

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUSIVE OF DELHI TIMES (CIRCULATED ONLY IN DELHI NCR) | \*APPLICABLE ONLY ON MONTHLY PURCHASE (IN DELHI NCR)

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**Police officers in riot gear cleared a pro-Palestinian encampment early Thursday at UCLA. Prez Biden defends the right to protest but insists that 'order must prevail' as college campuses across the country face unrest over the war in Gaza, P 14**

**In a tit-for-tat move, Iran foreign minister announces sanctions on more than two dozen American and British individuals and entities for supporting Israel in its 'terrorist acts' & 'human rights violations' against Palestinian people, P 14**

**Joshua Dean, 45, a former quality auditor at Boeing supplier Spirit AeroSystems and one of the first whistleblowers to allege Spirit leadership had ignored manufacturing defects on the 737 MAX, dies after a struggle with a sudden, fast-spreading infection**

**Niclas Füllkrug scores as Borussia Dortmund gets a 1-0 win over PSG in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal, P 20**



## Mfg sector sees second fastest growth in 3.5 yrs

Riding high on robust domestic demand, activity in the manufacturing sector in April recorded the second fastest expansion in three-and-a-half years as companies reported higher intake of new orders and scaled up production, an HSBC survey showed. The manufacturing PMI, however, was a tad slower than March. **P 17**

## Proposal in Hry to define 'forests'

In what could pave way for the Aravallis to get legal protection, Haryana has come up with criteria to define a 'forest'. The forest department has proposed recognising '5 hectares or more of uninterrupted forest-like elements' as 'deemed forest'. The proposal is awaiting the state govt's nod. **P 5**

## 'Bid to undermine govt's Covid effort'

Delhi police chargesheet filed against NewsClick and its founder Prabir Purkayastha has accused him of seeking to "undermine Indian govt's efforts to develop a vaccine to combat Covid-19". Purkayastha has been booked under UAPA. NewsClick said allegations against it & Purkayastha were baseless. **P 22**

## HC: Counsel cousins looking to marry

The Gujarat high court has ordered counselling sessions by a psychologist and a genetic expert for two first cousins, aged 19 and 20, determined to get married against the wishes of the woman's family. The issue had reached the high court in March after the woman went missing. **TNN**

## Heavy rains in Dubai again, flights hit

Several flights to Dubai were cancelled and diverted Thursday, airport authorities announced, as heavy rains hit the UAE for the second time in a month. Authorities warned residents to stay home, announcing that they should work remotely, and that schools will hold classes online. **P 14**

## Maoists kill 2 bros for giving land to police

Within two days of security forces killing 10 Maoists in an encounter, the Naxals on Wednesday murdered two brothers for giving a plot of land for setting up a police camp in Bijapur in Chhattisgarh's Bastar. The duo were abducted and tried at a 'jan adalat' before being strangled and dumped. **P 9**

## Citizenship under CAA starts this mth

Home minister Amit Shah said Thursday that the process of granting citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act will begin this month. "Applications have started to come in... before the last phase (of polls), the process of giving citizenship will start," Shah told News 18 Network. **P 13**

## Padma Shri awardee turns daily wager

Honoured with the fourth-highest civilian award two years ago, Padma Shri Darshanam Mogulaiah now works as a labourer to earn two square meals, reports Pinto Deepak. Recently, the 73-year-old artiste — popular as 'Kinnera' Mogulaiah for reinventing the rare musical instrument — was spotted toiling at a construction site. He told TOI, "One of my sons suffers from seizures. For medicines alone, I need Rs 7,000 a month," the artiste, a father of nine, said. **P 9**



# BJP drops Brij Bhushan, fields his son instead

## Dinesh Singh To Be Repeated From Rae Bareilly

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Lucknow: BJP has persuaded controversial incumbent in Kaiserganj, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, to yield in favour of his younger son, Karan, while also repeating the candidature of UP minister Dinesh Pratap Singh from the Nehru-Gandhi family stronghold of Rae Bareilly.

By sidelining Brij Bhushan, the former Wrestling Federation of India chief who has been accused of sexual harassment by women wrestlers, BJP has sought to neutralise the charge that it was soft on the six-time MP. Although the leadership had made plain its intent by withholding the candidature for the



BJP had thought of Brij Bhushan's wife before opting for Karan (R)

seat, Brij Bhushan did not give up hope and had already started campaigning by taking out roadshows.

