mawana market some 15km away.

As Arya, a father of four holds court, some of the others butt in to talk proudly about their clean village with neat winding roads and pucca houses. While Arya's younger son Neeraj, 38, lives in the village with his family, the elder one, Naveen, moved

to Meerut years ago and works as a consultant involved in getting environmental clearance for brick kilns.

Eager to contribute to the discussion, Arya's wife, Meela Devi, 71, orders the group to be quiet and give her a chance to speak.

"Unlike in urban areas, survival in rural belts is easier: Things are cheaper and many families grow their own food. However, one thing we've noticed in recent years is the strain on resources and infrastructure. Moreover, our villages are emptying out. People go to the

When B'luru traffic dominates poll talk in Kerala

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Bengaluru: The epicentre of the traffic-related battle is Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala's capital where heavyweights Shashi Tharoor (Congress) and Rajeev Chandrasekhar (BJP) have locked horns in the Lok Sabha elections.

But why are concerns being raised about Bengaluru traffic in Kerala? It all started when Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee took to micro-blogging platform X and turned the spotlight on the



ROADBLOCK: Debate started over a post on micro-blogging platform X

controversial steel bridge project, which was also responsible for the Congress' dismal performance in Bengaluru during the 2018 assembly elections. The nearly 6.7-km-long steel bridge project, mooted by the Siddaramaiah govt in 2016 at a cost of Rs 1,800 crore, had snowballed into a major controversy following widespread protests.

The opposition BJP had

charged the Congress govt with corruption while citizens spoke about environmental and heritage destruction. Chandrasekhar had opposed the project, stating: "It was taken up without any public consultation and that it would destroy the city." The steel bridge project got shelved and Bengalureans learnt to co-exist with crawling traffic on Hebbal flyover.

Interestingly, deconges-

ting Hebbal junction hasn't topped the list of poll issues being debated in Bengaluru.

Not just KIA road, the newly constructed Bengaluru-Mysuru access-controlled highway has also crept into poll discourse in Kerala. While Chandrasekhar and fellow party functionaries maintain that BJP will change Kerala's trajectory, Congress spokesman Jaairam Ramesh pointed out that Rs 8,500 crore had been spent on the project.

Despite this massive outlay, commuters have been outraged by the lack of safety measures, engineering defects, and waterlogging that have led to severe road fatalities on the highway. Less than a year after its inauguration, NHAI has had to invite Rs 688 crore of additional roadwork to address construction issues," he said.

Campaigning ends for Ph-1 of polls in 102 seats

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Campaigning wrapped up Wednesday evening for 102 Lok Sabha seats across 21 states and Union territories slated for the first phase of polling on April 19. The opposition had won 45 of these 102 seats in 2019, while NDA took 41. Six of these seats have been redrawn as part of the delimitation exercise.

The poll battleground spans various regions, including all seats of Tamil Nadu (39), Uttarakhand (5), Arunachal (2), Meghalaya (2), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (1), Mizoram (1), Nagaland (1), Puducherry (1), Sikkim (1) and Lakshadweep (1). Besides, 12 seats in Rajasthan, 8 in UP, 6 in MP, 5 seats each in Assam and Maharashtra, 4 in Bihar, 3 in Bengal, 2 in Manipur, and one each in Tripura, J&K, and Chhattisgarh.

Home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and party MP Rahul Gandhi, along with other political figures, actively canvassed for their respective candidates.

In Tamil Nadu, CM MK Stalin and his arch-rival AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami rallied their respective bases, taking aim at BJP, PM Modi, and each other. Stalin said: "If BJP returns, India will become a country where future generations will not have a chance to live together."

Key RJD neta quits party

In a setback to the RJD, its national vice president Devendra Prasad Yadav on Wednesday resigned from the party, protesting the "import" of candidates to the detriment of "committed workers".

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TMC vows to tweak Art 155 to ensure state assemblies consulted for naming guys

Rohit.Khanna@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Mahashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar Wednesday kicked up a storm with his reference to Draupadi's marriage to five men, and a promise to allocate funds only if people voted for the Mahayati candidate in Indrapuram.

Appealing to voters to see through what it called BJP's "anti-people policies", TMC's poll document mentioned a "price stabilisation fund".

The social security proposals included an annual old-age pension of Rs 12,000 to eligible beneficiaries, Rs 1,000 each a month to unemployed women in the general category, Rs 1,200 a month to those from the SC/ST categories, and a conditional cash transfer of Rs 1,000 a year to unmarried girl students aged between 13 and 18.

It said TMC, as part of the INDIA bloc, would amend Article 155 to ensure governors are appointed in consultation with state legislatures. A mandatory three-year "cooling-off period" before retired judges can accept govt appointments or

political positions is also on the to-do list.

Mamata Banerjee's party enshrined in the manifesto its opposition to BJP's "One Nation, One Election" proposal as well.

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The manifesto proposed to increase health insurance coverage to Rs 10 lakh.

bearing the advertisement of a liquor company, to say that DMK would not fulfil its electoral promise of prohibition.

Old videos of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal criticising Congress and now joining hands with the national party are shared by NDA supporters. As a tit-for-tat, old videos of BJP leaders criticising former Maharashtra CM Ajit Pawar and recent ones of his sharing a stage with BJP leaders are widely circulated.

N Karthikeyan, a cyber law expert, cautions politicians. "Now everything is transparent. What you post today may be used as a weapon on years later," he said.

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Ahead of Musk visit, new FDI limit in space sector notified

New Delhi: Ahead of Starlink-promoter Elon Musk's visit to India, the Centre has notified a new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit for various satellite-related activities under Foreign Exchange Management (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, enabling foreign investors to firm up investment plans in the sector, reports Surendra Singh.

A notification from the finance ministry said the new rules called the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Third Amendment) Rules, 2024 are effective from April 16. In Feb, govt had approved an amendment in FDI policy for the space sector.

Musk, who will meet PM Modi during this visit to India, is expected to make several major announcements, including the launch of Starlink and investments ranging from \$2 billion to \$3 billion in India. Starlink has also applied for the permit to start satcom services in India. Starlink has a constellation of around 4,000 low earth orbit (LEO) satellites.

We don't discuss sanctions openly, says US official

►Continued from P1



Modi is reported to have said that in the 10 years of BJP govt at the Centre, 'terrorists are being killed in their own homes'

Defence minister Rajnath Singh had said if terrorists try to disturb peace in India, they will get a befitting reply

govt at the Centre, "terrorists are being killed in their own homes".

Earlier this month, Rajnath Singh, referring to New Delhi's assertive approach to dealing with cross-border ter-

rorism, had said if terrorists try to disturb peace in India or carry out terror activities, a befitting response will be given, and if they run away to Pakistan, India will enter the neighbouring country to kill them. He was responding to a question on a report by British newspaper 'The Guardian' that claimed Indian intelligence agencies carried out assassinations of terrorists in Pakistan as part of an emboldened approach to national security after 2019.

Suraj & Tanaya: Bengal proposes new names for lions Akbar, Sita

Kolkata: "Akbar" may become "Suraj", "Sita" may be renamed "Tanaya". West Bengal govt has proposed to the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) new names for the two lions that came from Tripura. Their names, Akbar and Sita, had snowballed into a major row, with right-wing groups protesting the "disrespect" and moving court, reports Krishnendu Mukherjee.

The proposal to rechristen the big cats follows the observation of Calcutta HC's Jalpaiguri circuit bench that controversial names should be avoided.

VHP had moved the circuit bench in Feb saying naming a lion Sita was offensive to those who worshipped the goddess. Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya had also observed that he did not support naming the other lion Akbar after the "efficient, successful and secular" Mughal emperor.

A senior forester said on Wednesday: "The proposed names have been sent to CZA. Now it is up to them to either go by these or give them digital names."

Nestle adds sugar to infant milk sold in poorer nations but not in Europe & UK

Over 5 Years, Added Sugar Cut By Up To 30%: Nestle India

Rema.Nagarajan
@timesgroup.com



Nestle adds sugar to infant milk sold in poorer countries but not in its main markets in Europe or the UK. This was revealed when Public Eye, a Swiss investigative organisation, and IBFAN (International Baby Food Action Network) sent samples of the company's baby food products sold in Asia, Africa and Latin America to a Belgian laboratory for testing. In India, where sales surpassed \$250 million in 2022, all Cerelac baby cereals contain added sugar; on average nearly 3 grams per serving.

Public Eye's investigation that was made public Wednesday said Cerelac wheat-based cereals for six-month-old babies sold by Nestle in Germany, France and UK had no added sugar; while the same product contains over 5 gms per serving in Ethiopia and 6 gms in Thailand.

Presented with the findings, Nigel Rollins, a scientist at WHO told Public Eye

natural sugar content... Avoid juice drinks or other mixed drinks, which have added sweeteners. Always check the label." This doesn't seem to apply to its own products sold in low and middle income countries.

Though Nestle did not respond to questions from Public Eye and IBFAN about the double standard, it stated that it "has reduced by 11% the total amount of added sugars in infant cereal portfolio worldwide" over the past decade and that it will "further reduce the level of added sugars without compromising on quality, safety and taste".

When contacted by TOI, a Nestle India spokesperson said, "Over the past 5 years, Nestle India has reduced added sugars by up to 30%... in our infant cereals portfolio". The spokesperson added, "We regularly review our portfolio and continue to innovate and reformulate our products to further reduce the levels of added sugars without compromising on quality, safety and taste."

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IT'S notified that in my daughter, Janvi Aggarwal's 10th marksheet my name is wrongly written as Sandeep Aggarwal. My true name is Sandeep Kumar Aggarwal R/O Tower 17, Flat 403, Unitech Habitat, Sector PI 2, Greater Noida, UP.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To whom so ever it may concern, my client Bhim Sen Khatter Son of Hukum Chand Khatter reside at W2 2138 Rani Bagh Delhi-34, and is the owner of 8-Bighas 06-Biswas of Agril Land located in village Gheva, Delhi, under Khata No. 201Min (Khasra No. 86/1(3/2(0-07), 14/2(1-3), 15/01-07), and 87/1(14-18) and Khata No. 201Min (Khasra No. 87/2(0-07). He explicitly states that he has not sold this property to anyone and have no intention of selling this property, and any transaction made without his consent will be considered null and void. It will not be his responsibility for the same.

D.S. LAKRA & ASSOCIATES (Advocate), End. No. D-36096(R)

Ch. No. 783, Delhi High Court

PUBLIC NOTICE

That my client namely Mr. Puneet Chapanrao S/o Sh. Om Prakash C/o Salasir Estate, E-34, Lower Ground Floor, Greater Kalash -II, New Delhi-48,(Mob:-7840850038/ 9560158521) is entering into an Agreement to Sell one Ms. Sanhita Agnihotri C/o Sh. Balmiki Tripathi with respect to Flat situated at Ground Floor front portion facing lawn measuring 2200 sq. ft. (alongwith proportionate basement) (being Duplex of Ground and basement) out of total 1299 sq. yds. in property bearing no. W-122, Greater Kalash -II, New Delhi-110048. Objections are hereby invited by way of this publication from any person having any interest/encl. etc. in the above said property within 7 days of this publication. Such person/s may contact my client whose details are mentioned above.

Kapil Lalwani (Advocate)

R-501, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-92

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at large is hereby informed that my client Mr. Ashish Gopal S/o Sh. Shyam Gopal R/o WZ-7, Beri Wala Bagh, J-Block, Maha Kavi Tulsi Bass Goswami Marg Hari Nagar, Delhi-110048, has sold his property to another person. If anybody deals with any other person without written consent of my client in respect of sale/purchase of aforesaid property, same shall be done by the said person(s) at his/her/their own risks, costs and consequences and my client shall be liable and responsible for the same. At the same time, any transaction so done by any person in respect of said property without written consent/permission of my client, the same shall not be binding upon my client and shall be treated as null and void.

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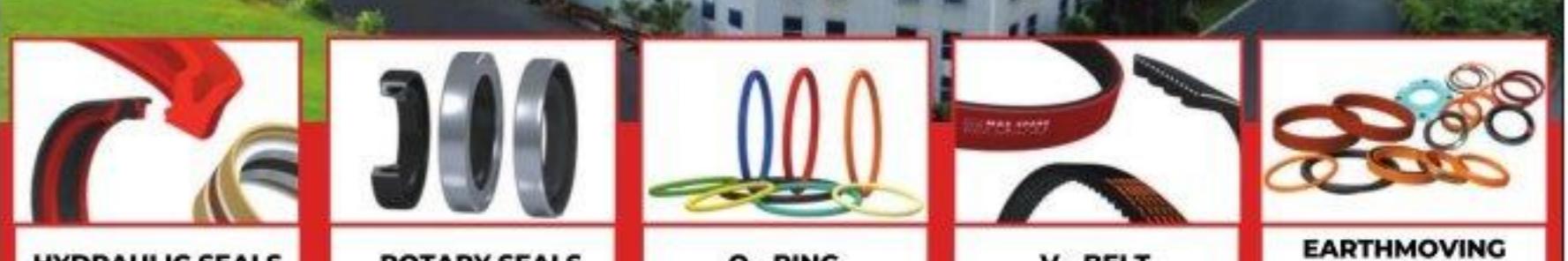
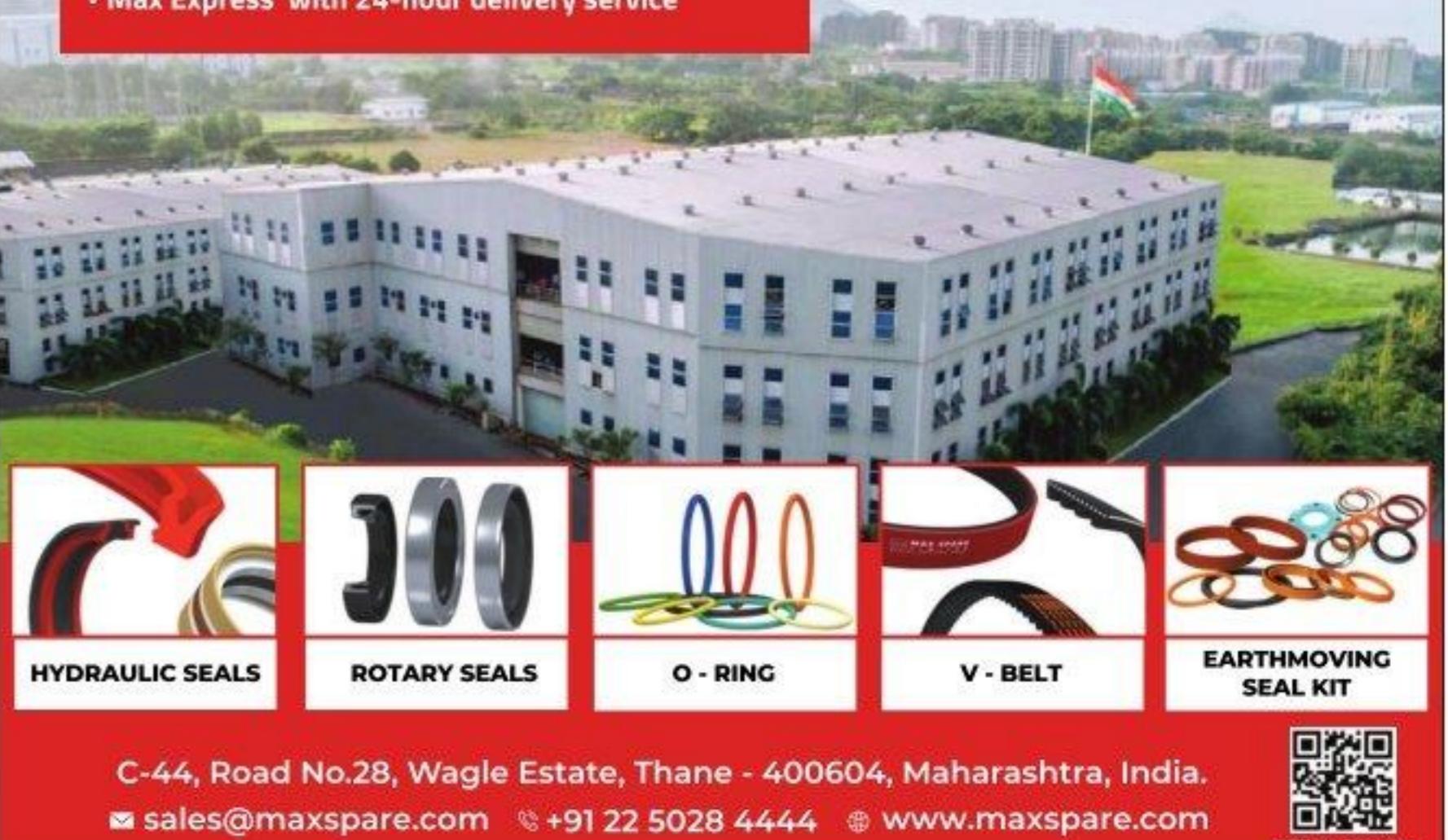
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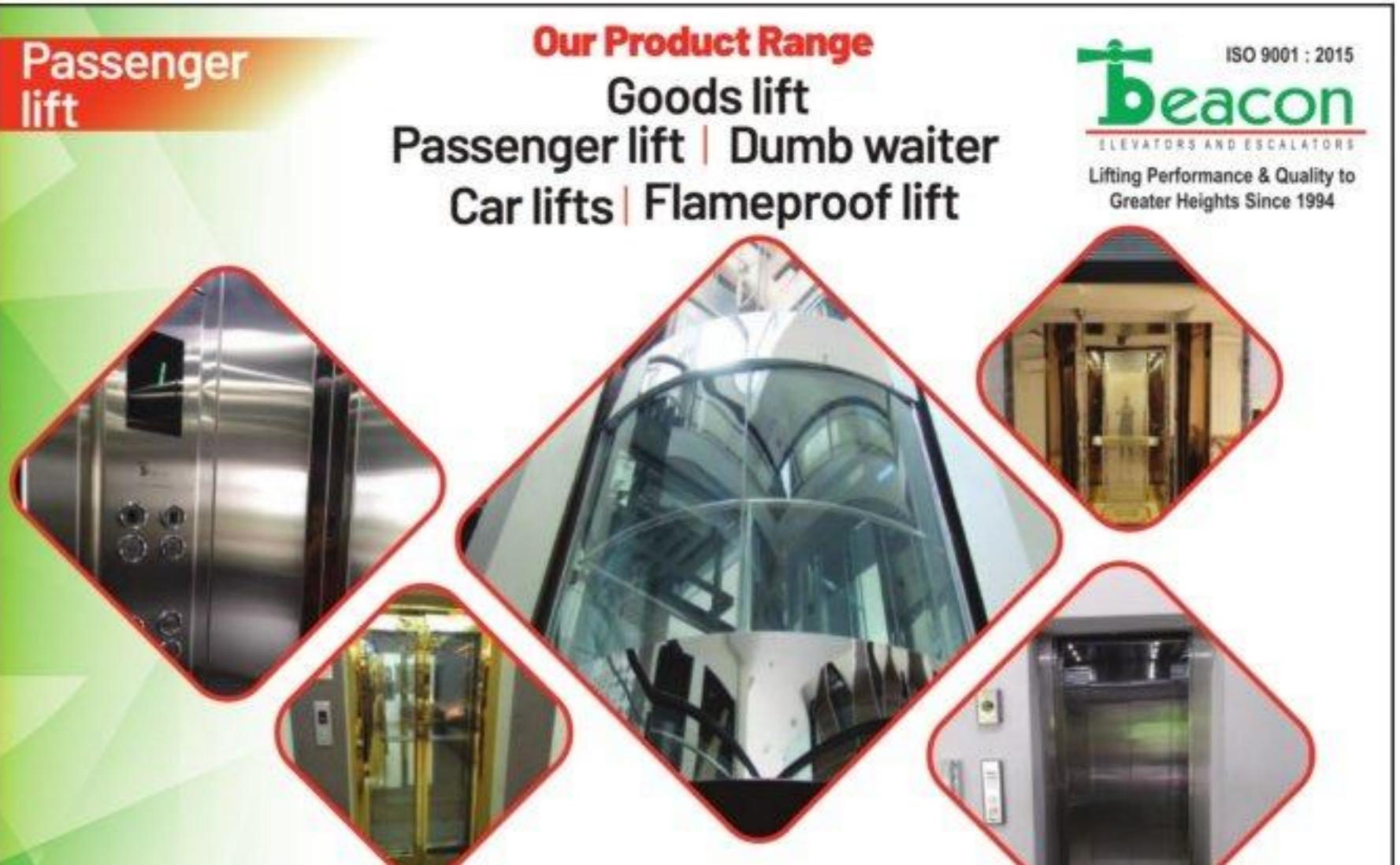
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Next 2 years to be decisive in war against Naxals: Bastar IG

But Warns Of Reprisal By 'Shaken' Reds

Rashmi.Drolia
atimesgroup.com

Raipur: Hi-tech intelligence gathering and communication, superior tactics and the stepping up of offensive ops have resulted in big successes for security forces, like the Kanker encounter, Bastar Range IG P Sundarraj told TOI in an interview on Wednesday.

Continuous assault by security forces has shaken their confidence and Maoists are finding it difficult to recruit cadres, he said. "Youngsters won't join them. Recruiting new cadres is going to be a challenging task for Maoists after losing senior and lower-rung cadres in recent encounters."

Collective efforts on vari-



Bastar Range IG P Sundarraj on Wednesday checks the weapons recovered after Tuesday's encounter in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district

ous fronts over a sustained, long period has resulted in giving a big blow to Maoists. "The next couple of years are going to be decisive on the anti-Naxal front. Operations will be intensified," he said.

"Maoists' morale has been dropping due to sustained pressure from security forces, which has led to the elimination of 78 Maoists in the past four months. But the fight hasn't

ended yet, and we will not underestimate the intentions of Maoists," he said.