Apart from winning Kaiserganj thrice in a row (2009, 2014, 2019), Brij Bhushan has won from neighbouring constituencies Gonda (1991 and 1999) and Balrampur (2004). His wife, Ketaki, one of the options considered by BJP, had won from Gonda in 1996 while his son Prateek is an MLA. Brij Bhushan exerts clout through nearly 54 educational institutions he owns or is closely associated with. These institutes dot both sides of a roughly

### DANCE of DEMOCRACY

➤ Cong chief Mallikarjun Kharge writes to PM that his letter to NDA candidates shows desperation. BJP hits back, says Cong carrying out a 'desperate campaign of lies, misinfo and appeasement politics' | **P 11**

➤ BJP's Chevella candidate Konda Vishweshwar Reddy moves HC that EC is not acting on his complaint about a namesake contestant | **P 13**

➤ Amid row over Adhir clip, Mamata says Cong working with BJP to defeat TMC | **P 13**

➤ Cops on heels, Giridih contestant Jai Ram Mahto flees after addressing a rally | **P 13**

100km stretch of the Ayodhya-Gonda highway connecting four districts — Gonda, Balrampur, Bahraich and Shravasti.

➤Rae Bareilly to bid..., P 20

## City cops: Bomb hoax aimed to spark mass panic

A day after a bomb hoax at around 200 Delhi-NCR schools, police in its FIR stated the email threats were made with the "conspiratorial intention of creating mass panic and to disturb public". Delhi Police wrote to Interpol through CBI seeking assistance, report Raj Shekhar Jha & Abhay. Initial police investigation suggests that the sender used a temporary email to register for the account at mail.ru. **P 6**

## Now, bomb threat at Nangloi school

An email was received in the official ID of Delhi police commissioner on Thursday stating a bomb was planted at a Nangloi school. Bomb squads and cops scanned the spot, but nothing was found and the threat was declared a hoax. **TNN**

turb public". Delhi Police wrote to Interpol through CBI seeking assistance, report Raj Shekhar Jha & Abhay. Initial police investigation suggests that the sender used a temporary email to register for the account at mail.ru. **P 6**

# 52 contractual workers of DCW sacked after LG nod to WCD's proposal

New Delhi: The women and child development department (WCD) of Delhi govt has terminated the services of 52 contractual workers allegedly hired "illegally" by Delhi Commission for Women in 2016.

A senior official of the department said following complaints of irregularities in appointments, then LG Anil Bajal had formed a committee of senior officials, led by the then chief secretary to examine the issue. It found the processes followed to be "illegal" and had held the appointments to be "invalid ab initio".

"The committee had submitted its report in June 2017. It had recommended that the contractual staff engaged without having sanctioned posts and without following due procedure cannot be allowed to continue," said an official. The official added that the then DCW chairperson, Swati Maliwal, who had done the recruitments, "kept the recommendations of the committee in abeyance". "The same could be moved by WCD only upon her demitting office recently," the official said. **TNN**

## Revoke 'Tughlaqi' order, says Maliwal

Former DCW chief and AAP RSP MP Swati Maliwal termed the LG's move "anti-woman and political". "He has issued a Tughlaqi order," she said, and demanded its revocation to ensure the panel could function properly. "If they have anything against me, let them put ED, CBI behind me. Let them put me in jail," she said, and asked why the LG was silent for eight years if DCW was doing "illegal work". **P 2**

wal, who had done the recruitments, "kept the recommendations of the committee in abeyance". "The same could be moved by WCD only upon her demitting office recently," the official said. **TNN**

➤ 'Large irregularities', P 2

# Xenophobia causing China, Japan & India's 'economic woes': Biden

Washington: President Joe Biden has called Japan and India "xenophobic" countries that do not welcome immigrants, lumping the two with adversaries China and Russia as he tried to explain their economic



► 'Biased': MEA on US report on religious freedom, P 22

► At UN, India supports full membership for Palestine, P 22

circumstances and contrasted the four with the US on immigration.

The US President made the controversial remark at a campaign fundraising event Wednesday evening. There was no immediate reaction from either the Japanese or Indian governments. **AGENCIES**

► 'Broader point', P 14

## MEA protests China's road in Shaksgam Valley

New Delhi: India has registered a protest with Beijing for constructing a road in the Shaksgam Valley, which was ceded to China by Pakistan in 1963, asserting it is a part of Indian territory. The MEA said India has never accepted the so-called China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963 through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China, and India has consistently conveyed its rejection of the same. "We have registered our protest with the Chinese side against illegal attempts to alter facts on the ground," MEA said. **TNN**

► 'Reserve right...', P 16

# Enrolling voters for post-poll benefits is bribery, says EC

New Delhi: EC Thursday directed all political parties, their members and agents to immediately stop enrolling or registering voters for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes in the guise of surveys. The move came ahead of the third phase of Lok Sabha elections on May 7.