The successful Kanker op was the outcome of establishing critical operational base camps, taking development to regions as far as possible and adopting superior tactics. Special strike forces, like DRG and Bastar Fighters, have not only given an opportunity for local youths and channelised their ener-

gy towards positivity, but also added strength to the fighting capabilities of the troops," the IG said.

In the Kanker operation, the troops adopted tactical movement that couldn't be spotted by Maoists. "Otherwise, they either flee or launch a counter-ambush. The region where the encounter took place was considered to be a safe den for Maoists and they never expected troops to enter their stronghold," he said.

Security forces are aware that Maoists will try to hit back after being battered so badly, he said. "They might try to inflict damage on soft targets first, like innocent villagers and public infrastructure, which we always try to protect. Their reaction might come on multiple fronts. They will use IEDs and resort to blame game. They will try to seek public sympathy to boost the sagging morale of their cadre," he added.

Revenge? Reds hack C'garh BJP worker to death in front of kin

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Raipur: In apparent retaliation for the Kanker operation, Maoists murdered a BJP deputy sarpanch in neighbouring Narayanpur district late Tuesday, two days before Bastar constituency votes in the Lok Sabha elections.

Pancham Das Manikpuri is the ninth BJP functionary/worker to be murdered by Maoists since Feb last year. Naxals accused him of working for police. The killing took place in Dandvan village of Farasaon, around 15km from the district headquarters and 115km north of Dantewada.

The Maoists struck around 11pm, when it was already known that 29 insurgents had been gunned down in Kanker's Binagunda, 75km away. The armed cadres broke down Pancham's door with axes, barged in and hacked him to death in front of his family.

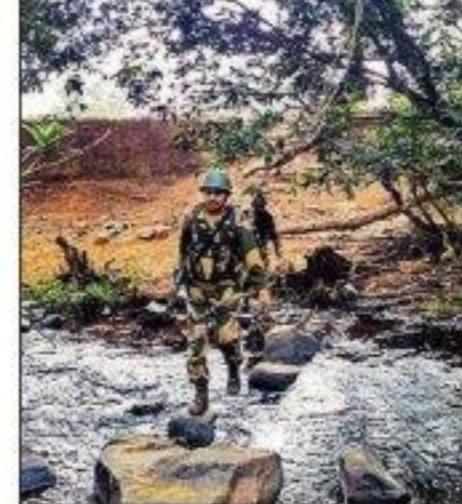
They left after stringing up a Maoist banner near the house, accusing Pancham of corruption and working as a police informer. The Maoist west Bastar division committee claimed responsibility for the murder and said Pancham didn't heed repeated warnings, "which is why he was killed in front of his family members".

"Pancham Das's murder is an act of sheer cowardice. They killed a defenceless, common man," said deputy chief minister and home minister Vijay Sharma. Pancham, a long-time BJP worker, was on the hit list of Naxalites for quite some time.

Last year, just before the assembly elections, BJP's Narayanpur district unit vice-president Ranbir Dubey was hacked to death at a campaign meeting. A few days before that, BJP worker Birju Taram was shot dead in Sarkeda village of Mohla-Manpur-Ambagar Chowki district. And in June 2023, a local BJP functionary was killed by Naxalites in Bijapur district. Three BJP leaders were killed in Feb last year in Bastar division.

78 Naxals eliminated in first 4 mths of BJP govt in C'garh

►Continued from P1



Security personnel during the encounter in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Tuesday

camp. The stage was set for Operation Kanker.

It's the highest Maoist toll in any single encounter in Bastar. Police are yet to identify all the dead Maoists. How did the forces achieve such complete and deadly surprise in what was known as a Maoist stronghold?

Binagunda is in Kanker's Chhotebathiya region, abutting Abujhmarh and close to the Maharashtra border. Trijunctions like this are well-known Maoist corridors, considered out of reach of the security forces. This is where top Maoist leaders hold meetings to chalk out strategy.

Police learnt that Maoist divisional committee members Shankar Rao and Lalita had been holding meetings with local operatives and villagers in Binagunda since April 5. MHA passed on the exact grid co-ordinates of the Maoist

stronghold to Operation Kanker.

When BSF and DRG jawans began combing the hillside in torchlight, they found bodies every few metres. The toll went up every few minutes — 10, 13, 18, 23, and then 29. If there were 30 Maoists, the kill ratio was nearly 100%. The bodies of Lalita, Shankar, and another commander, Vinod Gawde, were among the first to be identified, said police. They had tried to arrest Shankar many times in the past, but he had always managed to escape.

They hadn't anticipated a midday strike. "But they somehow sensed our presence and there was a sud-

den flurry of activity. Cadres used sign language with each other and immediately took positions to fire at us," one of the officers involved in the encounter told TOI. "Guns blazed from both sides. They were around 300 metres from us. We were in strong positions, behind trees and boulders," said another.

The first shot was fired around 3 pm. It wasn't until 7pm that silence returned to the hills. Even after sunset, bullets and screams pierced the darkness. The Maoists couldn't withstand such overwhelming force though they were armed with automatic weapons.

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Over-the-counter medicines refers to drugs that are allowed to be sold without a doctor's prescription. Countries like the USA, UK and Australia have clear cut guidelines regarding their classification, uses and regulation. In Feb, Director General of Health Services, Atul Goel, formed an expert committee to formulate India's OTC drug policy.

The committee has submitted the first list of drugs that could be sold over the counter recently after which a meeting was called on Monday to discuss any potential addition or subtraction.

"India has a rule for prescription drugs but there is no guideline or list of drugs that should be sold over the counter. A drug is considered an OTC unless it is specifically stated as a prescription only drug. This is the first time such an exercise is being undertaken," said a source.

Regarding his earlier statement, Baghel said, "The encounter that happened earlier in Kanker was fake... We will give him a list of fake encounters from Raman Singh's tenure till now."

Several fake encounters have taken place, which didn't happen during our regime. They (BJP-led Chhattisgarh govt

Fake encounters, cries Baghel; prove it, challenges CM Deo

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Raipur: Former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel on Wednesday alleged that "fake encounter" cases have gone up in Bastar, prompting CM Vishnu Deo to challenge him to prove Tuesday's Kanker encounter was "fake" or apologise to security forces.

"Several fake encounters have taken place, which didn't happen during our regime. They (BJP-led Chhattisgarh govt

even threatened and arrested tribals," a tweet by ANI quoted Baghel as saying during a press conference in Kawardha on Tuesday.

CM and deputy CM Vijay Sharma rejected Baghel's allegation, saying, "Every issue shouldn't be politicised". Sharma said that calling the encounter fake was an insult to security forces. Baghel must prove that the encounter is fake or apologise to security forces.

"Several fake encounters have taken place, which didn't happen during our regime. They (BJP-led Chhattisgarh govt

praised security forces for the "successful" Kanker operation. "They fought with great courage and achieved remarkable success. Our strategy of infiltrating deep into Maoist strongholds has proven effective. The death of 29 Maoists is significant," he said.

Regarding his earlier statement, Baghel said, "The encounter that happened earlier in Kanker was fake... We will give him a list of fake encounters from Raman Singh's tenure till now."

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टेलिफ़ोन सं.: 7088117360

निविदा सं.: 62/SE(C)O&M/E-Tender/PTCUL/D.Dun/2023-24

निविदा सं.: 62/SE(C)O&M/E-Tender/PTCUL/D.Dun/2023-24 की तिथि क्रमस: दिनांक 29.04.2024 तक विद्युत विवरण दिनांक 06.05.2024 समय 5:00 बजे तक अधीक्षण अभियन्ता (जानपद) परिवर्तनामुख्य कार्यालय से जारी है। निविदा संभवान्वित अन्य विद्युत विवरण इन्विदा सुचना प्रेसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in/PTCUL एवं ई-निविदा सुचना प्रिट्कुल वेबसाइट www.ptcul.org से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं।

निविदा संभवान्वित अन्य विद्युत विवरण इन्विदा सुचना प्रिट्कुल वेबसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in/PTCUL एवं ई-निविदा सुचना प्रिट्कुल वेबसाइट www.ptcul.org से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं।

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ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित जानकारी हैं अथवा किसी भी सहायता के लिए PH-No.-91-889890000, +0120-420462, 0120-4001002, 0120-4001005, 0120-627778 से सम्पर्क स्थापित करें।

पत्रक: 139-अधीक्षणप्रभारीजनपदपरिवर्तनामुख्य/प्रिट्कुल/वेबसाइट-1 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता (जानपद) परिवर्तनामुख्य

दिनांक: 16/04/2024

"राष्ट्र हित में विजली बवाये"

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.I.T.No. 02 (A, B, C)24-25/WE

Name of work with its location	(A) Annual maintenance of newly constructed 54 Type-V flats at Chankapuri in the S/o SSE/W/HNZ under ADEN/E-III.
	(B) AMC of commercial RO at Annex-I and II at Baroda house (For two Year) in the S/o SSE/W/BH under ADEN/E-III.
	(C) Renovation of damaged Ladies and Gents toilets of floors of ANNEXE-I building at Baroda House and provision of new doors, pipe lines, sanitary installment etc. in the section of SSE/W/BH under ADEN/E-III.

Approx. Cost of work (A) 949689.92 (B) 249959.27 (C) 19954165.88

EMD Amount (A) 189700.00 (B) 50000.00 (C) 249800.00

Completion period of work (A) 12 Months (B) 24 Months (C) 06 Months

Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender Closing date of tender on 10.05.2024 at 15:00 hrs.

Website particular notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.

128-W/269/OET/24-25/WE/NIT/02 (A, B, C) Dated : 15.04.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

1150/24

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

CASH & ACCOUNTS-II

NOTICE to nationalized banks for investment of an amount of Rs. 6,00,00,000/- (Rupees Six Crore only) IN FIXED DEPOSIT.

All the Nationalized Banks are informed that the above mentioned amount is to be invested in Fixed Deposit for a period of SIX MONTHS. Interested Nationalized Banks are requested to quote in sealed cover, the highest rate of interest valid till 24.04.2024, for this deposit in accordance with the prescribed format and hand over personally to the undersigned upto 5.00 p.m. on 22.04.2024. No offer will be accepted after 5.00 p.m.

For more details, prescribed format and instructions, log on to www.supremecourtindia.nic.in

(TAPAN KISHORE SHARMA)

Drawing & Disbursing Officer,

Supreme Court of India

Place : New Delhi Date : 10.04.2024

SHO

PS: Mangolpuri, Delhi

Ph.: 011-27921168, 27922186

7065036122

DP/4431/OD/2024

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male namely Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown, Age about 55 years, Height 5'6", Complexion Wheatish, Long Face, Thin Built, Wearing Grey colour sweater and black colour pant was found dead on the Road Side, Y-Block, Nala Road Mangolpuri, Delhi on 29.02.2024. In this regard a DD No. 64A, dated 29.02.2024 has been lodged at PS Mangolpuri, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased male may kindly inform to the following.

SHO

PS: Mangolpuri, Delhi

Ph.: 011-27921168, 27922186

7065036122

DP/4431/OD/2024

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

TRACK MACHINE UNIT /ROYAPURAM/CHENNAI

E TENDER NOTICE NO. TMC-RPM-02 OF 2024 DT. 16.04.2024

Deputy Chief Engineer/Track Machines/Royapuram/Chennai for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following works as per tender notice and Complete details are given in our e-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in.

Sl. No. **Tender No. & Name of work** **Appx. value of the work (₹ in Crores)** **Amount of EMD (in ₹)** **Completion period of work**

1	Tender No.: TMC-RPM-02-2024-01 Periodic overhauling (POH) of Ballast Regulating Machines (PBR-R-10, R-19 & R-32) of Southern Railway.	26083245.31	280400	9 months
2	Tender No.: TMC-RPM-02-2024-02 Operation & Maintenance of BCM and group of Track machines in Southern Railway for 2 years	176431356.94	1032200.00	24 months

SI. No. 01 & 02- Tender closing date and time: 13.05.2024 at 15.00 hrs.

Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderer to check any Corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website, the same shall be taken into account while submitting Tender.

Deputy Chief Engineer

Track Machine/Royapuram/Chennai

Follow us on: twitter.com/GMSRailway

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

No. S/Sale/611/E-AP/5270/24-25 Date: 15.04.2024

**E-AUCTION PROGRAMME,
NOTICE NO. 02 MONTH May - 2024**

It is intimated that scrap materials available in all Divisions and Depots of North Central Railway will be sold through e-auction and all organizers will conduct the auction of their area.

Scrap Items: P. Way Scrap, Scrap Rail, Cast Iron Scrap, Condemned rolling Stock, Non ferrous and Non metallic Scrap, Turning & Boring, Condemned Oil/Paints Drums, Condemned Machinery & plants, Condemned Vehicles, Condemned office equipments, Foundry Slag, Released overhead MS/GI tanks, Released ferrous scrap of train lighting fans, Released MS/GI pipe line, foundry skull, Workshop MS scrap and other MS scrap.

SN	e-auction Date & Day	Depot/Division	Organizer of Auction	Through Website
1	02.05.2024 Thursday	GSD/JHS	Dy.CMM/SYS./ JHS	www.ireps.gov.in
2	09.05.2024 Thursday			
3	16.05.2024 Thursday			
4	30.05.2024 Thursday	GSD/CNB	Dy.CMM/GSD/ CNB	
5	16.05.2024 Thursday	PRYJ DIV	Sr.DMM/NCR/ PRYJ	
6	30.05.2024 Monday	JHS DIV	Sr.DMM/NCR/ JHS	
7	29.05.2024 Wednesday	AGC DIV	Sr.DMM/NCR/ AGC	
8	11.05.2024 Thursday			
9	16.05.2024 Thursday			
10	29.05.2024 Wednesday			

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024

BATTLEGROUND INDIA | APRIL 19-JUNE 4, 2024



In 'exile', OPS hopes fishing dispute with Lanka can resurrect his career

Contesting As An Independent Backed By NDA, Ex-CM Banking On Modi & Katchatheevu Row

Julie.Mariappan@timesgroup.com

Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' slogans rend the air as JP Nadda's cavalcade rolls down a road in Paramakudi in south Tamil Nadu. The BJP president sports a scarf with the jackfruit symbol of former chief minister O Panneerselvam who is contesting from Ramanathapuram Lok Sabha constituency as an Independent candidate of the NDA alliance after his expulsion from ADMK.

"Vendum Modi, meendum Modi (We want Modi, once again Modi)," the crowd chants as Nadda's roadshow moves on in the constituency that goes to polls this Friday. For Panneerselvam, an MLA from Bodinayakanur, the contest is a matter of prestige as he continues his legal battle with ADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami. But as of now, he has only Modi to thank. "Modi has been overseeing diverse states, languages, and cultures. No caste or religious conflict has occurred during his tenure," Panneerselvam tells **TOL**. "Palaniswami has bought off ADMK leaders, but the cadres are with me."

Panneerselvam had stepped in for former ADMK chief Jayalalithaa twice, when she was disqualified or had to go to prison in corruption cases. He had another brief stint as CM soon after she died. Having been restrained by courts from using the



Ramanathapuram votes on APRIL 19

O Panneerselvam | IND

Talking Points

- Fishing rights row with Lanka
- Depleting groundwater
- Lack of infrastructure
- Slow industrialisation

2019 LS	Vote Share (%)
IUML	44.1
BJP	32.1
AMMK	13.3
2014 LS	
ADMK	40.8
DMK	28.8
BJP	17.2

Mukkulathors (30%), Dalits (25%) and Muslims (17%), besides Thevars, remain the influential groups here.

Panneerselvam, a Mukkulathor, is relying on Dalits who have cosied up to BJP after Modi gave them the dignified name of Devendrakula Velalars in 2021. But he is pitted against incumbent Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) MP K Navas Kani—an ally of DMK and part of INDIA bloc, who enjoys the support of Muslims in Ramanathapuram, Tiruvadanai, Ramanathapuram and Mudukulathur which are all represented by either DMK or Congress.

Spread across three districts—Pudukkottai, Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram, the seat comprises six assembly segments (Aranthangi, Tiruchuli, Paramakudi (reserved), Tiruvadanai, Ramanathapuram and Mudukulathur) which are all represented by either DMK or Congress.

OPS also faces the menace of dummy candidates: There are at least four other candidates by the name Panneerselvam. That the NDA candidate doesn't have a popular symbol has added to his headache.

Panneerselvam too has criticised BJP for using Lankans over fishing rights is a pain point. The Lankan navy has repeatedly fired at and captured Tamil Nadu fishermen. More than 350 boats of Indian fishermen remain in Lankan custody. "A boat costs Rs 25 lakh to Rs 1 crore. At least 50 families rely on a boat for livelihood. The families are



Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameshwaram. Katchatheevu island, in news recently, is a small distance across the water from land's end here



P. Jeyaperumal | ADMK

now migrating to other states," said All Mechanized Boats Association president P Sesuraja. Fishermen of Ramanathapuram largely belong to the Christian community.

DMK minister Thangam Thennarasu dismissed Katchatheevu as a non-issue. "People know it is all stage-managed," he said. Along with DMK minister RS Raja Kannan, Thennarasu has been engaging with the Mukkulathor and Yadava communities to gain support for Kani.

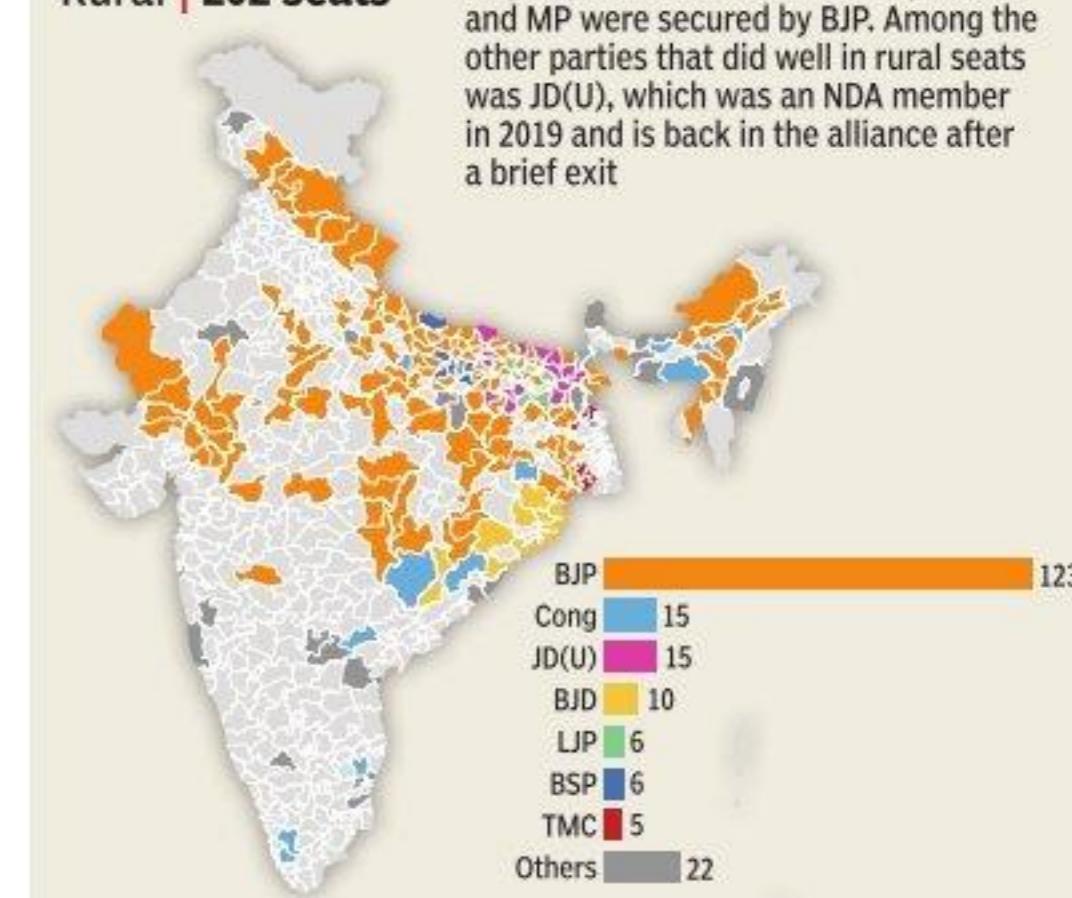
In Ramanathapuram, Palaniswami too has criticised BJP for using Katchatheevu for political gains, and highlighted Jayalalithaa's efforts at retrieving the islet. The party's candidate P Jeyaperumal, meanwhile, is banking on the 'two leaves symbol' and perceived anti-incumbency against the state and Union govt. But ADMK is facing heat from the Mukkulathor community for reducing the MBC quota to extend the Vanayar quota. The DMK camp continues to call ADMK "stooges of BJP".