Taking note of instances of parties seeking details of

► Pandian's bureaucrat wife shunted out, P 13

voters, EC said it has taken a "serious view of the corrupt practice of bribery" under Representation of the People Act. Such activities "blur the lines between legitimate surveys & partisan efforts to register individuals for post-election beneficiary-oriented schemes", it said. **TNN**

► 'Quid pro quo', P 20

# 13-year-old defies 45 fractures, fate to script dream TT tale

Shiva.Gundra@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: Even before she was born, scans showed several 'bends' in Vijaya Deepika Gangapatnam's bones. Her father says the 13-year-old is like "glass" because of Brittle Bone Disease that has caused 45 fractures till now. Yet, her life seems to have more steel than glass as she turns the tables on fate to become a star para table tennis player. She was the youngest to win a medal at the UTT Para Table Tennis National Championship in Indore this March. In fact, the Secunderabad girl clinched silver in singles and bronze in doubles. The bespectacled home-schooled girl was drawn to the

## BONES OF 'GLASS', GIRL OF STEEL

➤ Vijaya suffers from Brittle Bone Disease. So a fall for her doesn't result in just a bruise, but a fracture

➤ Her bones snapped even during her birth. She's had 45 fractures, needing hip & knee surgeries

➤ The pain is unbearable each time and stays for several days. 'I rest & realise I must be more careful,' she says

➤ At 13, she was the youngest medallist at UTT para table tennis national championships in Indore this March

sport after seeing elder brother Vijaytej (20) playing tennis and travelling for tournaments. But given her condition — unlike other teenagers her age, a fall for Vijaya doesn't me-



Vijaya Deepika Gangapatnam's dream is to win a Paralympic medal

➤ 'Bid to win Para medal', P 20

## Amid suspense, Rahul veering towards fighting from Rae Bareilly

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Rahul Gandhi is likely to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Rae Bareilly, a possible decision that may enthrone Congress and its allies in UP alike. The Wayanad MP was veering towards the decision late Thursday night, though there was no formal announcement.

If Rahul does agree, he will file his papers on Friday, the last day of nomination. In that case, constituency manager and Gandhi family loyalist K.L. Sharma is likely to file his nomination from Amethi. Both seats go to polls on May 20 in the fifth round of the seven-phase general elections.

The Gandhi scion has been hesitant about contesting from a second seat after Wayanad, and is said to have had a rethink after agreeing on Thursday. But the Congress top brass apparently talked him out of his reluctance.

If Rahul is fielded from Rae Bareilly instead of Amethi, which he represented from 2004 to 2019 before losing to Smriti Irani, a family loyalist or old constituency manager is expected to contest from Amethi. Initially, there was talk about Priyanka Gandhi Vadra contesting from one of the seats.

Rae Bareilly has been the borough closely identified with the family. While Feroz Gandhi represented it 1952-57, Indira Gandhi was MP from there from 1967 to 1984. Sonia Gandhi was MP from 2004 to 2024.

►Wayanad factor, P 20

# Call for 'vote jihad' insult to democracy, Constitution: PM

## 'Pak Wants Rahul As PM So India Gets Weak Govt'

Anand/Rajkot: PM Modi Thursday slammed an INDIA bloc constituent's call for "vote jihad" as "an insult to democracy and Constitution".

The PM said he found the remark of Maria Alam, SP candidate and niece of Congress veteran Salman Khurshid, at a rally in UP all the more shocking as it came "from a person belonging to an educated Muslim family and not someone who studied in a madrasa".

During his Gujarat campaign, the PM also picked on a Pakistan ex-minister's praise for Rahul Gandhi on X as a reflection of the neighbour's

# Raj Bhavan staffer accuses Bengal gov of molestation

Kolkata: A Raj Bhavan employee on Thursday evening filed a complaint of molestation against Bengal governor C V Ananda Bose, introducing an element of the unprecedented in state politics and pitting the Trinamool govt and the governor's office in direct conflict in the middle of a seven-phase election season, report Tamaghna Banerjee and Dwaipayan Ghosh.

The woman, Raj Bhavan insiders said, works in the telephone room and stays at the quarters on campus. She went to Raj Bhavan police outpost before 7pm Thursday, from

## My father inherited martyrdom: Priyanka

When Modi ji calls my father (Rajiv Gandhi) a 'traitor', he will never realise that my father did not get rich and wealth as inheritance, he inherited martyrdom," Priyanka Gandhi said at a rally in MP on Thursday while reacting to Modi's accusation that the ex-PM had "changed a law to take inheritance from his mother." **P 11**

"desperation to see the shehzada become the next PM so that India gets a weak govt".

"Pakistan is weeping because Congress is dying here," the PM said of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Fawad Hussain Chaudhry sharing a video of the Wayanad MP & commenting, "Rahul on fire..." **TNN**

► 'Creating rift', P 11

Truth shall triumph. I refuse to be cowed down by engineered narratives. If anybody wants some election benefits by maligning me, God bless them. But they cannot stop my fight against corruption and violence in Bengal

— WB governor CV Ananda Bose

where she was taken to Hare Street PS. PM Modi is staying the night at Raj Bhavan and is expected to leave for campaigning in the morning.