GEOGRAPHY

How BJP bridged urban-rural gap

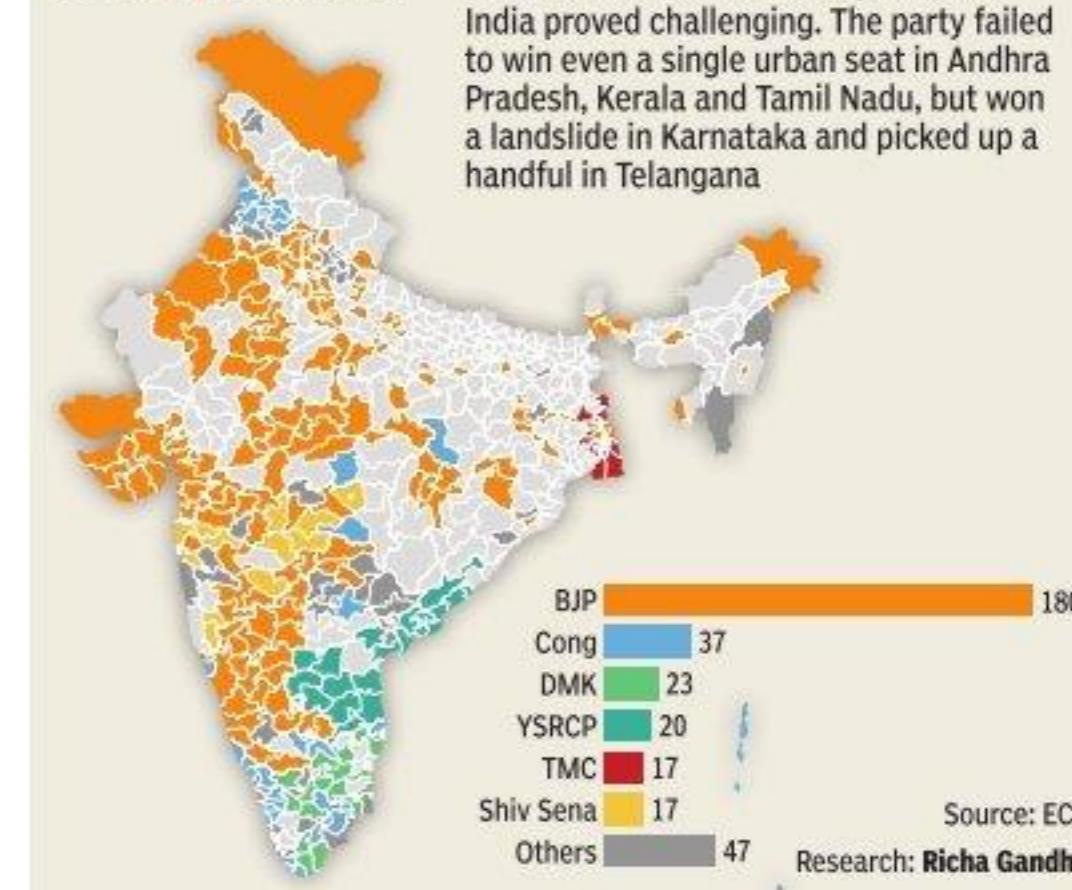
Of BJP's tally of 303 LS seats in 2019, 180 fell in cities and towns. That means the party cornered more than half of the 341 seats in the Lower House that can be classified as urban or semi-urban. Congress managed to win 37 such seats. The saffron party's performance in rural seats was even more impressive. It took 123 of the 202 LS seats that fall in rural areas. Congress won 15 rural seats. The second runner-up in the urban/rural stakes was Trinamool Congress, which won 17 urban and 5 rural seats.

Rural | 202 seats



Majority of rural seats in UP, Rajasthan and MP were secured by BJP. Among the other parties that did well in rural seats was JD(U), which was an NDA member in 2019 and is back in the alliance after a brief exit

Urban/Semi-Urban | 341 seats



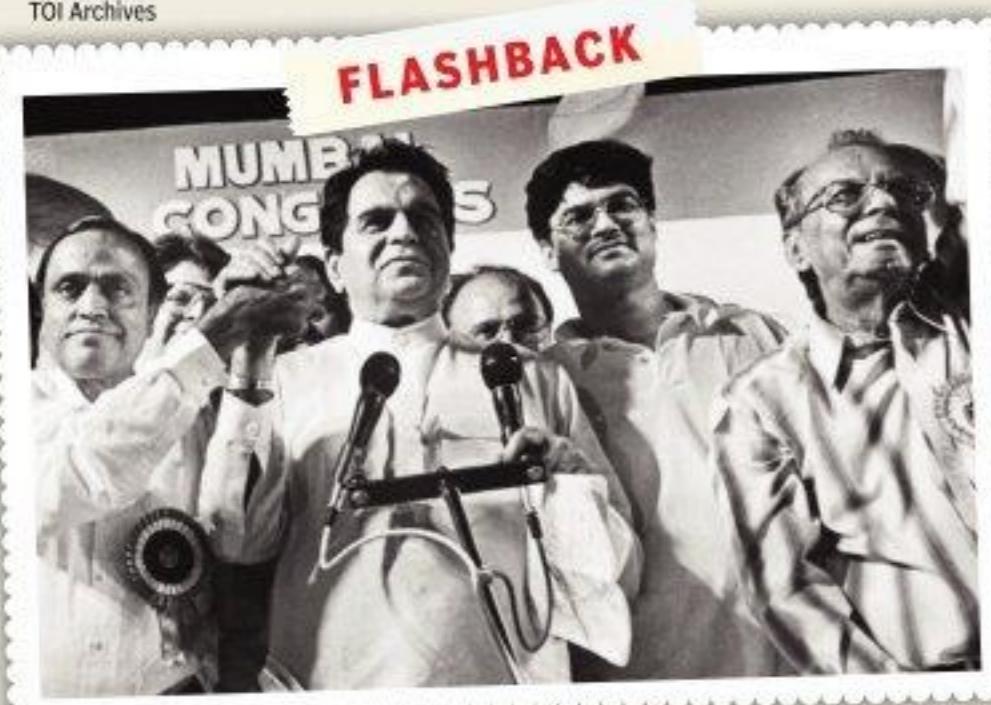
BJP mopped up all the urban seats in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi. While it did well in the west, southern India proved challenging. The party failed to win even a single urban seat in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, but won a landslide in Karnataka and picked up a handful in Telangana

SURROUND SOUND

Vote with green thumb, urge environmental groups

Over 70 environmental organisations have come together to urge voters to leaf through India's environmental report card ahead of LS elections. "As Indians prepare to vote... it is crucial to consider the future of our democracy, especially the youngsters and their right to clean air and water security as our country faces extreme impacts of climate change, including unpredictable rainfall, melting glaciers, and increasing pollution," they said in a joint statement.

TOI Archives



1999 | A different kind of promotion. Bollywood icon Dilip Kumar (second from left) at a campaign stop for Congress's Murli Deora (left), the candidate for the Mumbai South seat. In tow is another crowd-puller, comedian Johnny Walker (right). Though he never forayed as a celeb campaigner during elections. In his autobiography, 'Dilip Kumar – The Substance and the Shadow', he talks about his personal ties with some politicians, including Jawaharlal Nehru. The actor would serve as Mumbai's sheriff and also enter Rajya Sabha in 2000. As for Congress veteran Deora, he lost the 1999 fight to BJP's Jayawantiben Mehta by over 10,000 votes.

Muslim silence speaks amid poll noise in UP

Anand.Soodas@timesgroup.com

A blazing sun rained misery from a clear sky above as a group of men, sweating and breathless, waved BJP flags and sought votes for the party from a clearing at a corner of Meerut's Ghanta Ghar. A bunch of teenagers who had trooped out of a metal works factory to see the parade dithered for a moment before scurrying back into the building. "It's best to keep away," one of the boys who introduced himself as Muzammil Abbas said.

As UP readies for LS polls, with eight seats in its western belt voting on April 19, one aspect of the elections that is impossible to miss is the relative silence of the Muslim voter — in political rallies, posts on social media or discussions around village chaupals. "Unlike previous years, there aren't too many nukkad debates with Muslims participating, even in places like Deoband with a big minority presence," said Md Kamran, 38, who runs a computer training institute in Aligarh.

"Our morale is low. There is fear, of course. Who knows what will be misinterpreted and reported to the police. We are always anxious, careful. Moreover, while once Muslim votes were a decisive factor in many seats here, that influence seems to be waning," Kamran added.

Sitting behind a large glass-topped desk in his Meerut office, the director of a bustling charitable hospital asked, "Have Muslims gone quiet in UP? Certainly. Go anywhere, Shamli,



A group of Muslim men in a village near Bulandshahr. While BSP supremo Mayawati has said that she couldn't find people from the community to put up in LS polls, there is some support for Azad Samaj Party founder Chandrashekhar Azad, who's contesting from Nagina

Muslim MPs From UP

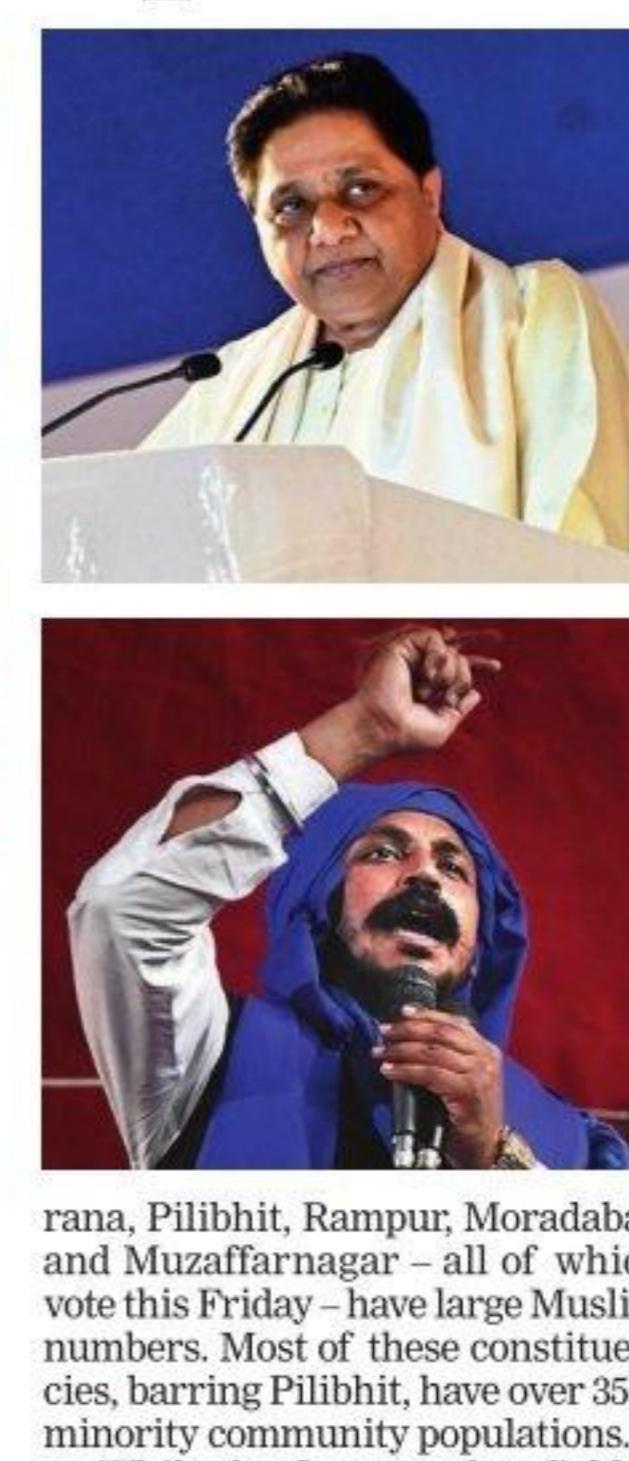
2019	6
2014	10*
2009	7
2004	12
1999	9**

*1 MP elected in bypoll in 2018
**Out of 85 LS seats, Uttarakhand was carved in 2000. UP now has 80 seats

Baghpat, Agra, you will find that our voices are muffled. We don't want to attract unnecessary attention. We don't want to come to the forefront anymore. And no party wants us to be the 'face' either. It's wise to be tactical, not vociferous."

A businessman who owns large mango orchards in Siyana, Bulandshahr, agreed. "Iss time pe Muslim ki zuban toh band hai hain (Our lips are sealed). Plus, where are the local leaders or candidates? Who's giving us tickets? So, who do we root for?"

Saharanpur, Nagina, Bijnor, Kai-



ra, Pilibhit, Rampur, Moradabad and Muzaffarnagar — all of which vote this Friday — have large Muslim numbers. Most of these constituencies, barring Pilibhit, have over 35% minority community populations.

While the Congress has fielded Imran Masood in Saharanpur; in Kairana there is the Samajwadi Party's Iqra Hasan and Mohibullah Nadvi in Rampur; Mayawati, who has put up Irfan Saifi to contest in Moradabad, said during a rally last week in Muzaffarnagar that she wanted a Muslim candidate to fight from her party, the

BSP, but "couldn't find anyone... They are too scared".

Salman Gauri, who is pursuing his PhD at Aligarh Muslim University, said, "In a way, Muslims have been forced to keep their mouths shut. Who wants to go to jail? And with so many poor among us, it's just not worth it to take unnecessary risks by speaking up. More importantly, we don't want polarised polls. That would mean handing an already powerful BJP a ready-made victory."

But many community heads and clerics, like Deoband-based Mufti Arshad Farooqui, said that disenchantment with the current political dispensation does not mean a disinclination to vote. "The democratic process has become more precious to us in current times," he said. "Let me make that clear. An appeal to Muslims to cast their votes has been made from idgahs, mosques, seminars, and those pleas will continue."

The director of the charitable hospital concurred. "Hamara masla development ka nahi hai. Wajood ka nahi (our principal issue isn't development). It is existence, identity. The Muslim understands that now. He will vote accordingly. Don't be surprised if (Chandrashekhar) Azad (of the Azad Samaj Party) wins in Nagina (a reserved seat with sizeable Muslim inhabitants)."

Kadeem Alam, the west UP vice-president of BJP minority cell, has a theory: "Muslims this time seem like they are in deep slumber because they are confused. Who do they vote for? Where is the opposition?"

Cast aside, Bengal's Totos don't care much about casting ballot

Pinak Priya Bhattacharya | TNN

One needs to cross seven rivers — Bangri, Titi, Purney Khola, Kalikhola, Dayamara, Jarip, and Howrikhola—to reach Totopara from Alipurduar's Madarhat, a 28km distance. Nestled along the India-Bhutan border, Totopara is home to an indigenous tribe—Totos, who have been categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).

One of the smallest tribes in the world, the Toto population has stagnated around 1,600 for a decade now, with only 600 of them eligible to vote when the Alipurduar Lok Sabha constituency goes to polls on Friday. Three polling booths have been set up—two at Dhanapati Toto Memorial High School and one at Poanrao ITDP school—but there is no huge excitement about elections in the hamlet.

Ashok Toto, president of Toto Samiti (TKS), an organisation working for the betterment of the community, says, "The problem is 600 is too little a number to make



On The Margins

- Totos have been designated as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group
- Their language, Yaa Waa, is critically endangered with only 1,644 speakers
- Totopara falls under Alipurduar LS seat, which votes on April 19
- Only 600 Totos eligible to vote this year



Totos are one of the world's smallest tribes

Their population has stagnated around 1,600 for a decade now

acres. Now, there are 410 Toto families in Totopara, and only 195 of them have khatian (records) for their lands. To ensure that the tribe is not deprived of their lands, Dhaniram has started recording family trees of the 410 families, going back up to seven generations. He plans to submit the record to the Centre and urge it to ensure protection for the indigenous people.

This also has had another fallout. Totos' language is now critically endangered, the final stage before extinction, with only 1,644 speakers. The language, Yaa Waa, has no link with any of the others spoken locally—Nepali, Bengali, Hindi, or Bhutanese. The children go to a Bengali-medium school, and most speak Hindi and Nepali. Lack of English tends to confine Totos to the village as it hinders their job prospects, in particular well-paying govt jobs, but the community is desperate to keep its language and culture alive. The tribe is apprehensive of losing its language, history, and way of life, consumed by an education system that obliges them to speak Bengali and an economy that pushes them towards Hindi and English.

Realising the necessity, Dhaniram Toto, a backward class welfare officer, invented a script for Yaa Waa in 2019. This fetched him a Padma Shri in 2022. "It is not only our problem. Whenever people from outside come to Totopara for research, they face problems. There are some books on Yaa Waa, but most are riddled with errors. Therefore, I thought of creating a script for my language as I want to keep it alive," says Dhaniram.

TKS, on its part, has requested every Toto person to speak in their native language among themselves. "We want to make sure our tradition doesn't fade away," says Ashok. But there are bright spots, too. Youngsters are going out for education and returning to give back to the community. Bharat Toto, first from the community to complete his master's from Kolkata, returned to run a coaching centre that seeks to enable Toto children to compete with mainstream students.



A thought for today

Once you lose your credibility,
you can never restore it

REINHOLD MESSNER

Trust Is Key

As SC again hears petitions on poll process, EC should consider increasing VVPAT verification

Supreme Court is back to dealing with the tricky issue of trust in the integrity of India's election process. It's an important issue, but one where the apex court's repeated interventions have failed to quell doubts. We are now in the midst of one more attempt.

EVMs to stay | EVMs were introduced for 2004 Lok Sabha elections. Govts have come and gone since, and in general EVMs are seen as an improvement over paper ballots. Therefore, SC did well to quash the idea calling for a return to ballots.

VVPAT comes in | A voter verified paper audit trail is connected to an EVM device. It allows a voter a chance to verify that the choice is captured accurately and also creates a paper trail to resolve any subsequent dispute. It was SC in 2013 (*Subramanian Swamy vs UOI*) that ordered the introduction of VVPAT. Its logic was that it's an essential part of the election process.

This intervention was meant to get adequate buy-in of the electorate in the integrity of elections. However, till this day it's an issue that hasn't been laid to rest. It can't be ignored as an electorate's trust in an election's integrity is what holds up democracy.

2019 intervention | Ahead of 2019 LS elections, SC took an extra step (*N Chandrababu Naidu vs UOI*). In response to a petition seeking verification of 50% of VVPAT slips in each constituency, EC put out a statistical reason to oppose it. Indian Statistical Institute had told EC that 479 randomly picked EVMs for VVPAT verifications would generate results with over 99% accuracy. EC said it was already verifying eight times the number. Once again, to buy-in electorate trust, SC ordered a five-fold increase in VVPAT verification.

Time's not the issue | Any increase in VVPAT verification will delay results, said EC in court. But time's not anymore a relevant issue. To illustrate, in 2004, LS polls along with that of four state assemblies were completed in a little over three weeks. This year, the polls will take a little over six weeks.

US has been a deeply divided society after the breakdown of trust over election results in 2020. India shouldn't go that way. But having introduced VVPATs to quell doubts in 2013, we remain unsure of the adequate level of verification needed. EC should consider increasing VVPAT verification.

The Pain In Spain

Thoughtless tourism damages the places we seek out, and the people who live there. We can change this

Go home, the placards tell you clearly. The Spanish have had enough of tourists. Local govt in Spain have raised tourist taxes. Overtourism, though, isn't a European problem. It has afflicted iconic landmarks and famous landscapes in other parts of the world. Tourism has increased because of higher incomes and cheaper travel. A study found that 80% of the world's travellers go to just 10% of the world's tourism destinations – and these destinations have finite capacities.

While travel is an expansion of the imagination, and certainly should not remain an elite indulgence, tourism is too often about seeking and finding clichés, a frenzied ticking off boxes, a 'bucket-list' of places to go and things to do. Instead of meshing unobtrusively into a living environment, we often see it as mere backdrop for ourselves. It's a familiar story in India too, our hills and coastlines are clogged with junk and single-use plastics we leave behind. Tourist hotspots become reliant on seasonal income. Economic benefits are clear. But there are also unseen costs on local populations and environment.

Irresponsible tourist infrastructure in protected areas is one of the big reasons for habitat fragmentation and loss. If done right, though, tourism and its revenues can also be a driver of conservation, if tourists and the tourism industry move from a consumer mentality to one of collective stewardship. Leaving a place as we found it is a basic courtesy, to make sure that those who live there and future visitors can savour it too. Sustainable travel means examining the impact of our actions – from the way we travel to the experiences we seek, to being mindful about our effects on local communities and nature. We can chase our individual dreams without collectively savaging the earth.

Blood on the sand

Black bucks sans EBs. Hear apun ka Salman story

Bachi Karkaria



Scary to read about bike-borne gunmen firing at Salman Khan's house in blood-for-blood *badla*. Blackbuck-worshipping Bishnois keep trying to avenge the macho actor's killing of two of these beasts in the forests outside Jodhpur during the 1998 filming of *Hum Saath Saath Hain*.

The law too hounded King Khan with Bolly-grade tamasha till 2018, when he finally got bail. Last Sunday's sequel is even more of a masala movie, starring smouldering-hero gangster, Lawrence Bishnoi. In Tihar jail since 2021 under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, he wreaks remote justice via voice-over IP calls to his still-free accomplices. My buckbuster is set not in Tihar but Thar. It too centres on a dead endangered deer, and climaxes with a hair-raising car ride to escape the consequences – like Salman's with his stellar *saathiyen*.

In the early 70s, I went to cover the first Desert Festival at Jaisalmer. We got up close with camels, sword dances and the world's longest moustache, winding up with dancing at dusk on the surreal dunes of Sam. Then I drove off, along with two newfound male friends also headed to Jodhpur, to catch my early morning flight. Suddenly, a violent thud shattered our slumber. The driver had hit a chinkara – and bust the radiator! Both lay oozing into the sand. 'Ouch!' paled to OMG!! This was Bishnoi territory, and surely even less-sacred deer carried some blood-pride? Finally covering the tell-tale stain, we hefted the dead giveaway into the boot. Instead of a dreamy ride, the boys pushed the crippled car across the darkened desert.

Staggering into Pokhran, we found a sleepy mechanic. After fiddling around for ages with a primitive welding rod, he announced, 'Ban gaya!' The water poured out with a mocking gurgle. Several agonising attempts later, the radiator held. The chastened driver raced cautiously through the breaking dawn, my heart keeping pace. The boys said, 'Don't worry, flights from Jodhpur are never on time.' Perversely, this one was. The evening plane I had to take was four hours late. Chinkara? Don't ask, won't tell.

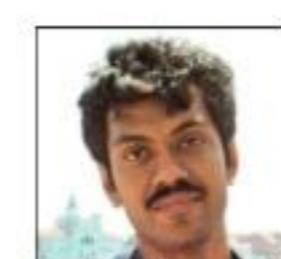
Alec Smart said: "Will fish jibe make BJP rui the day, katla up its Bengal dream? Il-eesh!"



Vote Counting: How To Get It PAT

Optimal level of EVM-VVPAT tallying is context-dependent. For example, narrow victory margins may call for more tallying. Key is choosing EVMs randomly for VVPAT auditing

Atanu Biswas



It may be hard to have a Lok Sabha election these days without contentious debates about EVMs. The voting process is basically the soul of democracy. Assuring its sanctity and, by extension, its unbiasedness is undoubtedly a prerequisite for democracy. However, convincing voters of the impartiality of the voting process is no less important.

A question of balance | The demand for tallying more VVPAT counts to corresponding EVM counts is not new. Guidelines for VVPAT-auditing five EVMs in each assembly constituency were established by Supreme Court in 2019.

However, the ideal number of EVMs for a VVPAT audit is a difficult one to determine. The answer is contingent on human resources, prompt result announcements, and unquestionably demonstrating the voting machines' fairness.

Reducing time and effort is the primary goal of employing EVMs, and it would be defeated if we counted too much. However, voters and political parties may continue to have worries about the accuracy of election results if an inadequate number of EVMs are audited. So, one must maintain balance.

Less tampering needs more counting | Are there any statistical solutions? Yes, depending on specific requirements and constraints. On average, there are a little over 3,300 EVMs in each LS constituency. To obtain 99.9% statistical assurance of detecting tampering will need 66 EVM-VVPAT tallying per LS constituency if as many as 10% EVMs have been tampered with, but 342 EVM-VVPAT tallying if only 2% EVMs have been tampered with.

One may approach the issue from various angles, though. Suppose that after EVMs are counted, the victorious candidate's 'provisional' victory margin is noted. Assuming that an EVM can be manipulated to

change an average of 400 votes, or any other realistic figure, one can apply a preset rule (similar to Duckworth-Lewis method in cricket) to determine how many EVMs need to be VVPAT-audited to find at least one tampered case.

For instance, one EVM tampering might be sufficient to change the outcome if the winning margin is smaller than 800 votes. Again, in order to alter the result, about 25 EVMs must be tampered with if the margin is 10,001-20,000. In the first scenario, 100% of EVMs must then be VVPAT-audited in order to determine whether the necessary tampering has occurred, whereas in the second scenario, 908 VVPAT-auditing is sufficient.

Convincing the public that EVMs are, in fact, unbiased is essentially the task of the institutions. Yes, our institutions have made a sincere effort to do so. EC has also thrown open challenges for the EVM hackathon. Numerous legal challenges to EVMs have been made over the years, and nearly all of them have been rejected by the courts or have resulted in decisions that support EC and EVMs.

Media and experts both play significant roles in influencing public opinion. However, it turns out that people's beliefs are more influenced by what their leaders say. All throughout the planet. For instance, polls suggest that about one-third of American voters, or roughly two-thirds of Republican voters, still believe that the 2020 election was stolen from Trump. No matter what the experts, media, and courts opine, they believe what their political hero says. Sadly. Same is true in India. Notably, a majority of the main political parties have attacked EVM at some point or other.

Blockchain future?

Reverting to paper ballots may be nearly impossible in a country with 96.8 crore voters. Conversely, technology will keep advancing. For instance, voting based on blockchain technology, which is more advanced and believed to be more difficult to tamper with, may be adopted in the near future.

But the general public is not familiar with the technology underlying EVM-VVPATs, and they won't be familiar with any more advanced technology either. Furthermore, their viewpoint will be shaped by what authorities, media, experts, and, above all, politicians have to say.

But public opinion is crucial in democracies. Therefore, the institutions may try to bring all the major political parties into confidence, whether using EVM-VVPAT or another technology. A utopia? Perhaps. However, that might be the only way to persuade the common people. And EVM-VVPAT or any other sophisticated technology will have to continue to wrestle with the astounding legacy of paper ballots.

The writer is Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata



Importance of randomness | To ensure that rice is cooked to perfection, one should mix the boiling rice with a spoon and then test a small sample of the grains. It's crucial that EVMs be "mixed" and chosen at random for VVPAT auditing. Furthermore, a large number of VVPAT audits are required if perceived amount of EVM tampering is low, in order to guarantee a high likelihood of discovering at least one tampered EVM in the sample.

None of the above approaches, however, can be claimed to be the "best". And when a court decides on how many VVPATs are to be audited, it also takes different kinds of info and logistical constraints into consideration and makes the best possible decision.

Trust - the Trump challenge | It's not that there were no allegations of election fraud in the era of paper ballots. But the real problem is that millions of ordinary people don't comprehend the technology.

The New Clear Chinese Strategy

Beijing's growing nuclear and missile inventory is aimed at both US and India. New Delhi should prepare countermeasures

Jayant Prasad



Recent testimony to the US Senate Armed Services Committee by the head of US Strategic Command, Gen Anthony J Cotton, confirms that China is accelerating the upgrade of its strategic deterrence. It has augmented the types, quantities, and quality of its nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Cotton stated that China's land-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers currently exceed those of US. The outsized Chinese nuclear ambition is to become a strategic co-equal of Russia and US, which is disquieting for India, necessitating Indian countersteps.

Chinese missile muscle | Missile clusters in Kunming, Yunnan province, and Xining, Qinghai province, target Indian locations. Additionally, continuing transfer of Chinese nuclear and missile materials and technology to Pakistan forces India to face a trichotomy strategic challenge.

Since Xi assumed office, PLA has established a new Rocket Force to oversee its nuclear and conventional missiles, and PLA Strategic Support Force to handle counter-space, cyber, and electronic warfare. Chinese National University of Defence Science and Technology researchers have reported the formation of a new 'Near-Space Command' equipped with hypersonic, highly manoeuvrable missiles that travel at Mach-5 speed.

Modernisation overdrive | The road-mobile, multiple independent re-entry vehicle (MIRV)-capable D-41 ICBMs best demonstrate the modernisation of Chinese nuclear arsenal. The advanced missile now under development reportedly

has an MIRV capacity of seven warheads, compared to three for DF-41. China has also built extensive tunnel networks and extended the range of its ballistic missiles. These make Chinese nuclear forces more effective and difficult to target and destroy.

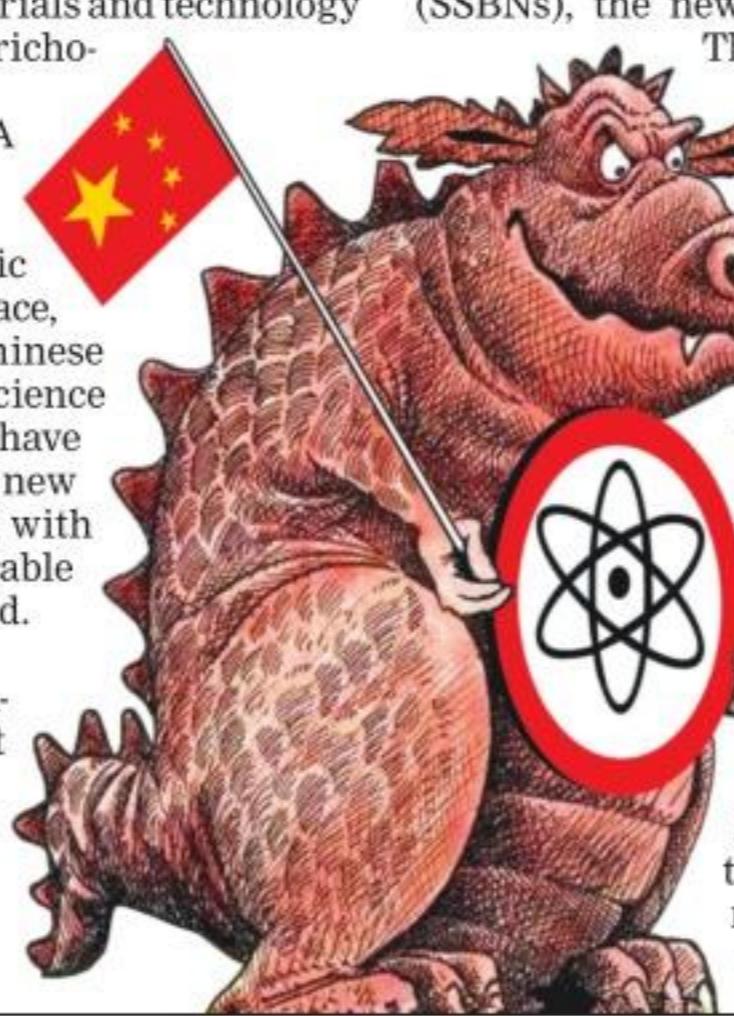
It has been known for a few years that China is building over 100 hardened silos each in Yumen, Gansu, and near Hami, Xinjiang, and an unspecified number at Yami, Shaanxi, to house its strategic DF-5 missiles, increasing Chinese ICBM silos 10 times.

Dragon's nuclear teeth | China is developing air-launched ballistic and cruise missiles delivered by new platforms, including the H-20 strategic stealth bomber and unmanned aerial combat vehicles to close its air-delivery capability gap.

Chinese nuclear triad includes JL-3 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) on six JIN-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), the newer versions of which are quieter.

The erstwhile Chinese nuclear posture stands altered since SLBMs must have nuclear warheads mated with missiles. A Chinese SSBN first appeared in Indian Ocean in 2014, causing India to speed up the strengthening of its anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability.

Production of highly enriched uranium and reprocessed plutonium is increasing in China, which has stopped the annual voluntary declarations of its plutonium stocks to IAEA since 2017. Researchers headed by Hans M Kristensen have published in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* that the Chinese stockpile "now includes roughly 500 nuclear warheads with more in production". By 2030, China



could have more than 1,000 operational warheads. Such rapid expansion is not in step with China's professed 'minimum deterrence'.

Countering evolving threat | China's increasingly opaque nuclear posture and growing deployment of dual-capable missiles elevate uncertainty. Its strategic literature now ominously mentions 'early-warning counter-strike'. Combined with its concept of 'pre-emptive defence', this might foretell a significant change in its nuclear posture.

However, the Chinese cannot freely deploy their noisy SSBNs in Pacific and Indian Oceans due to the difficulty of passage from their home ports. When deployed, they would be vulnerable to the growing regional ASW assets. Easily tractable, as they come through South China Sea into Indian Ocean, they cannot be safely based in ports proximate to India, such as Gwadar.

China's anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy cannot work far from its home bases. Other countries in Indo-Pacific, including India, are adopting the same tactic to counter the Chinese threat, increasing the vulnerability of Chinese naval assets in Indian Ocean Region.

India's options | Without racing with China on the number of nuclear weapons and warheads, India must accelerate improving the robustness of its deterrence, as with MIRVing its strategic missiles. India must also continue upgrading its ASW, NC3 (nuclear command, control, and communications), early warning and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems.

Besides augmenting its interdiction capacity, including in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India could strengthen the third leg of its triad by accelerating development and deployment of SSBNs. Finally, India should continue to improve its nuclear weapons and delivery systems proportionate to the requirement of minimum nuclear deterrence in causing unacceptable damage to the adversary. The Indian nuclear posture provides all the flexibility required for doing so.

The writer has served as a member of the UNSG's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Sacredspace



The nature of mind is such that it becomes that which it intensely thinks upon. Thus, if you think of the vices and defects of another man, your mind will be charged with those defects and vices at least for the time being.

Swami Sivananda



Talking Back To Your Inner Demons

Marguerite Theophil

At times, when feeling down or angry, we may hear an inner voice; it's as if another person is talking to us but not in any positive way. This inner voice is what some refer to as an inner critic – even 'inner demon', since it can be destructive if we let it get its way.

This in no way implies that one is possessed by a malignant spirit, but that our own fearful, negative or dismissive thoughts begin to disturb our inner peace and fill us with negative emotions.

In more extreme cases, if we let these inner demons take over, ignoring our own power to discern and choose, it might cause us to act differently from how we generally are, resulting in actions that hurt ourselves and others.

Now the thing is – hard as it may be to accept – we all have these parts of ourselves that we don't like to acknowledge, but that lurk inside us – causing us to act thoughtlessly and irrationally out of fear for ourselves. We also call this denied aspect our shadow side.

These hyper-critical inner voices start out as self-judgment – first as 'I am' thoughts that soon morph into 'You are' statements: you are incompetent, unworthy, unlovable, wicked, or whatever harsh judgement can pierce you.

These inner demon voices can be in response to experiences in the past that caused you to feel angry, sad, unloved and overall helpless. That time may have passed, but you can get triggered whenever similar instances of criticism, neglect, fear, pain, or inadequacy occur.

THE SPEAKING TREE

THE SPEAKING TREE

Lines from Rumi's *The Guest House*, bring out this truth: "This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness... Still treat each guest honourably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the

malice; meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent, as a guide from beyond."

Inner demons emphasise negativity. Consciously focusing more on positive things

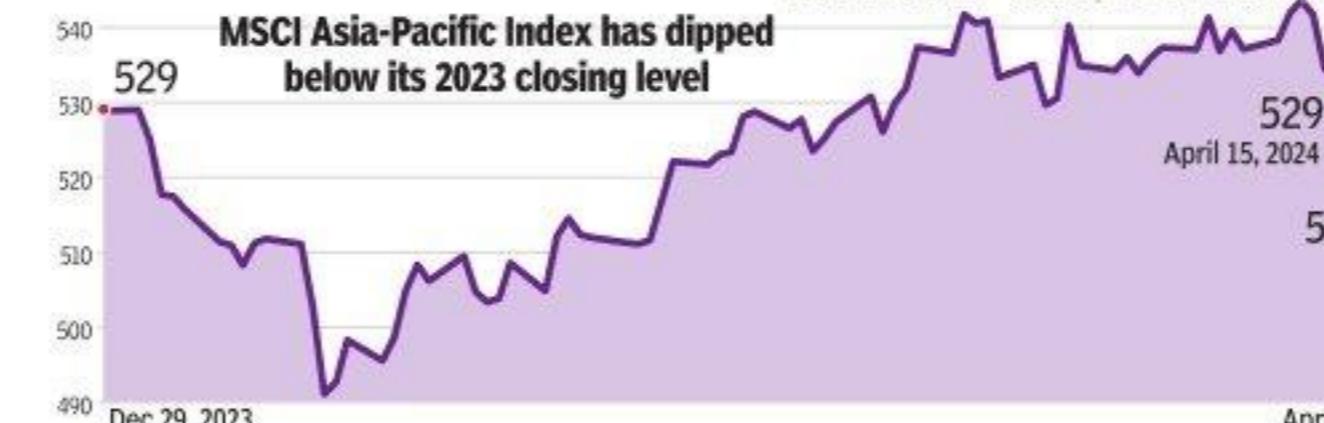
Asian Stock Gauge Erases Year's Gain as Tensions Mount

Asian stock benchmark has erased its gain for the year, as the MSCI Asia-Pacific Index fell 0.4% on Wednesday. The repricing of Fed rate bets, a stronger dollar, a flare-up in West Asia tensions and a slow economic recovery in China are creating headwinds for these stocks, which had gained over 5% at one point in 2024. Overseas investors have net sold more than \$2.2bn worth of equities in emerging Asia excluding China in April. The bulk of the selling has happened this week.

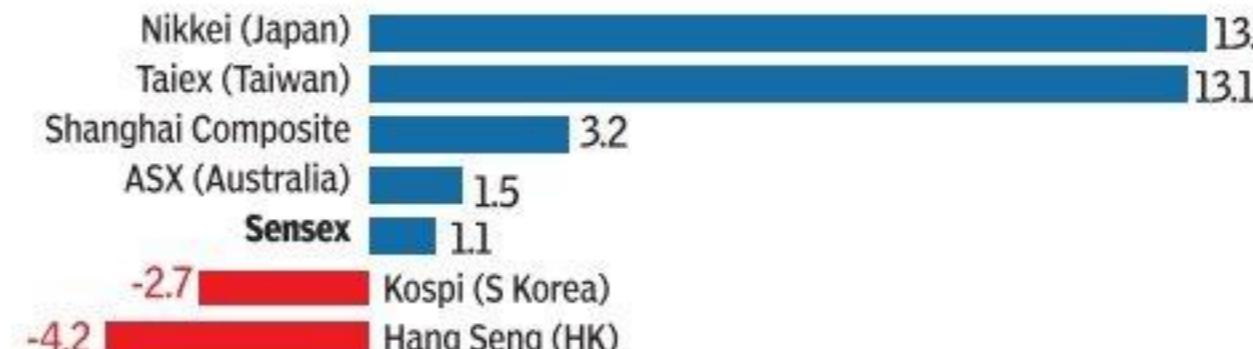
Source: Bloomberg, Refinitiv

TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024



Japan & Taiwan are the only bright spots (YTD %)



► Other bleak milestones are flashing across the region as the 10-day historical volatility on the MSCI index spikes

► The pullback has even drawn in high-flying chip stocks and Japanese shares as investors take risk off the table

Voda Idea eyes fresh bailout to convert dues into equity

Says Payments To Govt Should Not Come In Way Of Ops

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Facing an outstanding of Rs 2.3 lakh crore to the department of telecom towards spectrum and AGR dues, Vodafone Idea is asking for a fresh govt bailout to convert some of the payments — beyond four-year payment moratorium — into equity in order to continue operations.

Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra told TOI that the company needs "comfort" from govt in servicing dues (principal and interest) so that it is able to manage business efficiently and pay lenders and vendors. "In the past, when we couldn't pay as per payment schedule, govt had found a solution. The support which we need and where investors are also seeking comfort from govt is — philosophically I can only describe is that servicing of govt dues should not come in the way of the company continuing its operations efficiently and being able to pay its lenders and vendors in prior-

Govt Not Willing To Up Stake Beyond 49%

► Vodafone Idea needs to pay **₹12,000 crore** to govt between Oct 2025 and March 2026
► After that, it has to pay **₹43,000 crore** annually for five years (from 2026-27 to 2030-31)
► Govt earlier converted Vodafone Idea's interest payments of ₹16,000 crore into equity and gave **4-year moratorium** on dues in a bailout package



Q3 Loss | ₹6,986 crore
Debt | ₹2.1 Lakh Cr (at the end of Dec 2023)
₹145 | Average Revenue Per User

— AKSHAYA MOONDRA | CEO, VODAFONE IDEA

► Govt should not become a reason that the company is not able to continue its operations. That's the only support that investors need, and through some of their meetings, they have gotten that comfort



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Govt had earlier converted Vodafone Idea's future interest payments to the tu-

ne of Rs 16,000 crore into equity and given a four-year moratorium on statutory and AGR dues as part of a broader reforms-cum-bailout package.

Moondra said between principal and interest, the company has to pay Rs 12,000 crore to govt between October 25 and March 26. After that, it needs to pay Rs 43,000 crore annually for five years or from FY27 till FY31.

Moondra said: "Even till yesterday, there have been comments by the minister and finance secretary that they support a healthy competition. They are not supporting Vodafone Idea but a healthy competition". He said if the company operates efficiently and needs "some support" in (payment of) govt dues, "I think that support is there." It is also ingrained in reforms package that post-moratorium, govt can convert some of these installments into equity if the need be. I think that situation to some extent is already contemplated with."

Paytm gets NPCI nod to shift users to other banks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: One97 Communications, which owns Paytm, said that it has received NPCI's approval to start migration of users to new Payment System Provider (PSP) bank handles. Paytm UPI users can now create new VPAs (virtual payment address) with partner PSP banks.

Following NPCI's approval last month to onboard One97 Communications as a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) on the multi payment service provider API model, Paytm has expedited the integration with Axis, HDFC, SBI and Yes Bank. "All four banks are now operational on the TPAP, streamlining the process for Paytm to shift user accounts to these PSP banks. The company has started transitioning @paytm handles users to these banks, ensuring seamless UPI payments," the company said in a stock exchange filing on Wednesday.

Paytm was earlier using Paytm Payments Bank, an associate entity of One97 Communications, for most of its settlement services. But RBI's move to restrict operations of PPBL has necessitated Paytm to migrate its systems to other banks.

"We are committed to grow the UPI ecosystem in partnership with NPCI to every nook & corner of India. Leveraging the robust infrastructure of its banking partners, Paytm ensures uninterrupted and secure UPI payments for both users and merchants through the Paytm app," a spokesperson said.

The stock price of Paytm ended at Rs 391 apiece in the last trading session.

No big bang reforms in BJP manifesto: Citi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Citibank has expressed disappointment with the lack of "big bang" reforms in the BJP manifesto. However, they remain hopeful that these reforms can be introduced later on. In a research report, Citibank said that it could be a bit of a "let-down" that the structural reforms of land, labour, agriculture, privatisation, and opening up to foreign investment, which are contentious, did not find any mention in the manifesto.

According to the report, the manifesto seems to be more focused on continuity than change. "The party might be confident of its last 10 years' performance track record, which is expected to propel India into being the third-largest economy in the next five years," the report authored by chief economist Samiran Chakraborty said. It points out that the manifesto has a plan to develop industrial cities along different industrial corridors. However, there is no explicit mention of extending the production linked incentive or 'Make in India' schemes.

Under govt's national asset monetisation pipeline, the road and highway sector has got the highest target of monetising projects worth around Rs 1.6 lakh crore by March 2025. The highway sector has so far achieved monetisation of Rs 1.1 lakh crore.

front payments to NHAI and they get the right to maintain, operate and collect toll for 20 years. An Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) is like a mutual fund, which enables direct investment from individual and institutional investors in infrastructure projects to earn a portion of the income as return.

We are confident of surpassing this target as the projects identified are lucrative for investors and the trend of toll collection is robust on these stretches. As the economy is doing well, the investors will get a return for

their money," said an NHAI official. The identified stretches include 333-km Kanpur-Ayodhya-Gorakhpur, 226-km Gurgaon-Jaipur, Haridwar-Muzaffarpur (74 km) and Chennai Bypass (32 km). The annual toll collection on the 33 identified stretches is around Rs 4,931 crore.