► 'Won't be cowed', P 15

## SIT to charge Prajwal with rape as 2nd woman alleges assault

Bengaluru: The alleged sexual harassment and sleaze videos case against former PM HD Deve Gowda's grandson, Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, took a grave turn on Thursday with another woman alleging she also was sexually assaulted by him, reports Chaitanya Swamy.

Based on her statement, an SIT probing the case has been allowed to invoke rape charges against him under IPC Section 376. Karnataka home minister G Paramesh-



## JD(S) MP didn't seek nod for trip to Germany: MEA

JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna did not seek political clearance from the ministry for his trip to Germany, said MEA on Thursday and confirmed he had travelled on a diplomatic passport. While MEA had not issued any visa note for him, a reciprocal pact between two sides allows all Indian diplomatic passport holders to visit Germany for 3 months without a visa. **P 9**

wara said Prajwal was "able to leave the country only because of the diplomatic passport issued to him by the Centre". He said CM Siddaramaiah has written to Centre seeking the revocation of his diplomatic passport.

Calling Prajwal a "mass rapists", Rahul Gandhi alleged he had "raped 400 women" and accused PM Modi of endorsing him by seeking votes for him.

► Moves court, P 16

## A TOOFANI FLIGHT TO THE WEST INDIES IS TAKING OFF!

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Rain likely tomorrow, but mercury may touch 40 degrees Celsius | 5

35.5°

MAXIMUM

19.3°

MINIMUM

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 38°C and 20°C

SUNSET 6.58PM (FRI)

SUNRISE 5.38AM (SAT)

MOONSET 1.52PM (FRI)

MOONRISE 3.02AM (SAT)



Check, sanitise and neutralise: How Delhi bomb squads keep you safe | 6

19.6

AQI IN DELHI ON THURSDAY (MODERATE CATEGORY)

DJB's peak summer challenge: Adequate water for schools | 6



# Revoke Order, Says Maliwal; BJP Alleges Corruption

## Removal Of Contract Staff Anti-Woman Move: DCW Ex-Chief

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Former DCW chief and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Thursday demanded revocation of the order that has led to the removal of all contractual staff from the commission.

Maliwal, who held a press conference outside DCW's office, while being surrounded by people working there, said: "I want to tell people that currently, there are 90 people in DCW, of which only 8 are regular staff and the rest 82 are contractual. So, if you remove all these workers, how will DCW run its 181 helpline? How will we run the rape crisis intervention, the mahila panchayat cell? Almost every day, DCW gets almost 500 women who seek help. How will only a staff of eight be able to do this work?" she asked.

The women and child development (WCD) department has given different figures of the contractual hands who were removed. It said that 52 have been sacked. Maliwal said that among those who had lost their jobs were survivors of hate crime, acid attacks, domestic violence and orphans living in shelter homes.

She said the order was an "anti-woman, political move".

In the last eight years, DCW has handled over 1.70,000 cases, and the 181 helpline has taken over 40 lakh distress calls. Over 60,000 sexual assault survivors were counselled through the crisis intervention centre, Maliwal said.

Listing several other figures about DCW's work, she said the commission needed funds and staff. "Withdraw the order to make sure that the commission can function properly. If they have anything against me, let them put ED, CBI behind me. Let them put me in jail. But I will not



Sanjeev Rastogi

### MALIWAL SAYS

**If you remove all these workers, how will DCW run its 181 helpline? How will we run the rape crisis intervention, the mahila panchayat cell? How will only a staff of eight be able to do this work?**

allow them to play with the safety and security of women and girls of the capital," she said.

When Maliwal was asked if the appointments were indeed "illegal", she said that despite writing to the then LG several times for approval to hire more staff in DCW, there was no response and she was forced to engage contractual workers for short durations of three months

multiple times. "While the salaries of such workers were stopped by administrative officials, some of them moved the high court for relief. "There were orders from high court to release their salaries till they had been engaged," she said.

There have been allegations against Maliwal of sitting on a report that recommended the removal of the contractual workers. On Thursday, Maliwal said the WCD department did not have the guts to act since they knew there was an authority sitting at the top of DCW who would not allow it to happen. "If we had removed the contractual staff, our work would have been affected. They would have then stopped the funding, saying the commission does nothing," she said.

WCD minister Atishi wrote on X that the BJP-led central govt gives (election) tickets to rapists and ruins the commission that fights for the rights of victimised, helpless women."

## 'Panel found large-scale irregularities in DCW'

► Continued from P1

The official added that lieutenant governor also approved the proposal moved by the department to remove the contractual workers.

According to the order issued by the WCD department on April 29, DCW had created 223 additional posts in Sept 2016 and appointed contractual staff on some of these positions. Since the commission gets a grant-in-aid from Delhi govt, the WCD department informed it through its member-secretary that any act that entailed an additional financial liability for the govt without the approval of the administrative, finance and planning departments and the competent authority, LG, was not permitted, the order stated.