The assets would be monetised through Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) and InvIT modes. Officials said most projects will be monetised through TOT, in which the successful bidders make up-

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The assets



UNEXPECTED PARTNERSHIP: SONS OF LENNON AND McCARTNEY, SEAN ONO & JAMES, TEAM UP FOR NEW SONG 'PRIMROSE HILL'

HUGH GRANT SETTLES PRIVACY CASE AGAINST UK TABLOID, SAYS HE COULD'VE FACED A BILL OF UP TO £10M EVEN IF HE HAD WON

Bibi: Israel will be one to decide whether & how to respond to Iran

Thanks Allies For Support, But Brushes Off Calls For Restraint; Iranian Prez Warns 'Tiniest' Invasion Will Prompt Massive & Harsh Retaliation

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that his country would be the one to decide whether and how to respond to Iran's major air assault earlier this week, brushing off calls for restraint from close allies. Israel has vowed to respond to Iran's unprecedented attack without saying when or how, leaving the region bracing for further escalation after months of unrest linked to the ongoing war in Gaza.

Israel's allies have been urging Israel since the attack to hold back on any response that could spiral. These calls were repeated on Wednesday during visits by the British and German foreign ministers. The diplomatic pressures came as Iran's prez Ebrahim Raisi warned that even the "tiniest" invasion of its territory would bring a "massive and harsh" response. Violence meanwhile surged between Israel and the Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah, which fired a volley of rockets on northern Israel. The attack wounded at least 14 Israeli soldiers, six seriously, the army said.

Speaking to a meeting of his cabinet on Wednesday, Netanyahu said he met with both ministers and thanked them for their countries' support. But he said Israel would make the call on its own on how to respond despite "all sorts of sug-



Israeli armoured vehicles along the border with the Palestinian territory

UNRWA: Staffers in Gaza stripped naked, beaten

The UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said some of its staff members and other people detained by Israeli forces in Gaza were subjected to ill-treatment, including severe beatings and being forced to strip naked. In a report published on Tuesday, UNRWA said staffers that were detained, in some cases while performing official duties, were "held incommunicado and subjected to the same conditions and ill-treatment as other detainees". The agency said staff members had said they were subjected to beatings and treatment akin to waterboarding, threats of rape and electrocution, and were forced to strip naked, among other forms of ill-treatment. "UNRWA has made official protests to the Israeli authorities," it said. "UNRWA has not got any response." Tel Aviv did not respond to a request for comment. REUTERS

gestions and advice" coming from Israel's allies, some of whom — including the US, UK and France — helped Israel repel Iran's drone and missile assault. "I want to be clear: we will make our decisions ourselves. The state of Israel will do whatever is necessary to defend itself," Netanyahu said.

Despite the tough rhetoric, Israel appears unlikely to attack Iran directly without at least the support of its top ally the US. But it could resort to more covert methods such as targeting senior Iranian commanders or Iran-backed groups in other countries, or launching a cyber attack. It's unclear how

Iran might respond given the heightened tensions. Any miscalculation by either side risks setting off a regional war.

Prez Biden's administration on Tuesday announced new sanctions on Iran and has worked to coordinate a global rebuke of the attack while urging all sides to de-escalate. US officials said earlier this week that Biden told Netanyahu that Washington would not participate in any offensive action against Iran.

Over the weekend, Iran launched hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel in response to an apparent Israeli strike on Iran's embassy compound in Syria on April 1 that killed 12 people, including two Iranian generals. Israel says it and its partners successfully intercepted nearly all missiles and drones.

Earlier on Wednesday, UK foreign secretary David Cameron and German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock, who were on separate visits to the region, each appealed for calm. Cameron said "it's clear the Israelis are making a decision to act" against Iran, but he hoped they would do so "in a way that it does as little as possible to escalate this conflict." Baerbock said, "Israel has already shown strength with its defensive victory at the weekend." The ministers said they would push for further sanctions on Iran. AP

have nefarious intentions to create an environment of chaos," the ministry said, adding that the decision was taken after considering "various confidential reports from intelligence and security agencies of Pakistan". IHC chief justice Aamer Farooq adjourned hearing till May 2.

Separately, Sindh HC ordered Pak govt to restore access to social media platform X within a week, after more than two months of disruptions

have been banned in the country due to national security issues after the social media platform failed to address concerns on its misuse.

The Islamabad high court (IHC) heard a petition by journalist Ehtisham Abbasi against the disruption in the access to X since Feb 17, when former Rawalpindi commissioner Liaquat Chatha accused the chief election commissioner and chief justice of being involved in rigging the Feb 8 general elections.

The interior ministry, in its written submission to IHC, said: "The failure of Twitter/X to adhere to the lawful directives of the govt of Pakistan and address concerns regarding the misuse of its platform necessitated the imposition of a ban."

It said the decision to impose a ban was made in the interest of upholding national security and to maintain public order". Hostile elements operating on Twitter/X

have been removed.

With the advantage of hindsight, Shafik acknowledged there has been a rise in antisemitism in Columbia but said it's far from pervasive. The Dec hearing featured the presidents of Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, and the MIT whose lawyer responses drew backlash. The presidents of Penn and Harvard have since quit. AP

Now, Columbia prez questioned on antisemitism

Washington: Four months after a contentious congressional hearing led to the resignations of two Ivy League presidents, Columbia University's prez appeared before the same committee Wednesday and unequivocally denounced antisemitism on her campus, rebuking claims that she has allowed Columbia to become a hotbed of hatred. "Antisemitism has no place on our campus, and I am personally committed to doing everything I can to confront it directly," Nemat Shafik said.

Shafik was called before the committee to address questions of antisemitism and the school's response to conflicts on campus over the Israel-Hamas war. She was originally asked to testify at the House Education and Workforce Committee's hearing in Dec, but she declined citing scheduling conflicts.

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Blocked X in Feb over security concerns: Pak govt to Islamabad HC

Islamabad: Pakistan govt on Wednesday told a high court that the microblogging site X has been banned in the country due to national security issues after the social media platform failed to address concerns on its misuse.

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'Leaked' report on graft claims against Muizzu sparks calls for impeachment

Male: Ahead of parliamentary polls in the Maldives, opposition parties have demanded a probe into allegations of corruption against Prez Mohamed Muizzu in "leaked 2018 intelligence reports". Some opposition members, including ex-vp Mohamed Jameel Ahmed, even called for impeachment of Muizzu, who has denied the allegations.

Elections to Majlis — the legislative body — are to be held Sunday, and the atmosphere has been vitiated by the trading of charges between the main opposition Maldivian Democratic Party and the Muizzu's People's National Congress.

Anonymous handle 'Has-

san Kurusee' Monday posted on X leaked intelligence reports that allegedly linked Muizzu to graft. They included documents by the financial intelligence unit (FIU) of Maldives Monetary Authority and Police Service.

"These reports, dated circa 2018, claim irregularities in money transfers to President Muizzu's personal bank account, highlighting critical red flag indicators of financial misconduct. These indicators suggest involvement with politically exposed persons, embezzlement, structured transactions, and the use of corporate enti-

ties to hide fund origins," myrepublica.com reported. The news portal said this was the first time an FIU report was leaked, and added that there has been no response from govt bodies regarding the legitimacy of the reports.

Jameel Ahmed of opposition Progressive Party of Maldives also accused the prez of corruption in his flagship 'Ras Male' development project.

Muizzu dismissed the claims, saying the opposition "cannot show any wrongdoing". "The same allegations had been made during his campaigns for mayor and president." AP

During her months-long trial, Suu Kyi had suffered dizzy spells, vomiting and at times had been unable to eat because of a tooth infection. Her son Kim Aris is said in Feb that she was still being held at the special compound in Naypyidaw. The compound had no air conditioning in searing heat and the concrete cells leaked during the monsoon, according to Australian economist Sean Turnell, a former advisor to Suu Kyi's govt who was also detained there. AGENCE

Local media reported that

Suu Kyi moved to house arrest due to heat: Military

Bangkok: Myanmar's jailed former leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest as a health measure due to a heat wave, the military govt said as it freed more than 3,000 prisoners under an amnesty to mark this week's New Year holiday.

Suu Kyi, 78, and Win Myint, the 72-year-old former prez of her ousted govt, were among the elderly and infirm prisoners moved to house arrest because of the severe heat, military

spokesperson Maj Gen Zaw Min Tun told foreign media representatives late Tuesday.

Suu Kyi's transfer comes as the army has suffered a string of major defeats at the hands of pro-democracy resistance fighters and their allies in ethnic minority guerrilla forces.

Suu Kyi has been serving a 27-year prison term in a specially built annex of the main prison in Naypyitaw, where

she was also detained there. AGENCE

Local media reported that

during her months-long trial, Suu Kyi had suffered dizzy spells, vomiting and at times had been unable to eat because of a tooth infection. Her son Kim Aris is said in Feb that she was still being held at the special compound in Naypyidaw. The compound had no air conditioning in searing heat and the concrete cells leaked during the monsoon, according to Australian economist Sean Turnell, a former advisor to Suu Kyi's govt who was also detained there. AGENCE

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BIBLICAL FLOODING IN DUBAI

142mm

of rain soaks Dubai between Monday night and Tuesday evening, the average amount it normally gets in a year and a half

Nearly 100mm fell over the course of just 12 hours

on Tuesday

255mm

Rainfall UAE witnessed in Al Ain on Tuesday in less than 24 hours. That is the most since records began in 1949, before the country was established in 1971

Rain fell so heavily & so quickly that many were forced to abandon their vehicles on roads that had turned into rivers

AIRPORT HIT

Unverified videos of Dubai International Airport show jets leaving waves as they make their way down flooded runways. Large jets looked more like boats moving through the flooded airport



Chaos in Dubai after UAE's record rains

Cloud Seeding Behind Gulf Nation's Heaviest Rainfall In 75 Years?

Dubai: Dubai's giant highways were clogged by flooding and its major airport was in chaos as the West Asian financial centre remained gridlocked on Wednesday, a day after the heaviest rains on record.

Buildings and cars across the centre of the northern city were destroyed in the strike.

President Zelensky, who has urged allies to send more missiles to thwart Russian aerial attacks, said Ukraine lacked the weapons it needed to intercept the three missiles that struck Chernigiv. He said he had spoken to Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg about the strike and asked for "immediate steps" to bolster Ukraine's air defences.

The official at the centre as saying no cloud seeding took place on Tuesday, without acknowledging any earlier flights.

The country, which heavily relies on energy-hungry desalination plants to provide water, conducts cloud seeding in part to increase its dwindling, limited groundwater.

Rain is unusual in the UAE, an arid, Arabian Peninsula nation, but occurs periodically during the cooler winter months.

Many roads and other areas lack drainage given the lack of regular rainfall, causing flooding.

Scientists also say climate change in general is responsible for more intense and frequent extreme storms, droughts, floods, wildfires across the world.

Powers outages were reported around Dubai, which was dotted with flooded areas and submerged and abandoned cars.

One road tunnel near the airport was completely flooded to a depth of several metres.

As sunny skies returned Wednesday, stories emerged of residents stuck in cars and offices overnight.

"It was one of the most horrific situations I ever experienced," said one worker after his 15-min commute turned into a 12-hour saga on flooded roads.

Schools will remain closed until next week, officials said, underscoring the difficulty of the clean-up. AP & AP

Fights to and from Dubai, the biggest aviation hub for Indian globetrotters outside the country, are badly impacted since late Monday with the UAE receiving its heaviest rainfall in the last 75 years.

India has about 75 flights per day to Dubai, which are operated by Indian and UAE carriers, say travel industry sources. According to the travel industry, 30-40 flights were affected over Monday and Tuesday.

Apart from point-to-point travellers, Dubai also sees a lot of transfer traffic between India and rest of the world on Emirates flights. The biggest player on the Dubai-India route, Emirates suspended check-ins for passengers departing Dubai from 8 am to midnight on April 17 due to operational challenges caused by bad weather and road conditions. Emirates has 167 weekly flights between India and Dubai.

Its low-cost arm, Flydubai, which has 30 weekly India flights, had suspended all flights till early Wednesday night; some of them were to start operating after 8 pm Dubai time.

An Air India spokesperson said: "Due to the impact of adverse weather in Dubai, we have had to cancel our flights to and from Dubai on April 16 and 17. We are doing our best to get affected passengers on their way as soon as possible by re-accommodating them on flights to and from Dubai on April 18 and 19. We are also offering a one-time date change waiver to passengers with valid tickets on 16 and 17 April, allowing them to reschedule their flights... to future dates without impacting the validity of the tickets."

An IndiGo spokesperson said the airline has had 13 cancellations from Dubai International Airport as of now. We are yet to take a call on the last two departures of the day". The airline has "offered full refund and free move to passengers."

Airlines say other airports in the UAE that have direct flights to and from India — like Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah — have not been battered as severely by torrential rain. But flights at these places, which saw significant diversions from Dubai-bound flights late Monday and early Tuesday, are getting delayed too. A spokesperson for Abu Dhabi-based Etihad said its "flights are operating as usual... although some might still experience minor delays. Guests are still required to check inethihad.com to check status of flight."

Air India Express said: "Three-four of our flights on April 16 and 17 were among those delayed. We regret the inconvenience and have offered the option of a full refund or free rescheduling to all impacted guests." Comments from other airlines were awaited till the time of going to press. TNN

April rain doubles historical average in Pak, 65 killed

Peshawar: At least 65 people have died in storm-related incidents, including lightning in Pakistan, officials said,

with rain so far in April falling at nearly twice the historical average rate. Heavy downpours between Friday and Monday unleashed flash floods and caused houses to collapse, while lightning killed at least 28 people. The largest death toll was in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where 32 people have died, including 15 children, and more than 1,300 homes have been damaged.

"All the casualties resulted from the collapse of walls and roofs," Anwar Khan, spokesman for the province's disaster management authority, said.

Villagers whose homes were inundated with water were forced to seek refuge on higher ground, creating makeshift tents with plastic sheeting and bamboo sticks. AGENCE

TODAY'S FACE-OFF
PBKS VS MI
PLAYED 31
TV TIME 7.30 PM
STAR SPORTS / JIOCINEMA



LAST FIVE MATCHES
PBKS L L W L L
MI L W W L L
VENUE: MULLANPUR
PBKS ODDS MI

5/4 6/10

TIMES SPORT | THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024

IPL 2024

Delhi Capitals Stroll To Six-Wicket Win After Dismissing GT For 89

Sabu.Cherian@timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: An incisive bowling performance and a superb fielding effort was backed by aggressive batting as the Delhi Capitals produced an all-round display to stroll to a six-wicket triumph over Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Thursday.

Chasing a paltry 90 set by the hosts, the Capitals raced to the target in 8.5 overs with Rishabh Pant (16) and Sumit Kumar (5) guiding the team home with 67 balls to spare. Jake Fraser-McGurk began with a lofted six but was caught for 20 (off 10b, 2x4, 2x6) by Abhinav Manohar off Spencer Johnson's bowling. Prithvi Shaw (7), Abhishek Porel (15) and Shai Hope (19), too, batted aggressively and though they got out cheaply, the small target meant Capitals eased to the target with consummate ease while boosting their net run rate.

Earlier, Pant won the toss and opted to bowl first. The Capitals' incisive bowling display helped them bowl out Titans for 89, their lowest total over the three seasons they have been competing in, in 17.2 overs. After two boundaries on either side of the wicket, Titans



TOP PERFORMANCE: Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant (left) appeals for the wicket of Gujarat Titans batter Rahul Tewatia on Wednesday

67 Delhi Capitals' triumph by 6 wickets with 67 balls remaining is their biggest in the IPL in terms of balls to spare. Their previous best was the win by 9 wickets with 57 balls remaining vs Punjab Kings at Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai on April 20, 2022.

3/14 Mukesh Kumar has produced his best IPL performance, bettering the 3/21 vs CSK in Vizag on March 31, 2024.

captain Shubman Gill was dismissed for 8 after he spooned a fuller length ball by Ishant Sharma (2/8) to Shaw at cover. Wriddhiman Saha (2), back in the squad after missing last two matches, tried to break the shackles but was bowled off an inside edge off Mukesh Kumar's short-length ball.

Number three batter Sai Sudharsan's vigil was cut short by Sumit's excellent piece of fielding. Stationed at mid wicket, Kumar, replacing the injured David Warner, rushed to the ball, dived and

89 GT have registered their lowest total in the IPL. Their previous lowest all-out total was 130 off 18.5 overs vs LSG in Lucknow on April 7, 2024, while their second worst is 125/6 vs Delhi Capitals in Ahmedabad on May 2, 2023.

threw at the base of the stumps to end the southpaw's stay.

David Miller was caught brilliantly by a wrong-footed Pant for 2 after he inside-edged an Ishant

4 Dismissals (2 catches + 2 stumpings) effected by Rishabh Pant to become the second Delhi wicketkeeper to accomplish the feat after Dinesh Karthik (vs Rajasthan Royals in Bloemfontein on May 17, 2009).

and Rahul Tewatia looked to build the innings slowly but the part-time off-spin of Tristan Stubbs (2/11) had the former stumped brilliantly by Pant while impact player Shahrukh Khan too was stumped off his first ball with the ball deflecting off Pant's thigh to further reduce the hosts to 48/6.

Tewatia then joined forces with match-hero Rashid Khan, hoping to take the Titans to a competitive total. But the former was trapped in front by a spinning delivery from Axar Patel for 10.

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POWELL TRYING TO CONVINCE NARINE TO PLAY IN WORLD CUP

“I GENUINELY WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE SURPRISED IF JOS BUTTLER DIDN'T FINISH THAT GAME OFF WHEN POWELL GOT OUT. THAT'S HOW GOOD THE MAN IS. HIS ABILITY TO READ GAME SITUATIONS AND TAKE EMOTION OUT OF IT IS WHAT SETS HIM APART.”

— Ben Stokes | England Test captain

SCORECARD

GT: W Saha b Kumar 2, S Gill c Shaw b Ishant 8, S Sudharsan run out (S Kumar) 12, D Miller c Pant b Ishant 2, A Manohar st Pant b Stubbs 8, R Tewatia lbw b Patel 10, Shahrukh Khan st Pant b Stubbs 8, Rashid Khan c Pant b M Kumar 31, Sharmilla c S Kumar b Ahmed 4, N Ahmad b M Kumar 1, S Johnson not out 1; Extras (lb 3, nb 2, w 5) 10; Total: (in 17.3 overs) 99; Fow: 1-11, 2-28, 3-28, 4-30, 5-47, 6-48, 7-66, 8-78, 9-88; Bowling: K Ahmed 4-1-18-1, Sharma 2-0-8-2, M Kumar 2-3-10-3, K Yadav 4-0-18-0, T Stubbs 1-0-11-2, A Patel 4-0-17-1

DC: P Shaw c Johnson b S Warner 7, J Fraser-McGurk c Manohar b Johnson 20, A Porel b S Warner 15, S Hope c M Sharma b R Khan 19, R Pant not out 16, S Kumar not out 9; Extras (lb 4, w 2) 6; Total: (in 8.5 overs) 92/4; Fow: 1-25, 2-31, 3-65, 4-67; Bowling: S Warner 3-0-40-2, S Johnson 2-0-22-1, R Khan 2-0-12-1, N Ahmad 1-0-14-0

Result: Delhi Capitals won by six wickets

4 GT became the third team to lose four wickets in the Powerplay in this edition, the first two being Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals.

HOW THEY STAND

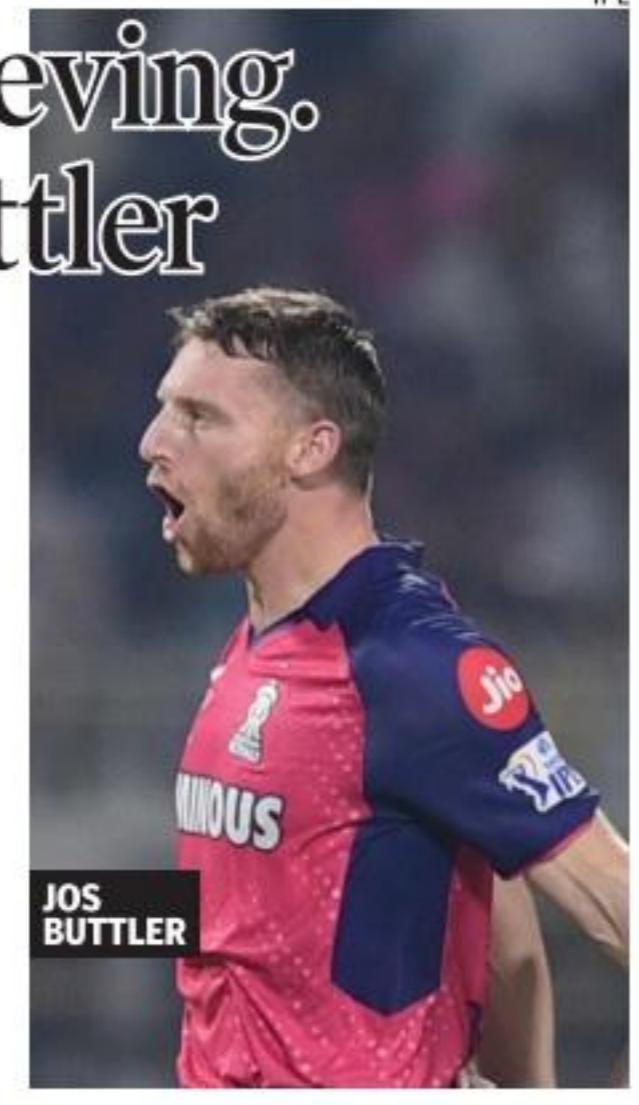
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
RR	7	6	1	0.677	12
KKR	6	4	2	1.399	8
CSK	6	4	2	0.726	8
SRH	6	4	2	0.502	8
LSG	6	3	3	0.038	6
DC	7	3	4	-0.074	6
GT	7	3	4	-1.303	6
PBKS	6	2	4	-0.218	4
MI	6	2	4	-0.234	4
RCB	7	1	6	-1.185	2

Kohli, Dhoni keep believing. That's what I tried: Buttler

Archiman.Bhaduri@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: It's difficult to say whether Jos Buttler picked up a thing or two from Sunil Narine's innings as he watched the West Indian hit his maiden ton in any format of the game at the Eden Gardens on Tuesday. But there's some similarity in the way the two centurions went about their jobs in the Kolkata Knight Riders vs Rajasthan Royals IPL match.