It added that the member-secretary had written to the then LG in Nov 2016 pointing out various inadequacies and irregularities in the functioning of the commission and stopped the salaries of the contractual staff.

Ruling on the petition of one of the affected contractual workers, the high court directed govt to release the salaries. The then lieutenant governor, however, on the basis of an audit conducted in Dec 2016 by the office of principal accountant general (audit); a special audit con-

ducted by Delhi govt's directorate of audit; and a case registered by anti-corruption branch constituted a committee in Feb 2017 to examine the "illegal" appointments and other alleged irregularities.

The committee, headed by the then chief secretary, and having principal secretary (finance), secretary (law and justice) and secretary (WCD) as members, observed there were large-scale administrative and financial irregularities and violations in the functioning of DCW, including irregular appointments, unauthorised engagement of manpower, unauthorised implementation of projects and extending of undue benefits to private organisations.

"Taking cognisance of all these irregularities and illegalities made by DCW, LG has approved the proposal of the department that the appointments of contractual staff engaged in DCW without having sanctioned posts and without following due procedures is void ab initio and the same cannot be allowed to continue in DCW," the order read.

"The approval of govt is hereby conveyed to DCW to discontinue the services of all contractual staff with immediate effect... (appointed) at any point of time by going beyond its delegated power and without following various procedures laid down," the order stated.

## BJP: Why did Maliwal not try to get new posts sanctioned in 8 years?

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva on Thursday said that the unconstitutional, anarchic working style of the entire AAP govt, especially Swati Maliwal, the former chairperson of Delhi Commission for Women, was the cause behind the removal of contractual hands of DCW.

"It is shocking to see Maliwal, who was chairperson for eight years, claiming that she had to keep contractual employees... as there were no regular posts," he said. "We can understand Maliwal needed staff, but can she explain why she never tried to get new posts sanctioned?" he asked.

He alleged that Maliwal had treated DCW as her personal fiefdom and kept volunteers of her NGOs, mostly from other states, for contractual jobs without following procedures, like Arvind Kejriwal did while employing volunteers in Delhi govt.

"Our sources tell us that several palms got greased," he said. "Without following any procedure, contractual jobs were doled out and, today, when they are being removed, AAP leaders are playing their old blame game," Sachdeva said. "There is no department left where AAP leaders have not engaged in corruption."

BJP leader Praveen Shankar Kapoor said: "This is AAP's old habit of blaming the LG and central govt for everything. It cannot be that you will keep practising corruption and there will be no action." He said that it was "sad to see that the party, which came to power on the anti-corruption plank, is engaged in corruption in every department".

Kapoor said that the people of Delhi would teach AAP a lesson in this election. "People are seeing how a party that used to speak against corruption is now being reprimanded every day by courts for their functioning."

# Pathak to lead AAP panel to coordinate with Cong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** AAP has formed a co-ordination committee, with MLA **Durgesh Pathak** as the state-level coordinator, to work better with INDIA bloc partner Congress.

The party has also appointed its functionaries for co-ordination in each of the seven parliamentary constituencies in Delhi. While AAP is contesting four seats in the capital — East, New Delhi, South and West, Congress is fighting in the remaining three — North East, North West and Chandni Chowk. Delhi votes on May 25 in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

Pathak said, "People are upset with BJP as their MPs did not work in their area. People of Delhi have seen AAP work in Delhi and we will ensure that there is perfect vote transfer. INDIA bloc candidates

will win all seven seats of Delhi."

While the responsibility for the New Delhi Lok Sabha constituency has been given to MLA Rajesh Gupta, West Delhi constituency will be looked after by MLA Naresh Balyan and South Delhi by MLA Dinesh Mohaniya.



AAP functionary Pawan Sharma has been appointed coordinator for Chandni Chowk constituency and MLA Mukesh Ahlawat is going to handle North West Delhi. MLA Sanjeev Jha will take care of North East Delhi and MLA Dilip Pandey of East Delhi.

Pathak said, "There is no point voting for BJP candidate, they disappear after winning election. Delhi govt is doing great work, that is why BJP's central government is showing us fear of Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation."

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Days after senior members of Congress and Aam Aadmi Party held a meeting to plan a joint campaign strategy for Delhi and Haryana, the state unit functionaries of the two parties met on Thursday and discussed "strategic coordination" on ground for the North East Delhi candidate, Kanhaiya Kumar.

Kanhaiya, who is being portrayed as an INDIA bloc candidate, along with Delhi Congress' election management and co-ordination committee chairman Subhash Chopra and former minister Narender Nath called on AAP's Delhi state convener Gopal Rai for their first joint meeting for the constituency.

Several AAP MLAs, who were also part of the meeting, promised to throw their weight behind Kanhaiya, who is fighting his first election in the capital. A former president of JNU Students Union, Kanhaiya is pitted against BJP's Manoj Tiwari who won the last two



POLITICAL BONHOMIE: Functionaries of AAP and Congress come together

Lok Sabha elections.