The Royals benefited a lot from the impact player rule being introduced in IPL in 2023. Without it, they might have missed Buttler for Tuesday's game. The Englishman,



JOS BUTTLER

I start thinking about the opposite and dare to dream. That's what kept me going," he added. The opener launched the attack in the 15th over when he hit Varun Chakaravarthy for four boundaries.

With the asking rate climbing to over 15, Buttler got good support from West Indian Rovman Powell at this stage. "I told Jos 'just relax, I will try to hit a few sixes' because he was trying to hit but wasn't connecting. So said 'I will try to hit a few sixes and later; if I get out, you take over the mantle of trying to hit those big sixes', Powell, who hit 26 off 13 balls, said.

"I started trying taking down Sunil (Narine) as their main bowler and giving the guys that belief that if Sunil Narine can go for runs, then anybody can go for runs," the West Indies skipper, who hit Narine for two sixes and a four, added.

Buttler, who rotated the strike well playing with the tail and collecting his next 65 runs in only 26 balls, took a leaf out of Virat Kohli and Mahendra Singh Dhoni. "I was trying to tell myself it'd be okay, keep going, try to stay calm. There's been plenty of times throughout the IPL, you've seen crazy things happen. Guys like Dhoni and Kohli, the way they stay till the end and keep believing and I was trying to do the same," he stated.

Buttler thanked RR head coach Kumar Sangakkara too. "That's something Kumar Sangakkara has told me a lot — there's always a little breaking point. The worst thing you can do when you are not feeling your best is to fight it and try to force the issue and give your wicket away. He just tells me to stay there and at some point, the momentum will change."

POWELL TRYING TO CONVINCE NARINE TO PLAY IN WORLD CUP

Kolkata: West Indies captain Rovman Powell says efforts are on to convince Sunil Narine to come out of international retirement for this year's T20 World Cup. Narine, who turns 36 next month, last played for the West Indies in a T20I in Aug 2019. "For 12 months, I've been whispering in his ear, he's blocked out everyone. Hopefully, they can crack his code," Powell said. PTI

67 sixes hit by Mumbai in 6 matches — the second most in this IPL behind the 77 in as many matches by Hyderabad. Punjab have hit 44 sixes in 6 matches.

100* Lennox Simmons' unbeaten match-winning knock off 61 balls in Mohali on May 21, 2014 is the only hundred for Mumbai vs Punjab.

4-15 Marcus Stoinis' career-best T20 figures in Vizag on May 13, 2016 is the best by a Punjab bowler vs Mumbai.

— Stats: Rajesh Kumar

UNCAPPED INDIANS TAKE CENTRESTAGE

SOME UNCAPPED INDIAN PLAYERS HAVE NOT ONLY MADE THEIR PRESENCE FELT BUT ALSO WON MATCHES ON THEIR OWN AS THE IPL APPROACHES THE HALFWAY STAGE. TOI TAKES A LOOK...



RIYAN PARAG

(Rajasthan Royals)

The years of investment Rajasthan Royals have put in the Assam youngster has finally come good this season. Parag is giving tough competition to Virat Kohli for the Orange Cap. What has been striking is his hitting ability coupled with a newfound consistency.

Royals have given him a fixed spot (No. 4) in the batting line-up and that has worked wonders for Parag. He is just behind Heinrich Klaasen in the list of top six-hitters in the tournament with 20 maximums.



MAYANK YADAV

(Lucknow Super Giants)

The most enthralling story. The virtually unknown Delhi speedster bowled thunderbolts in the three games he played for LSG. He breached the 150 kmph mark and bowled the fastest ball of the tournament — a 16.7 kmph missile against RCB. Yadav won back-to-back man of the match awards with three-wicket hauls against Punjab Kings and RCB. An abdominal strain has put him out of action for now.



ABHISHEK SHARMA

(Sunrisers Hyderabad)

SRH's mind-boggling hitting in the IPL so far has fuelled a lot by Abhishek Sharma's daredevilry at the top of the order. Abhishek's strike-rate of 197.19 is among the best in the tournament and the youngster from Punjab forms a lethal opening combo with another southpaw, Travis Head. The Sharma-Head duo has made sure that both batters have contributed so much for the team's cause after coming on as a substitute.



ASHUTOSH SHARMA

(Punjab Kings)

If impact value of individual innings had to be calculated, then Sharma's three knocks in the 30s would rank among the best. Sharma has hit a 17-ball 31 (against GT), a 15-ball unbeaten 33 (against SRH) and a 16-ball 31 (against RR). The 'Impact Player' rule has come as a blessing for Sharma as no other batsman has contributed so much for the team's cause after coming on as a substitute.



NITISH KUMAR REDDY

(Sunrisers Hyderabad)

The pace-bowling allrounder is a rare commodity and Reddy is one of the few going around in the country. His 37-ball 64 rescued SRH from a precarious position of 64/4 against Punjab on a lively wicket in Mullanpur. His ability to clear the boundary by comfortable margins against both pacers and spinners was the striking feature of his knock. Later, he also dismissed Jitesh Sharma with a slower bouncer.



SHASHANK SINGH

(Punjab Kings)

The middle-order batsman from Chhattisgarh came into the limelight by fashioning a memorable win for his team against GT with an unbeaten 29-ball 61, that too after the match had looked dead and buried for Punjab. The knock was a perfect redemption moment for Shashank after becoming a case of "mistaken identity" at the auction.

— Compiled by Hindol Basu

GALLERY

Iyer fined Rs 12 lakh for slow over-rate offence

Kolkata: KKR captain Shreyas Iyer has been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during their game against Rajasthan Royals. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Iyer was fined Rs 12 lakhs," said the IPL in a release.

Manika, Sreeja knocked out: Indian table tennis players Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula exited in the second-round group stage after losing against China's Wang Manyu and defending champion Chen Meng respectively at the ITTF World Cup in Macau on Wednesday. Manika lost 0-4 (6-11, 4-11, 9-11, 4-11) while Sreeja was beaten 1-3 (4-11, 4-11, 15-13, 2-11). AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

CHESS: WC Candidates, Rd 12, 11.45 pm (FIDE, chess24 YouTube)

CRICKET: IPL, Punjab vs Mumbai, 7.30 pm (Star Sports, Jiocinema); Pak vs NZ, 1st T20, 7.30 pm (FanCode)

FOOTBALL: Europa QFs, 12.30 am Friday (Sony)

TENNIS: ATP Barcelona Open, 2.30 pm (Tenis TV); WTA Rouen, 3 pm (WTA TV)

Paris wants to rekindle love for the Games



A police patrol boat on the river Seine, 100 days before the start of the Games

Games generally more desirable.

Critics question their value for a world grappling with climate warming and other emergencies. Potential host cities became so Gamesaverse that Paris and Los Angeles were the only remaining candidates in 20

PARIS DREAMS

Mbappe Scores Two As PSG Beat 10-Man Barcelona To Reverse Home Leg Loss And Reach The Semifinals

Paris: Paris Saint-Germain's emphatic victory over Barcelona keeps alive the French club's dream of ending the Kylian Mbappe era by lifting the Champions League trophy in June.

Their hopes of going all the way in Europe's elite club competition for the first time hung in the balance after they lost 3-2 at home to Barca in the first leg of their quarter-final last week.

They had never previously won a Champions League knockout tie after losing the first leg at home, and their prospects of doing so this time appeared slim after they conceded the opening goal on the night.

Another disappointing exit threatened for the Qatar-owned club who had gone out in the last 16 in five of the previous seven seasons.

But they seized the opportunity given to them in Catalonia after Ronald Araújo's red card left Barcelona to play over an hour with 10 men, allowing Luis Enrique's team to go on and win 4-1 on the night and 6-4 on aggregate.

PSG were rampant with the extra player, as Ousmane Dembélé again stood out against his old team by scoring the equaliser on the night and winning a penalty which Kylian Mbappé converted to put PSG ahead in the tie. In between, the outstanding Vitinha — who had already scored in the first leg — netted with a brilliant strike from outside the box, and Mbappé made sure of the win late on to spark wild celebrations in the away contingent at Montjuic.

"It is a magnificent, historic moment for the club. It is not easy to win here, but I was confident. I told the coach we were going to win and qualify," PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi proudly told broadcaster Canal Plus.

The final scoreline was identical to that on their last visit to Barcelona in February 2021, when Mbappé hit a hat-trick in the first leg of a last-16 tie they eventually won 5-2 on aggregate. But the manner of this victory surely finally exorcises the ghost of their humiliating collapse in Barcelona in 2017, when they won 4-0 at home in the first leg only to lose 6-1 in the return in a stunning implosion.

Seven years ago, Barcelona went into the 88th minute of the second leg needing to score three times and duly did so. This time it was PSG who produced the turnaround, and they now have a glorious opportunity to reach a second Champions League final in five seasons.

"This means a lot," Dembélé said later. AFP



KINDLY LEAVE! Referee Istvan Kovacs asks Barca's Araujo to exit the pitch after his red card. Manager Xavi too was red-carded later

IT REALLY FELT LIKE THAT WE HAD FULL CONTROL OF THE GAME, AND THEN AFTER 10-15 MINUTES IT JUST FELT LIKE WE DESTROYED OURSELVES."

— Ilkay Gundogan, Barca midfielder

A BIG SHIFT FROM THE WHOLE TEAM. WE WORKED THE ENTIRE WEEK, TACTICALLY, WITH THE COACH. HIS TACTICS WERE PERFECT."

— Ousmane Dembélé, PSG winger

Dipa qualifies for final but Pranati misses out

New Delhi: Star India gymnast Dipa Karmakar on Wednesday entered the women's vault final after finishing sixth in the qualifying round of the ongoing FIG Apparatus World Cup, a Paris Olympics qualifying event, in Doha.

GYMNASICS WC

The 30-year-old, who had finished fourth at the Baku Apparatus World Cup in Azerbaijan last month, scored 12.500 in the first vault and 13.066 in the second vault to total 12.783. Navas Karla (13.916), Georgieva Valentina (13.316) and An Chang Ok (13.166) took the first three positions in the qualifying round. The top eight finishers in the qualification ro-

und make it to the finals. The final is scheduled on Friday.

The other Indian in the fray, Pranati Nayak, however, failed to qualify for the final after finishing 11th in the qualifying round. Pranati, 29, who had won the bronze medal in vault event at Cairo World Cup this February and also represented India at the Tokyo Olympics, suffered a fall in the second vault to come up with a score of 12.416.

"She had a bit of ankle swelling but it is mainly the fall in the second vault which affected her," said coach Ashok Kumar Mishra. "Only two gymnasts in each apparatus will qualify in women's vault from this tournament."

CANDIDATES CHESS

fared a setback when he lost to below-par Alireza Firouzja in the seventh round of the 14-round double round robin event. But he won the next game with black pieces against Vidit Gujrathi.

"Gukesh has played minus positions so well. He has got that edge due to his fighting spirit," added Kunte. "But if all goes well in the next two rounds, even Vidit will be within striking distance for the top spot. Remember, he is playing Firouzja and Nijat Abasov, who have not done well in the last two rounds."

Another GM and coach Swapnil Dhopade said, "We have seen top-notch defensive skills from Gukesh in

rare physical condition called phocomelia which makes her the first and the only international para-archery champion without arms.

Sheetal believes her performance in the Khelo India event will help her prepare for the challenges ahead.

"This result will help me more going ahead in the international platforms and the Olympics," Sheetal was quoted as saying in a media release from the Sports Authority of India. EPA



Sheetal was born with a

Sheetal wins silver at able-bodied event

New Delhi: Asian Para Games gold-winner Sheetal Devi (in pic) grabbed a silver in the Khelo India NTPC National Ranking archery meet, finishing second behind Haryana's Ekta Rani, who is an able-bodied and a junior world champion.

In the competition held at the DDA Yamuna Sports Complex, the 17-year-old Sheetal competed with able-bodied junior archers and lost 138-140 to Ekta in the individual compound event final.

Sheetal was born with a

critical positions. And we are watching a different Vidit in this tournament." Vidit has not taken the safety-first approach. And as a result, the Nashik GM has played the most decisive games till the 10th round (three wins, three defeats).

Kunte marvelled at what

the players have achieved so far in this high-stakes



EASY PEASY: Kylian Mbappé celebrates PSG's fourth goal in Barcelona on Tuesday

BARCELONA		1
Raphinha	12	
PSG	4	
Dembélé 40, Vitinha 54, Mbappé 61-pen, 89		
PSG win 6-4 on aggregate.		

MATCH STATS

Barca	PSG	
33	Possession %	67
7	Shots	21
3	On Target	9
3	Corners	10
10	Fouls	12

40 Mbappé has now scored at least 40 club goals in all competitions for the third time in 4 seasons with PSG.

12 Barcelona manager Xavi was sent off as referee Istvan Kovacs showed 12 cards during the 4-1 defeat.

4 PSG are the only side to have scored four or more goals at Barcelona in a Champions League knockout tie — and they have done it twice (also in 2021).



DORTMUND 4
Brandt 34, Maatsen 39, Fuellkrug 71, Sabitzer 74

ATLETICO MADRID 2
Hummels 49-og, Correa 64

Dortmund win 5-4 on aggregate

DORTMUND turn it around

Nobody missed a metre here today. I've never played at this level before and I'm very proud to be in the semifinals. Things will certainly be different against Paris than in the group stage.

— Niclas Fuellkrug, DORTMUND STRIKER

MATCH STATS

Dortmund	Atleti	
52	Possession %	48
19	Shots	10
9	On Target	3
6	Corners	2
9	Fouls	11

goals in the 15 minutes after half-time, we have to improve that for sure, but our response to it was sensational," said Brandt.

Atletico were bidding to reach the last four for the first time in seven years, but fell at the quarter-final stage for the third time in five seasons. "It was tough," Atletico captain Koke told Movistar.

"Their goals hurt a lot — the fact that they got them so quickly after each other. We are angry because we wanted to get through. This is football and it can be cruel."

The home side should have been level in the tie after three minutes but Sabitzer took an extra touch, allowing Atletico to cover.

Just moments later, Atletico had a major chance of their own, as Alvaro Morata raced through one-on-one with the goalkeeper but chipped the ball well wide of the post.

Buoyed by an 80,000-strong home crowd, Dortmund pushed and prodded, with Karim Adeyemi shooting straight at Jan Oblak. Dortmund broke through on 34

minutes, Brandt collecting a Hummels chip and shooting on the turn, the ball bouncing through Oblak's hands.

The Germans were ahead in the tie just five minutes later. Maatsen threading in from an acute angle after he was given space to run in the Atletico box.

With Simeone sensing his chances of qualifying for the semis for a fourth time as Atletico boss slipping away, he shuffled his deck at half-time, making three changes including hooking the ineffective Morata for Correa. Reuters

ATALANTA READY TO DEAL FATAL BLOW TO LIVERPOOL

Milan: Atalanta have a chance to make history on Thursday as they welcome Liverpool to Bergamo with one foot in the Europa League semifinals thanks to a stunning first-leg win at Anfield. Atalanta once again punched way above their weight last week by dishing out a 3-0 hammering to Liverpool and are on the verge of reaching the last four of a European competition for the first time since 1988.

Back then Atalanta were a Serie B team and knocked out of the Cup Winners' Cup by Belgian outfit Mechelen, today the Italians are competing with and beating an altogether higher class of opposition.

It was magical. I try not to go overboard in interviews, but it was really magical. The stadium was on fire today," Fuellkrug told DAZN.

Dortmund will next face Paris Saint-Germain for a place in the final at Wembley on June 1.

"We did give them chances and

ATLANTA READY TO DEAL FATAL BLOW TO LIVERPOOL

Last week's win in England was probably the greatest European night in Atalanta's history as their run to 2020 Champions League quarter-finals — where they were desperately unlucky to lose to Paris Saint-Germain — came at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic which devastated Bergamo.

It was also unexpected as Atalanta's recent form has been patchy with three wins in 11 matches, and throwing away a two-goal lead to draw 2-2 with struggling Verona on Monday

reminded coach Gian Piero Gasperini of the dangers of complacency. "Liverpool are a team that came back from three goals down in a Champions League final against a team of greats," said Gasperini.

"We know that nothing has been decided and that we will have to play really well," he added. AFP

OLY CALLING: LeBron James

players who can blend and can fit and can play certain roles that you need," USA Basketball managing director Grant Hill said. "But I think defence was a priority and having guys that were capable of locking down, guarding multiple sets within a possession." The thinking is simple: Scoring shouldn't be a problem, and if the defense does its job, the Americans — looking for a fifth consecutive Olympic gold — will be tough to beat. AP

USA picks star-studded basketball team for Paris

New York: USA Basketball studied every men's basketball game it has played for about two decades and a clear trend eventually appeared. When the defence isn't good enough, the Americans tend to get themselves into trouble. And the team for the Paris Olympics was built with that in mind.

LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant, Bam Adebayo, Devin Booker, Joel Embiid, Jayson Tatum, Anthony Davis, Jrue Holiday, Tyrese Haliburton, Anthony Edwards and Kawhi Leonard were formally announced as members of the U.S. Olympic team on Wednesday — a group with nearly 200,000 NBA points, 84 All-Star Game selections and 10 Olympic gold medals between them.

"You want obviously talented individuals, but you want

winner of the Candidates tournament will play in the World title match. Hence there is less circumspection on part of the players. The previous such event was played in June 2022 and that time King Carlsen had not officially withdrawn from the World Championship cycle. Hence Liren's qualification for the title match was uncertain after he had finished second in the Candidates behind Nepo. The elevation of the Chinese happened after Carlsen withdrew a month later.

Though the 11th round result is not of do-or-die nature for Gukesh (6 points), it may not be the case for Praggnanandhaa (5.5) and Vidit (5). Same for top-two seeds Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura. A slip-up from the former will indirectly boost Nepo's position.

"The Russian's experience of winning this tournament twice and ability to handle the pressure of last rounds will count for something," said Dhopade. No. 4 seed Nepo has been undefeated so far but Kunte expects the law of averages to catch up with him. The 33-year-old had won the last event with 9.5 points (1.5 points clear) without defeat.

That leaves us with the dark horse Praggnanandhaa (seven draws till R10) who reached the World Cup final last year. None of his first 10 games have gone beyond 45 moves in Toronto. If a tinge of luck grows bigger, you never know.

Interestingly, the last Candidates had also seen 16 decisive games in the first 10 rounds (40 games) like this time. The critical difference being four decisive games this time in 12 games from the third to fifth rounds compared to just one in Madrid in that phase.

Dhopade said he was expecting fighting chess because of the winner-takes-all situation and more youngsters in fray as compared to other Closed events.

Furthermore, there is clarity now that only the

FOCUSSED: D Gukesh in action during his Round 10 match against Russian GM Ian Nepomniachtchi

critical positions. And we are watching a different Vidit in this tournament." Vidit has not taken the safety-first approach. And as a result, the Nashik GM has played

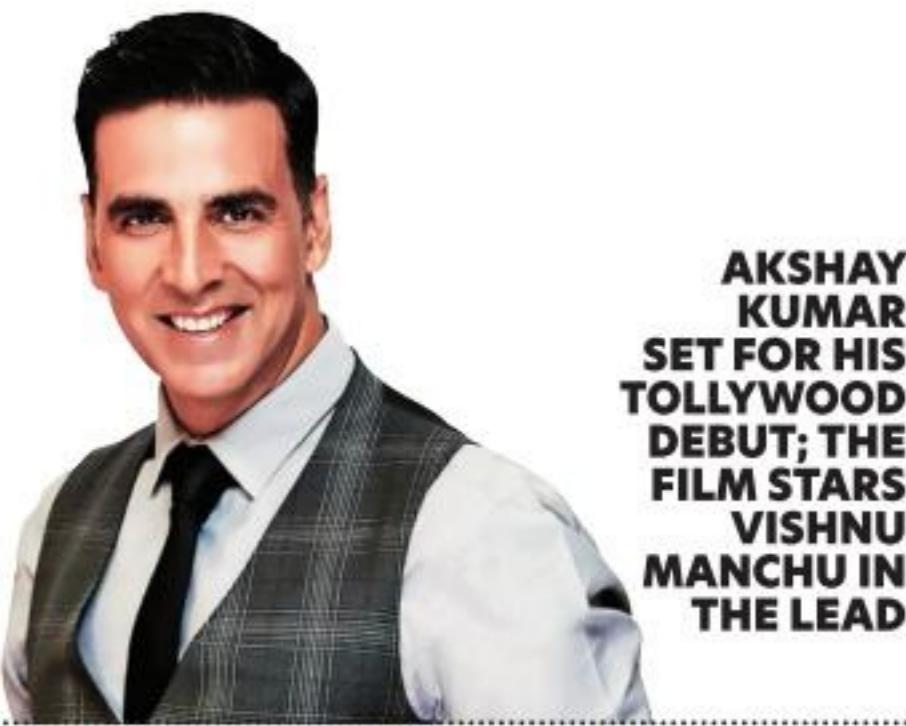
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Kunte marvelled at what

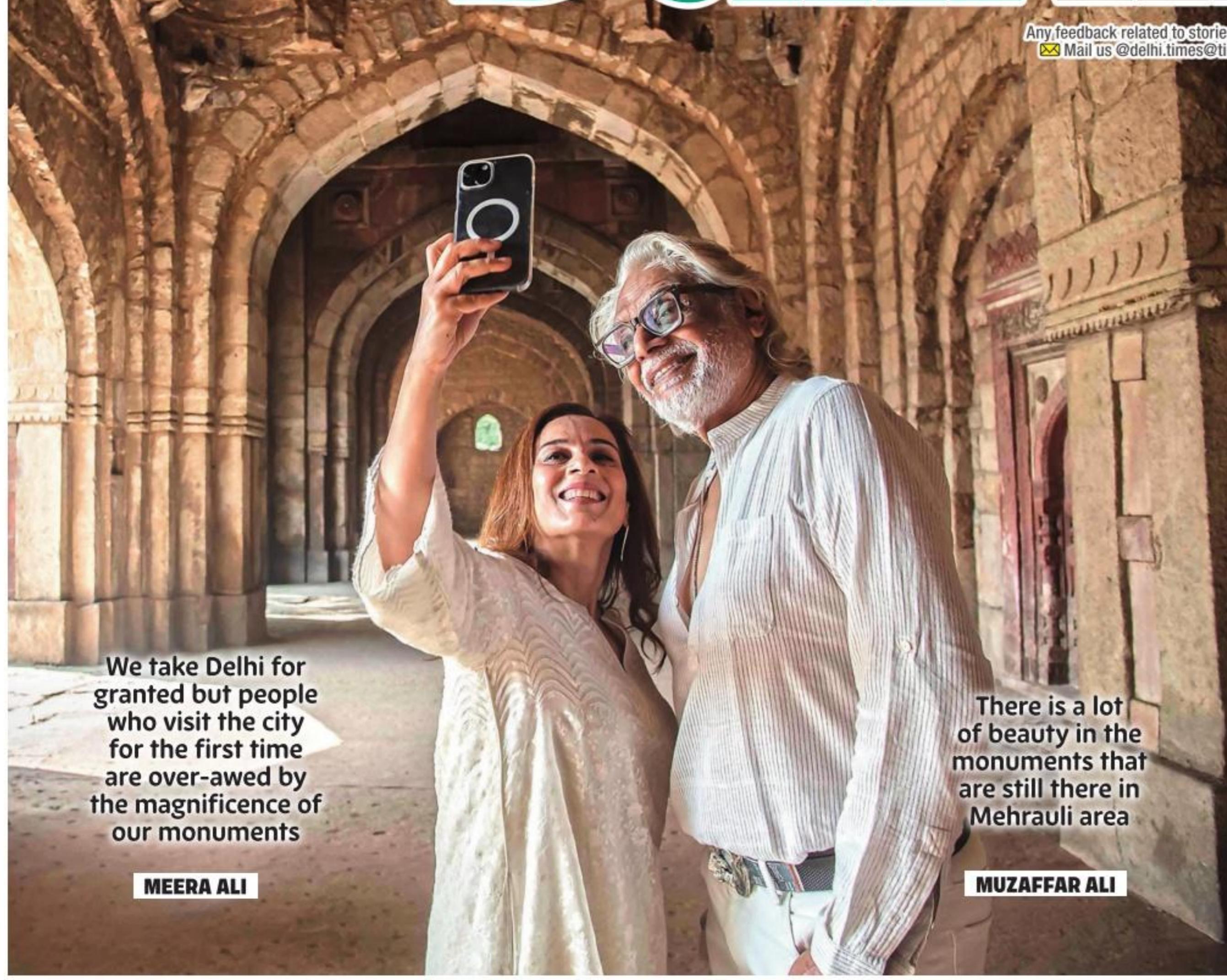
the players have achieved so far in this high-stakes

critical positions. And we are watching a different Vidit in this tournament." Vidit has not taken the safety-first approach. And as a result, the Nashik GM has played

the most decisive games



AKSHAY KUMAR SET FOR HIS TOLLYWOOD DEBUT; THE FILM STARS VISHNU MANCHU IN THE LEAD



We take Delhi for granted but people who visit the city for the first time are over-awed by the magnificence of our monuments

MEERA ALI

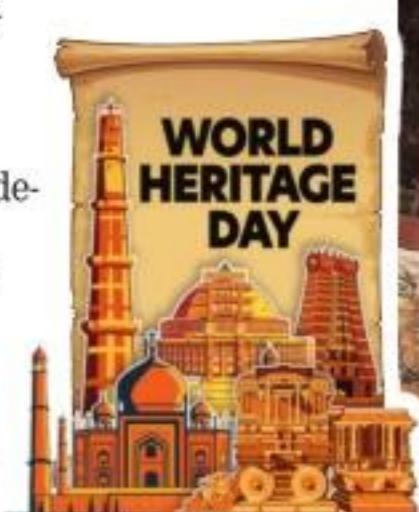
There is a lot of beauty in the monuments that are still there in Mehrauli area

MUZAFFAR ALI

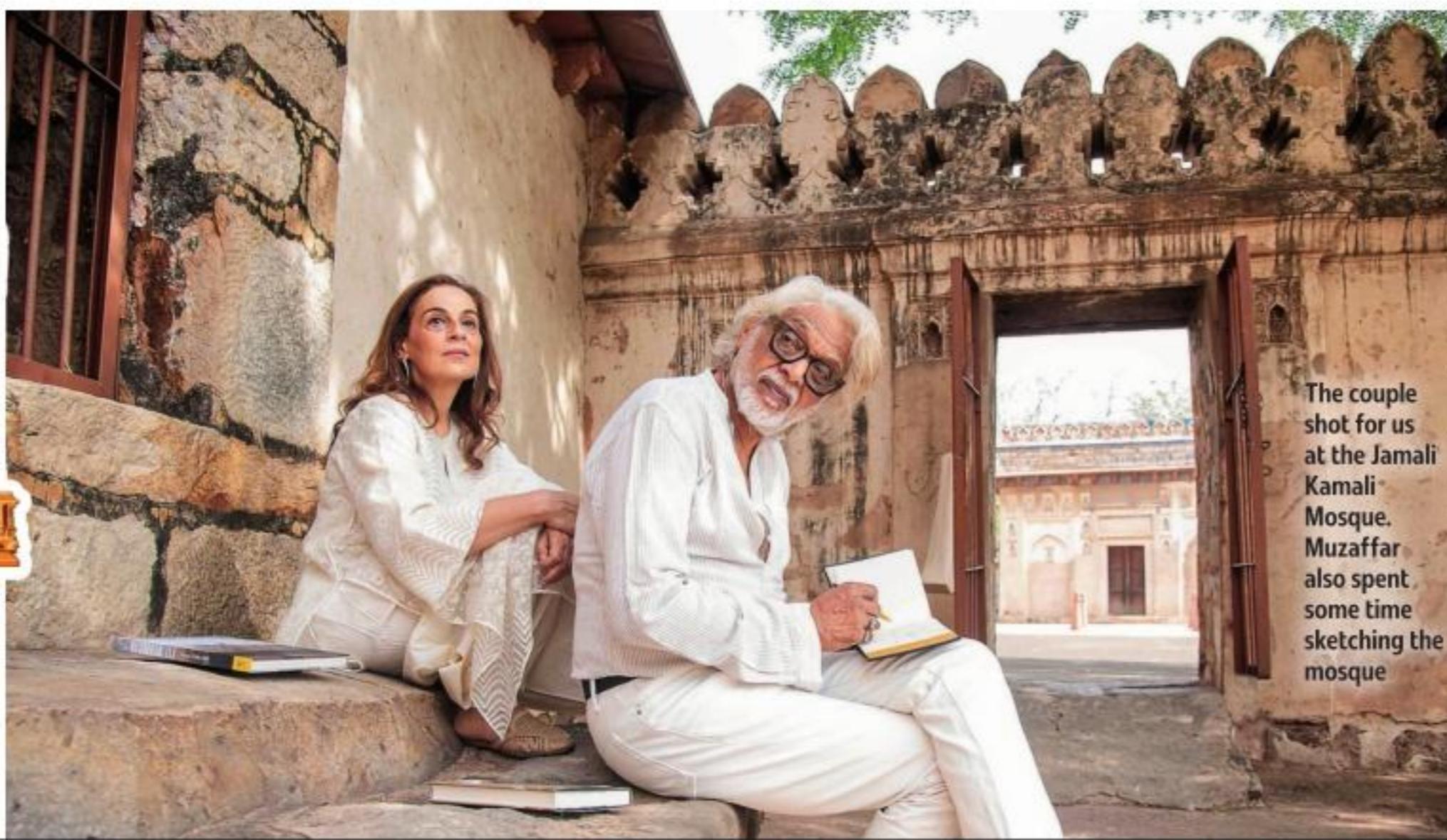
'DELHI IS DELHI BECAUSE OF THESE MONUMENTS'

Shivika Manchanda

Amid the rustling of leaves and the occasional roar of the planes flying over Jamali Kamali Mosque at the Mehrauli Archaeological Park, filmmaker Muzaffar Ali and architect-designer Meera Ali relived old memories as they visited the mosque after 15 years. On World Heritage Day, the couple shares how they explored monuments together when they first met, their favourite haunts, and shooting films across Delhi monuments.



CONTINUED ON 3



Aamir lodges FIR after deepfake political video

Aamir Khan has become the target of a fake video that shows him apparently criticising a political party. Reacting to the video, the actor's team said that the 27-second video was fake and that an FIR had been filed with the Cyber Crime Cell of Mumbai Police on Tuesday.

The statement issued by the actor's spokesperson read, "We want to clarify that Mr Aamir Khan has never endorsed any political party throughout his 35-year career... He would like to clarify that this is a fake video and totally untrue. He has reported the matter to various authorities related to this issue, including filing an FIR with the Cyber Crime Cell of the Mumbai Police. Mr Khan would like to urge all Indians to come out and vote and be an active part of our electoral process."

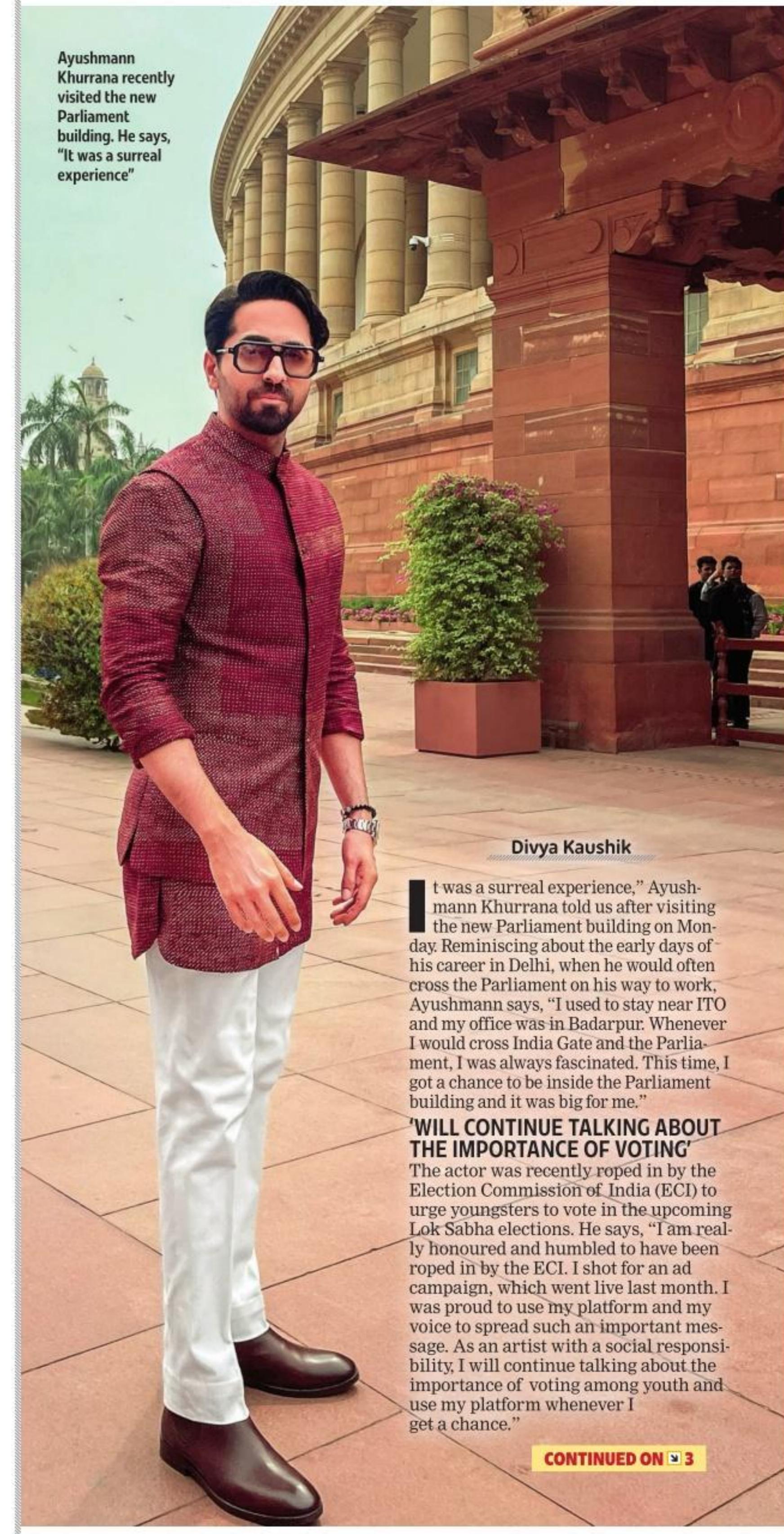


Aamir Khan; (inset) a grab from the now-viral video, which was actually a promo from Aamir's talk show, Satyamev Jayate (2012-2014)



It was big for me to be inside the Parliament building: Ayushmann

Ayushmann Khurana recently visited the new Parliament building. He says, "It was a surreal experience"



Divya Kaushik

It was a surreal experience," Ayushmann Khurana told us after visiting the new Parliament building on Monday. Reminiscing about the early days of his career in Delhi, when he would often cross the Parliament on his way to work, Ayushmann says, "I used to stay near ITO and my office was in Badarpur. Whenever I would cross India Gate and the Parliament, I was always fascinated. This time, I got a chance to be inside the Parliament building and it was big for me."

'WILL CONTINUE TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF VOTING'
The actor was recently roped in by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to urge youngsters to vote in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He says, "I am really honoured and humbled to have been roped in by the ECI. I shot for an ad campaign, which went live last month. I was proud to use my platform and my voice to spread such an important message. As an artist with a social responsibility, I will continue talking about the importance of voting among youth and use my platform whenever I get a chance."

CONTINUED ON 3

#DubaiFloods

DOOBAL!

Heavy thunderstorms lashed the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, dumping the heaviest rain ever recorded in the country in the span of hours as it flooded out portions of major highways and Dubai's international airport

sonirazzdan Sitting here at Dubai airport on this rather stormy night with no idea when our flight to Mumbai is going to be able to take off ... and remembering parts of the last two weeks. It's been magical and full of memories and adventures. From an earthquake to an eclipse and now a flood too But now we wants to go HOME 😊😊😊

Reportedly, the Dubai airport was shut down for 30 minutes and several flights were diverted on Tuesday due to major flooding on access roads leading to the airport, causing significant disruptions in operations

Habibii welcome to dubai!

Rahul Vaidya and Soni Razdan, who were in Dubai, shared their ordeal on social media

@rahulvaidyarkv

CharlesRead

Unilode

AKE T5254 RT TAKE 65 KG

CIt (the new Parliament building) depicts the rich heritage of our country, and the craftsmanship is brilliant. Different elements in that building encapsulate the heritage and culture of the entire country

CI have been learning something with every film of mine, and Article 15 was a great learning experience. Working on it deepened my appreciation for principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution



Earlier, fashion designers did not use men and women to model their new designs, and used mannequins to display fashion trends. But in 1853, the 'Father of Haute Couture' Charles Frederick Worth, asked his wife to model his design, making her the first ever live model.

BEST OF DELHI NCR



Be very proud: SRK tells his team post loss



After his cricket team lost its recent match, Shah Rukh Khan gave them a pep talk to lift the morale. The video of SRK's message has been winning hearts online. In the video, he tells the team, "There are days in our lives, in sports, especially, when we don't deserve to lose. And there are also days when we don't deserve to win. But there are days like that when things turn around. Today, we didn't deserve to lose, all of us played extremely well. We have to be very very proud of ourselves. Please don't feel sad or down." Addressing Gautam Gambhir, he adds, "GG, you don't feel down. We would all be bouncing back. It is God's plan for today."

The Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for - Ernest Hemingway

SHOULD BE DELHI IS TALKING ABOUT

INDIA'S FIRST-TIME VOTERS MUST ENSURE THAT CLEAN AIR IS A KEY POLL ISSUE

By Invitation



DIA MIRZA
actor, Goodwill Ambassador for UN Environment Programme, Advocate for UN Sustainable Development Goals



"When our youth underscore their right to clean air, it'll become an integral part of every political manifesto"

As a mother of young children, I feel deeply agonised by the fact that high concentrations of pollutants enter their tender lungs through vitiated air across the country. Polluted air also impedes their brain development and could create life-long challenges such as cognitive and motor impairments. Our existence and the well-being of our children depends on clean air, so tackling air pollution must be an important electoral issue and a legislative priority. This is the clarion call of mothers across the country who have joined forces to form Warrior Moms.

In fact, in 2023, the World Bank stated that "all of India's 1.4 billion people are exposed to

unhealthy levels of ambient PM 2.5 – the most harmful pollutant – emanating from multiple sources." And last October, IQAir ranked my home Mumbai as the world's second-most polluted major global city. I see the impact of this increasing pollution in my own family in the frequent eruptions of allergies, respiratory infections and fever. This problem is however much more serious than an occasional cold. Air pollution reduces life expectancy, can harm respiratory and cardiovascular systems, and exacerbate existing health challenges especially in children and senior adults.

As India goes to polls, I call upon all mothers, concerned citizens and especially first-time voters to ensure that in these elections, #cleanair becomes a key electoral issue. India has the largest youth population in the world and when it underscores its right to a healthy environment, clean air will become a vote bank issue and hopefully, an integral part of every political manifesto.

We must choose leaders who care for Sustainable Development Goals and want to restore and repair the environment. With our united call to action, we can push for proactive legislations at both local and national levels as well as cleaner forms of transport, city-specific clean air plans and mitigation of pollution emanating from construction activities, vehicular traffic, burning waste and industrial emissions. In

these elections, let us make every vote count and choose leaders who will protect biodiversity and our children's right to breathe unpolluted air.

'Air pollution indirect cause of death in respiratory ailments'

Toxic air now suspected to increase breast cancer risk

#cleanair #pollution #biodiversity #elections #manifesto

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

Level: Medium



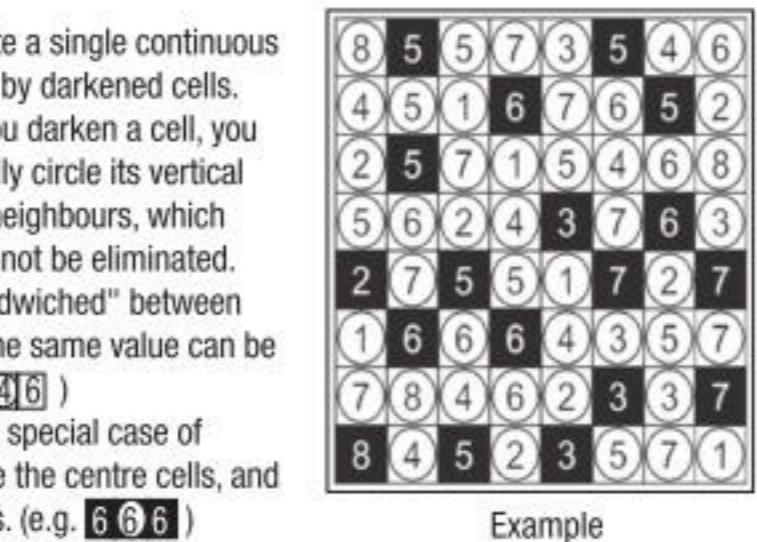
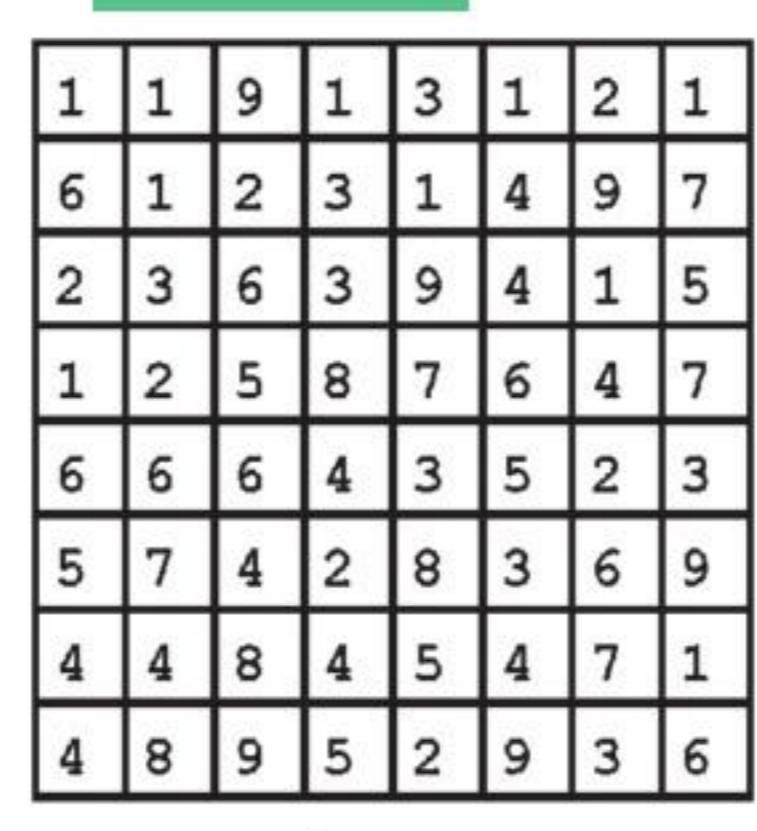
HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every horizontal row, every vertical column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9, without repeating the numbers in the same row, column or box. You can't change the digits already given in the grid. Every puzzle has one solution.