Congress' Chandni Chowk candidate Jai Prakash Agarwal also held a meeting in Model Town area, which was attended by AAP MLA Akhilesh Pati Tripathi and municipal councillors of the area. Constituents of opposition

parties' INDIA bloc, Congress and AAP have joined hands in Delhi, Haryana and Gujarat to prevent the splitting of the non-BJP votes. Of seven seats in Delhi, AAP is contesting four and Congress three. In Haryana, AAP is contesting on one of 10 seats while it has

fielded its candidates on two seats in Gujarat. The two parties, however, are fighting against each other in Punjab.

Kanhaiya was the first Congress candidate in the city who not only gave as much space to the photograph of AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal as his own party leader Rahul Gandhi but also called on chief minister's wife Sunita Kejriwal at her residence to convey that they were "united in the fight to save the democracy". The support and coordination between the two parties was evident at the inauguration of the election office of Kanhaiya last week when a large number of AAP workers, wearing white caps and having yellow-blue stole around their necks, attended the event.

Agarwal, too, has been proactive in seeking support of AAP legislators who won from assembly seats falling in Chandni Chowk constituency in his election campaign and has individually met each one of them in the last few days.

Agarwal met AAP's leader of

the house in MCD, Mukesh Goyal, at his residence and discussed the elections and had a meeting with minister Imran Hussain in Ballimaran, which was followed by similar meetings in Shalimar Bagh and Model Town assembly constituencies.

"Both Congress and Aam Aadmi Party have resolved to work with complete coordination and

**Several AAP MLAs, who were part of the meeting, promised to throw their weight behind Congress candidate Kanhaiya**

understanding in Lok Sabha elections in Delhi to ensure the victory of all the seven candidates." Delhi Congress' communications in charge Anil Bharadwaj said. "Both the parties will announce one observer each in all constituencies to ensure that the election campaigns are held in a smooth and effective manner. A meeting of the co-ordination committee will be held on Friday to draw up a roadmap for the joint campaigns," he added.

## Gahlot campaigns for S Delhi candidate, says BJP MP did nothing

Piyal Bhattacharjee



GEARED UP FOR THE POLLS: Minister Kailash Gahlot meets local AAP functionaries and supporters in Lado Sarai on Thursday

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Nestled among the predominantly four-storey houses of Lado Sarai, an urban village in South Delhi, is the panchayat room of the village that can accommodate about 200-250 people.

Women sat in the front rows. Elderly men, mostly from the Jat community, filled the seats at the back.

Six to seven chairs were in front of this crowd, laid out for minister Kailash Gahlot, AAP's South Delhi candidate Sahi Ram, MLA Naresh Yadav and some councillors.

Gahlot, campaigning for Sahi Ram, alleged that "the earlier MP did no work. That is why BJP had to change its candidate. If Delhiites strengthen CM Kejriwal at the Centre, work will be better." The sitting MP is BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri. BJP has fielded Ramvir Singh Bidhuri this time.

Gahlot said that "govts are being broken by arresting opposition leaders. The opposition is being eliminated in the entire country. Those who speak against BJP are picked up by ED-CBI."

Candidate Sahi Ram said:

"I got many people treated under the Farishtey Scheme. This has been due to the AAP scheme where we keep people first."

He pointed to price rise. "See how gas cylinders prices have increased, but if you complain about it, they (BJP) will say you are deshdrohi (anti-national)."

Lado Sarai is dominated by Jats, mostly landowners. The village is near IIT, JNU, AIIMS and several coaching institutes in nearby Kulu Sarai. It has become a choice for those looking for cheaper housing. This has led to Jats being outnumbered by new settlers. For some, a Jat not being given a ticket by the INDIA alliance was a concern. Bablu Sejwal said: "Last time, they gave the ticket to Vijender Singh. This time we don't have any representation."

But Paramjeet Sejwal, another Jat resident, pointed out that "Delhi politics has changed a lot in the past decade... We have an MLA from the Yadav community winning twice and he got a lead from this village."

He pointed out that although the village had produced "Olympic-level swimmers", there was no sports facility.

TOI

DOES BETTER ACCESS TO POLLING BOOTHS MEAN BETTER VOTER TURNOUT?

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GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA 2024-NCT OF DELHI  
Kind Attention: Media Persons of Delhi  
(To whom authorization letter have been issued by the Election Commission of India)

The Election Commission of India, in exercise of powers under Section 60 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 has notified "media persons of Delhi to whom authorization letter have been issued to cover polling day activities", as a class of persons to give vote by Postal Ballot under the category of essential services. Accordingly, such media persons who are electors of Delhi are entitled to vote through Postal Ballot in the ensuing General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 in NCT of Delhi, provided they exercise such option.