TIMES HITORI

HOW TO PLAY

1. A number may appear just once in each row or column. Eliminate repeat numbers by darkening cells. (see example)



LOOP THE LOOP

- Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A).
- Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B).
- Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines.
- You can't draw lines around zeroes.
- Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

THE DAILY CROSSWORD



18/04/2024

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



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17/04/2024

EVENTS

EXHIBITION

India Habitat Centre: Shakheen -3 - A solo painting exhibition by Renuka Verma. Till April 20, Visual Arts Gallery, IHC

India Habitat Centre:
Emerging - A solo exhibition of paintings by Rajesh Singh. Today-April 23, Convention Centre Foyer, IHC

Email us at tims.delhitimes@timesgroup.com

GARFIELD

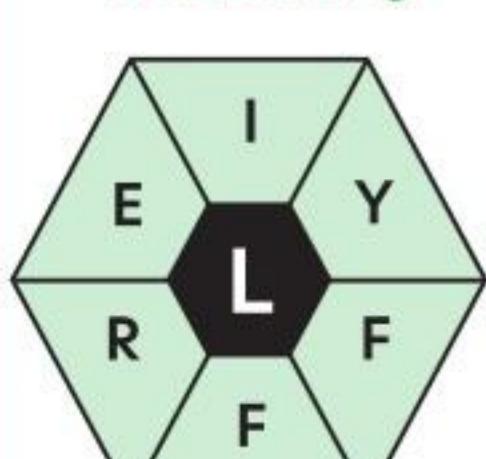


ARCHIE



SPELLATHON

Today's Ratings:
08-average | 09-good |
11-outstanding



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, a letter can be used as many times as it appears in the puzzle. Each word must contain the central letter. There should be at least one seven letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed. British English Dictionary is used as reference.

DENNIS THE MENACE



ARIES: You will be able to change something. Keeping in touch with the ones you love will really help ease any tension you might feel. Don't hesitate to take a look at how much energy you have got left at the end of the day for your friends and family.

TAURUS: You are at a big turning point. You will feel a growing sense of responsibility, and you will have the wonderful sensation of having grown up a little bit more. Things are hectic and you need to stay physically grounded.

GEMINI: You have to make your own decisions and all you can do is make your own needs and boundaries clear. Reach out and make some important professional connections. You will realize something very important about yourself. You have a whole new insight into your opponents' weak points.

CANCER: Take advantage of this time to keep up the good work. Enjoy every social moment and you could make some important new connections. It is really important that you give yourself space to relax and be by yourself.

LEO: Make sure you are in touch with your social network as you go through these romantic changes. You should give yourself a little time

PIRATES: You are feeling really creative. You are feeling the positive effects of making some important changes. Now is a good time for you to organize your workplace and develop new strategies for managing the tasks before you.

FINOLEX FORTUNE

For appointments : ANUPAM V KAPIL
9822042295 or anupamvkapil@gmail.com

See what the stars have in store for you - according to your moon sign.

to think. Spend few moments on seeking out new information and experiences. Friendship and cooperative endeavours flourish now.

VIRGO: You could make some important connections. You need to decide to make any decisions. You have a terrific new idea that you should implement. You have a business strategy; it is going to be successful so implement it.

LIBRA: You need to communicate something very carefully today. It is really important for you to listen to your body and give yourself some extra time to rest. Look at yourself and you will enjoy a highly charged atmosphere.

SCORPIO: You should be encountering a minimum of resistance to excellent implementations of your excellent optimisations. It is time for you to really go for your desires. Nervousness or irritability due to aggravations and the stress of increased demands at work is possible.

SAGITTARIUS: You could be feeling overwhelmed by all the work you are getting. Time to refresh and rejuvenate yourself and do the things you most enjoy doing. You do something to take advantage of how great you feel.

CAPRICORN: You are ready to get started making something change. Your mind is serious and you are able to concentrate on work that requires patience, attention to detail, and precision. It is time to make a grown-up decision. It is time to put a new idea to work.

AQUARIUS: You could make some big changes right now, if you stay focused. Your mental processes are speeded up and you move more quickly now. You now have the opportunity to gain materially. You will be seeing the extremely positive effects.

PISCES: You are feeling really creative. You are

feeling the positive effects of making some im-

portant changes. Now is a good time for you to

organise your workplace and develop new stra-

tegies for managing the tasks before you.

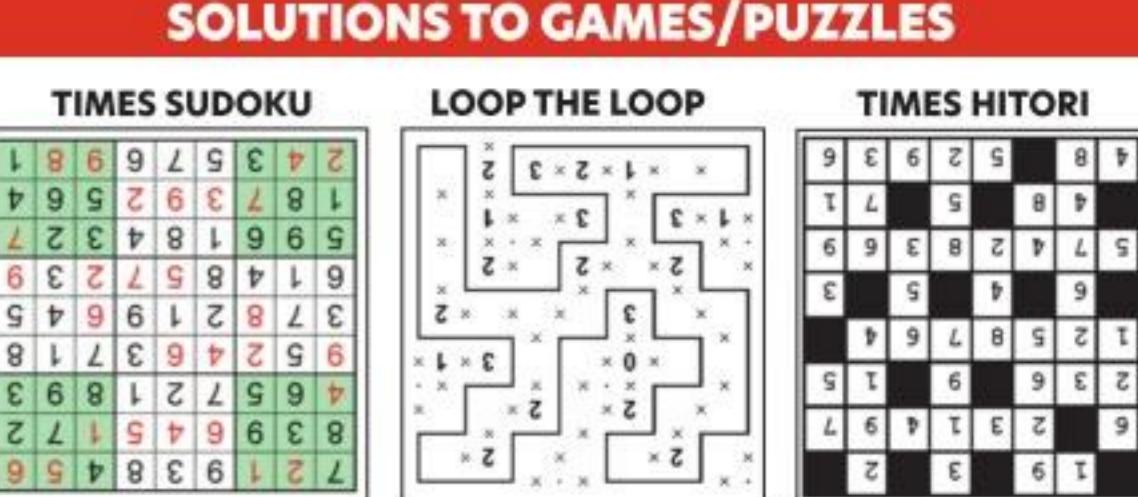
Answers to the crossword and puzzles are available online at www.delhitimes.com.

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SOLUTIONS TO GAMES/PUZZLES



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'When we met, we used to explore monuments together'

Pics: Ajay Kumar Gautam



CONTINUED FROM R 1

'DELHI IS DELHI BECAUSE OF ITS MONUMENTS'

Talking about their connection with the Jamali Kamali Mosque, Muzaffar says, "The archaeological park is a very significant place in a significant location of Mehrauli. The area is blessed with the *mehr* of Auliya, Hazrat Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. There is a lot of beauty in the monuments that are still there in this area." Meera adds, "This place has a lot of nostalgic value to us – having done many creative ventures here, coming here refreshed all those memories."

Meera, who has been brought up in Delhi, says that since childhood she found monument visits interesting. She tells us that Delhi's monuments were the couple's favourite spots to meet. "We lived in Nizamuddin back then, so Safdarjung Tomb and Humayun's Tomb became our favourite spots. So, every time we thought of shooting a film, we just knew which heritage site to go to."

Adding, she says, "Delhi is definitely defined by its monuments and heritage. It defines different periods of Delhi – *jab woh saat baari ujd, aur saat baar basi*. I think, we take Delhi for granted but people who visit the city for the first

I have shot many films in this space, like Rumi In The Land Of Khusrau, and we had organised Jahan-e-Khusrau World Sufi Music Festival in 2007. Coming here brings back all those memories. I believe Delhi is the centre of the soul, not a centre of power

– Muzaffar

When we met, we used to explore monuments together. We used to meet early in the morning, around 5am, take a walk, chat about our life, sketch sometimes, and talk about things that inspired us – that became our way of life for many months

– Meera

time are overawed by the magnificence of our monuments. You can't miss them. Delhi is Delhi because of its monuments."

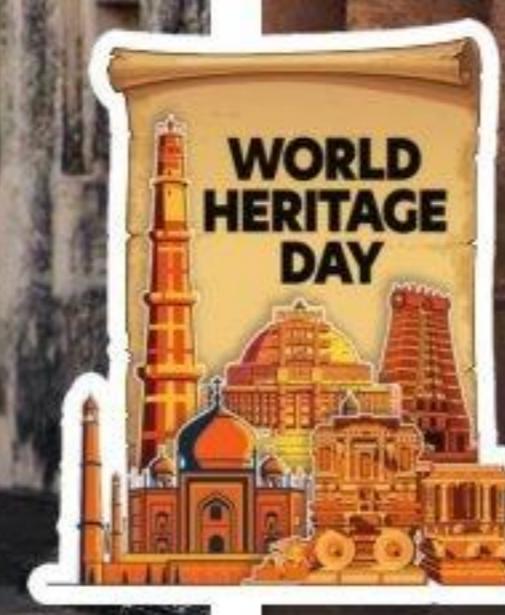
HOW HERITAGE INSPIRES THEIR WORK

"History that does not impose itself, history that celebrates the human and not the powers they had, inspires me. Nature inspires me the most," says Muzaffar, as he takes out his diary and pen

to sketch the mosque. He continues, "As an artist, I believe that time has its own creativity and sensibility. My art is a celebration of time's creativity – which you see at these monuments." For Meera, monuments have always served to be an inspiration for her designs. "The form, the symmetry or the conscious breakdown of it is fascinating. It leaves a strong impression on my sensibilities as an architect and a designer," she says.

We took a stroll around Mehrauli Archaeological Park with Meera and Muzaffar. Meera says, "This place has a lot of nostalgic value to us – having done many creative ventures here, coming here refreshed all those memories"

MUZAFFAR AND MEERA ALI



We took a stroll around Mehrauli Archaeological Park with Meera and Muzaffar. Meera says, "This place has a lot of nostalgic value to us – having done many creative ventures here, coming here refreshed all those memories"

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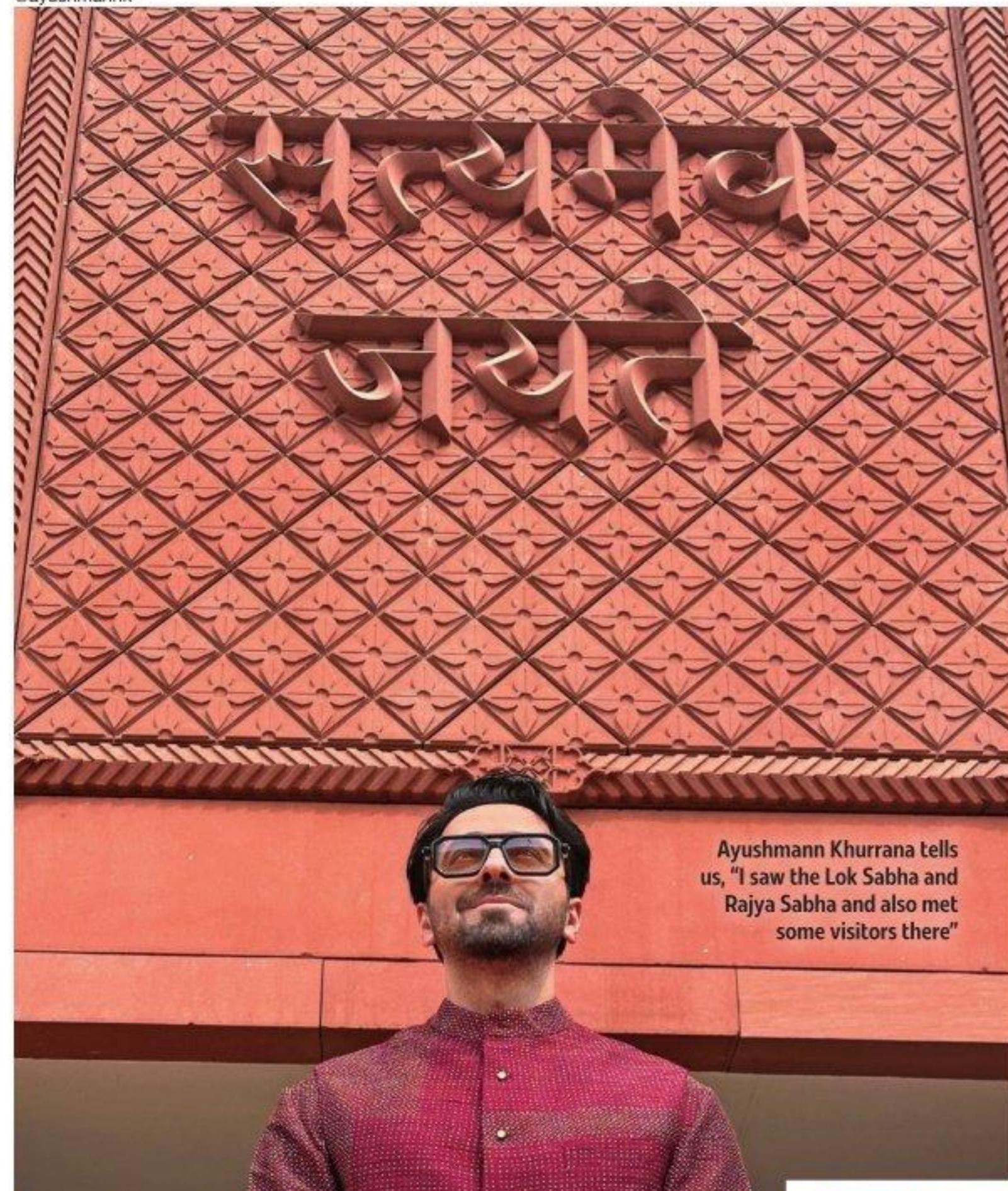
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- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

New parliament building depicts our rich heritage: Ayushmann

@ayushmann



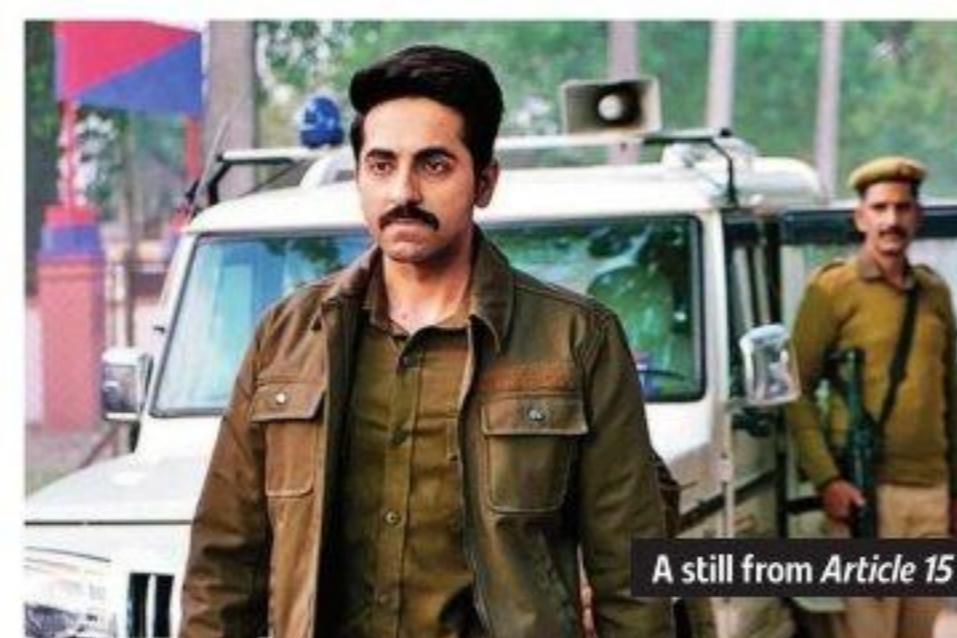
Ayushmann Khurrana tells us, "I saw the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and also met some visitors there"

CONTINUED FROM R 1

'ELEMENTS IN THE BUILDING ENCAPSULATE THE CULTURE OF ENTIRE COUNTRY'

Ayushmann says that as someone who has always been in love with architecture, it was a great experience to visit the new Parliament building with its state-of-the-art facilities. "It depicts the rich heritage of our country, and the craftsmanship is brilliant. Different elements in that building encapsulate the heritage and culture of the entire country. The detailing is very good. There is a section for Indian classical music and instruments, the theme of the Lok Sabha chamber is peacock, the national bird, the theme of the Rajya Sabha chamber is lotus, the national flower, and that of the courtyard is the Banyan, the national tree," Ayushmann tells us.

The theme of the Lok Sabha chamber is peacock, the theme of the Rajya Sabha chamber is lotus, and that of the courtyard is the Banyan, the national tree



'Article 15 was a great learning experience for me'

Before the release of his film Article 15 (2019), Ayushmann had said that he would want to visit the Parliament and see the first copy of the Constitution in the library there. While he couldn't see that this time, talking about his film, Ayushmann says, "Article 15 was about empathy and inclusivity. I have been learning something with every film of mine, and Article 15 was a great learning experience. Working on it deepened my appreciation for the principles and ideals enshrined in the Indian Constitution. It is a powerful reminder of the importance of equality and justice. Through the film, I gained a greater understanding of the complexities and challenges we face in upholding these values and it inspired me to continue advocating for social change, equality and inclusivity."

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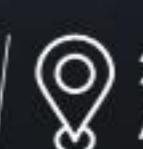
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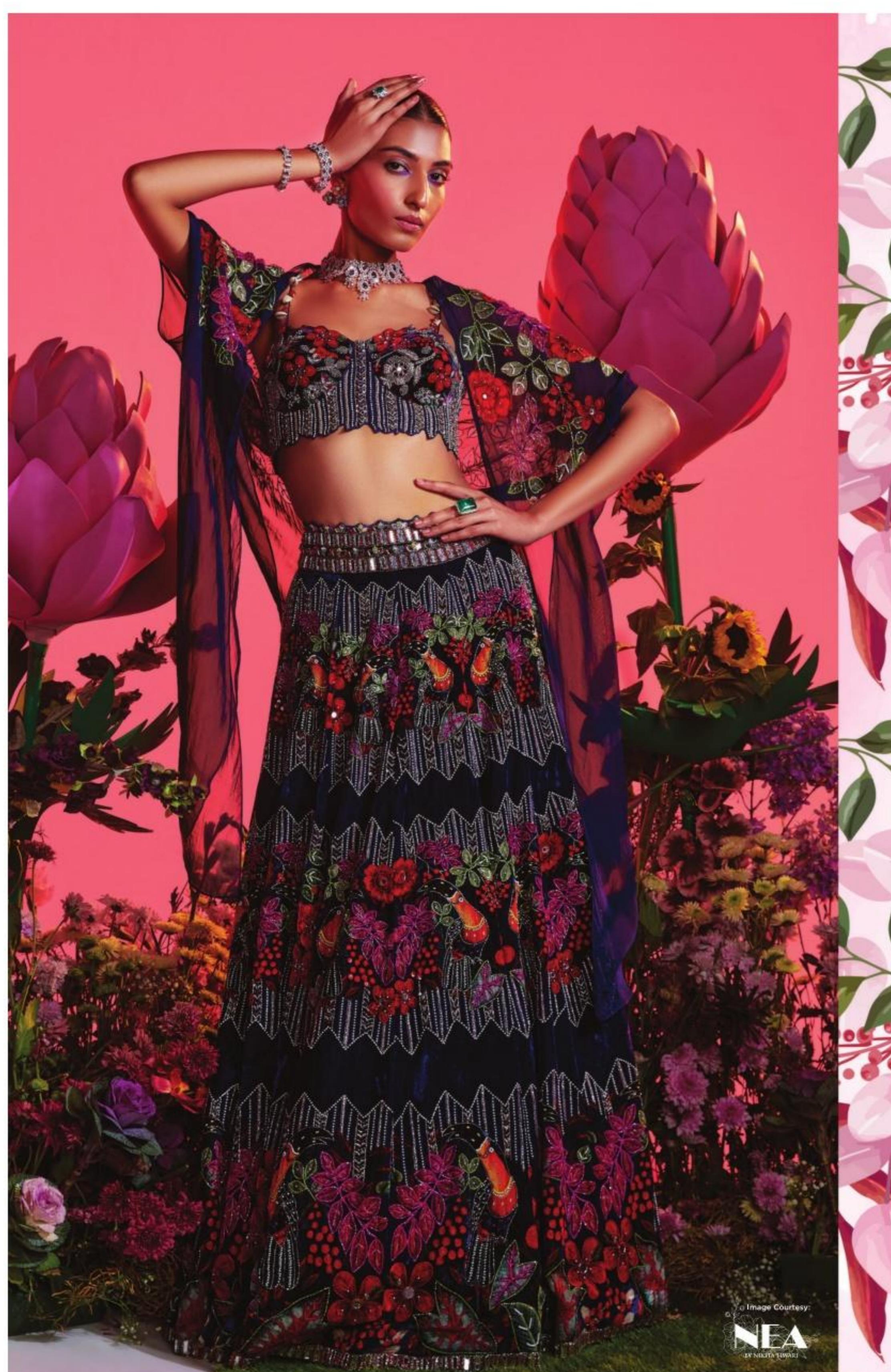
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