It is informed that those media persons who opt for this facility of Postal Ballot, may apply in Form-12D through Nodal Officer Sh. Harish Kumar Sharma, Section Officer, Directorate of Information & Publicity, GNCTD, Block No. IX, Old Sectt., Delhi-110054 latest by 07.05.2024. The Form-12D may be obtained from the Nodal Officer or it can be downloaded from website of CEO, Delhi i.e. [www.ceodelhi.gov.in](http://www.ceodelhi.gov.in).

The Form-12D submitted by such media persons, after verification and certification by the Nodal Officer (DIP), will be forwarded to the Returning Officers of the Parliamentary Constituencies concerned. The Returning Officer after verifying the details will send the list of eligible electors to the Nodal Officer. Each Returning Officer will set up a Postal Voting Centre (PVC) and communicate the details i.e. **Venue, Date and Time** for casting of Postal Ballot to the Nodal Officer (DIP) for further dissemination to such eligible media persons.

It is also to inform that the media persons who opt to vote by Postal Ballot under the category of Absentee Voters on Essential Services (AVES) can cast their vote **only in the Postal Voting Centre (PVC)** being set up by the Returning Officers and there is no facility for sending postal ballot by post.

For further details, the instruction of the Election Commission of India dated 31.10.2023 available on the website of CEO, Delhi i.e. [www.ceodelhi.gov.in](http://www.ceodelhi.gov.in) may be referred.

Sd/-  
(RAJESH KUMAR)  
Special CEO, Delhi

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LOK SABHA ELECTION 2024

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0032/24-25



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FOR THESE TWO CANDIDATES, PM MODI SEEMS TO BE THE FOCAL POINT: ONE SEEKS A VOTE AGAINST HIM, OTHER FOR HIM

# BJP Has Not Done Any I Do Not Matter, People Work In 5 Yrs: Udit Raj Want Modi: Chandoliya

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

Udit Raj, a former MP who joined Congress in 2019 after being denied a ticket by BJP, found himself in the eye of a storm with Arvinder Singh Lovely citing his selection for the North West Delhi seat as one of the reasons for quitting as the party's Delhi unit president. Excerpts from an interview:

## What are the five electoral issues in your constituency?

When I was MP of North West Delhi earlier, there was a demand for Delhi Metro to be extended to Narela. I sanctioned it, but my successor did nothing about it. There is now a demand for the train service to reach Bawana and Qutubgarh, which I plan to fulfil. In 2018, the Mundka Ghewra, Kirari and Narela crossings remained shut for long periods. I had obtained approval for an overbridge but that too hasn't been constructed. Then, Kirari remains submerged in water and the roads are not in good condition. There is also a need for more colleges.

## You are talking about local issues, but AAP is asking for votes based on the CM's arrest and BJP on Modi's image. Haven't local problems taken a backseat?

The PM is not asking for votes based on issues. He is asking for votes based on Hindu-Muslim issues and mangalsutra. Kejriwal asks for votes based on his work of making electricity cheaper, laying sewer lines and starting mohalla clinics. Modiji did not fulfil any promises, whether it was smart cities or bringing back black money from abroad. And now he says Congress is talking of wealth redistribution. Is it possible to take money from one and give it to another?

## The declaration of your name created controversy. Arvinder Singh Lovely, while resigning, said the Congress cadre was against your candidature.

I am a mass leader. When I was MP in 2014-2019, I adopted four villages. I

Rajesh Mehta



### UDIT RAJ SAYS

Dialogue process is on. There is full cooperation from AAP, which has a disciplined cadre. We will win all seven seats

was top performer as MP in different surveys. Deepak Babaria (AICC general secretary in charge of Delhi) is the right man for the capital. A person with a history of leaving Congress, then returning and again damaging the party should keep quiet.

## Won't the resignation of the state president at this juncture affect the campaign?

Last month, the state president wasn't even able to book advertisements; the district presidents were against him. Is this the time for the state president to blackmail the party? Hats off to Babaria for accepting the resignation. Lovely and some Congress leaders used to sit with a BJP leader and make plans to sabotage our party.

## What is your opinion about your rival candidate?

His prospects have been worse-

ned by the last BJP MP (Hans Raj Hans) not doing any work in five areas. You will, however, meet numerous people who will tell you about the work I did in the constituency.

## How do you coordinate with AAP and how does joint campaigning work?

By now, coordination committees and block-level committees should have been formed, but Lovely tried to sabotage the campaign by deliberately not doing so. They wanted to paralyse Congress from within. Now a dialogue process is on. There is full cooperation from AAP, which has a disciplined cadre. We will win all seven seats.

## What do you think of so many leaders leaving the Congress in Delhi?

There was a time when anyone nominated by Congress won because it was a powerful party. After winning, even mediocre individuals became powerful. They built big houses and businesses all because of the party. But now when the party needs them, they blackmail the high command. If the opportunists exit, the party will be strong again.

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

BJP has chosen former councillor and mayor Yogender Chandoliya to replace high-profile Hans Raj Hans from the North West Delhi constituency this election. Chandoliya, a long-time party worker, is banking on PM Narendra Modi's image and the work done by central govt to retain the seat for his party. Excerpts from an interview:

## What are the electoral issues in your constituency?

The voters in North West Delhi want Delhi Metro connectivity to be extended to Narela and from Badli to Siraspur up to Bawana and Auchandi. I will ensure the rail network reaches Narela and Palla. Another issue is Kirari having no outflow for rainwater or sewage. There have even been deaths due to drowning there. There's also the issue of the MLA local area development funds that no one knows where it has been used. Then there are demands for railway overbridges in different locations and for women's colleges. A sports university was announced, but even the building is not ready, so I have to pursue the matter. People in the village also want the revival of waterbodies, which are in a bad condition.

## Outgoing MP Hans Raj Hans has been criticised for not being visible in the past five years. Are you facing a backlash?

Had the MP been a political person, then he would not have had a problem. There are issues, of course, but when I visit the village, people tell me they will vote for Modiji. I do not matter in this election, Narendra Modi does.

## Why did the party decide not to renominate six of Delhi's seven MPs?

BJP follows a process. There is no taint on the leaders who have not been given a ticket again. Peo-

Sanjeev Rastogi



### CHANDOLIYA SAYS

If he (Udit Raj) had worked when he was BJP MP, the party would have retained him. But Modiji wants people who work

ple who did not get nominated have been given big responsibilities. Ramesh Bidhuri is working in UP, Parvash Verma in Rajasthan, Hans Raj Hansji is contesting from Faridkot in Punjab. There were many aspirants, but when I got the ticket did you see any protests? In Congress, the whole state unit was against the candidacies of Udit Raj and Kanhaiya Kumar. This proves the election is happening in Modi's name and it doesn't matter who is contesting.

## How do you view your Congress opponent?

If he had worked when he was BJP MP, the party would have retained him. But Modiji wants people who work. Udit Raj's ideology changed when he was with BJP. It's good to be an Ambedkarite, it's good to talk about Dalits. But a caste-

ist agenda creates a gap in society.

## AAP's main issue is the chief minister's arrest while you are saying this election is to retain Modi as PM. Aren't constituency issues being underplayed then?

These are national elections, not municipal or assembly polls.

## You have been a three-time co-ordinator and a mayor and have been in politics for a long time. How have elections changed over the years?

I rose through the ranks, starting at the bottom. I was appointed to several posts. In 1993, when OP Kohli was BJP Delhi president, I was in his team as secretary. I have also been in the party's Yuva Morcha and SC Morcha. So, I have learned how to coordinate with party workers. We all know how to get work in the system. We have mandal pramukhs and shakti kendra pramukhs. We have a well-oiled machinery that neither AAP nor Congress does. Half the election is fought on the table by planning and half on the ground. If one only fights with the focus on one element, then the contest is not properly fought.

## As amenities go south, infra issues take centre stage

Priyangi Agarwal &amp; Ridhima Gupta | TNN

New Delhi: For most people, the South Delhi parliamentary constituency appears a posh expanse. In reality, except for a few upscale areas, the constituency is dotted with urban villages, unauthorised colonies, slums, resettlement colonies and a rural belt near the Haryana border.

The battle here between BJP's Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and AAP's Sahi Ram is certain to be over as varied issues as the constituency's demography. Of the 22.8 lakh voters, 31.7% are OBCs, 16.6% SCs, 8.9% Gujjars, 7.7% Brahmins and 7%, Muslims. Their demands related to a range of subjects, from road congestion and water supply to infrastructure development, govt subsidies and protection from demolitions.

For Anantmal Potdar, 61, who has lived in Saket for 35 years now, civic amenities are top of the mind. "Saket was plotted for single houses, but four-storey buildings have come up. And though the population has increased massively, the basic amenities remain the same," Potdar noted. "The drainage system and sewage are old and not adequate for today's needs."

Rakesh Dabas, president of the Federation of RWAs Saket, added that their long-pending demand for a flyover to decongest the roads and community centre remained unfulfilled. "Political parties hardly work for the middle class. They think we don't go out and vote," he said.

In Vasant Kunj, voters are aggrieved about poor infrastructure and road congestion. Akhil Kumar, 37, of Sector D, Vasant Kunj, who travels to the north for work every day, frets about the traffic inconvenience. "The city traffic seems to be worsening. This is one of the key urban issues that govt has to address," Kumar said. People of Chhatrapur too raised the matter of road congestion. Police data in 2022 had located the most congestion points in the city in South district (14), followed by East (10), West (10) and North districts.

In the many informal colonies in the constituency, both AAP and BJP are promising regularisation as well as civic amenities. Deepshika Chauhan, who resides in Mehrauli village just a short distance

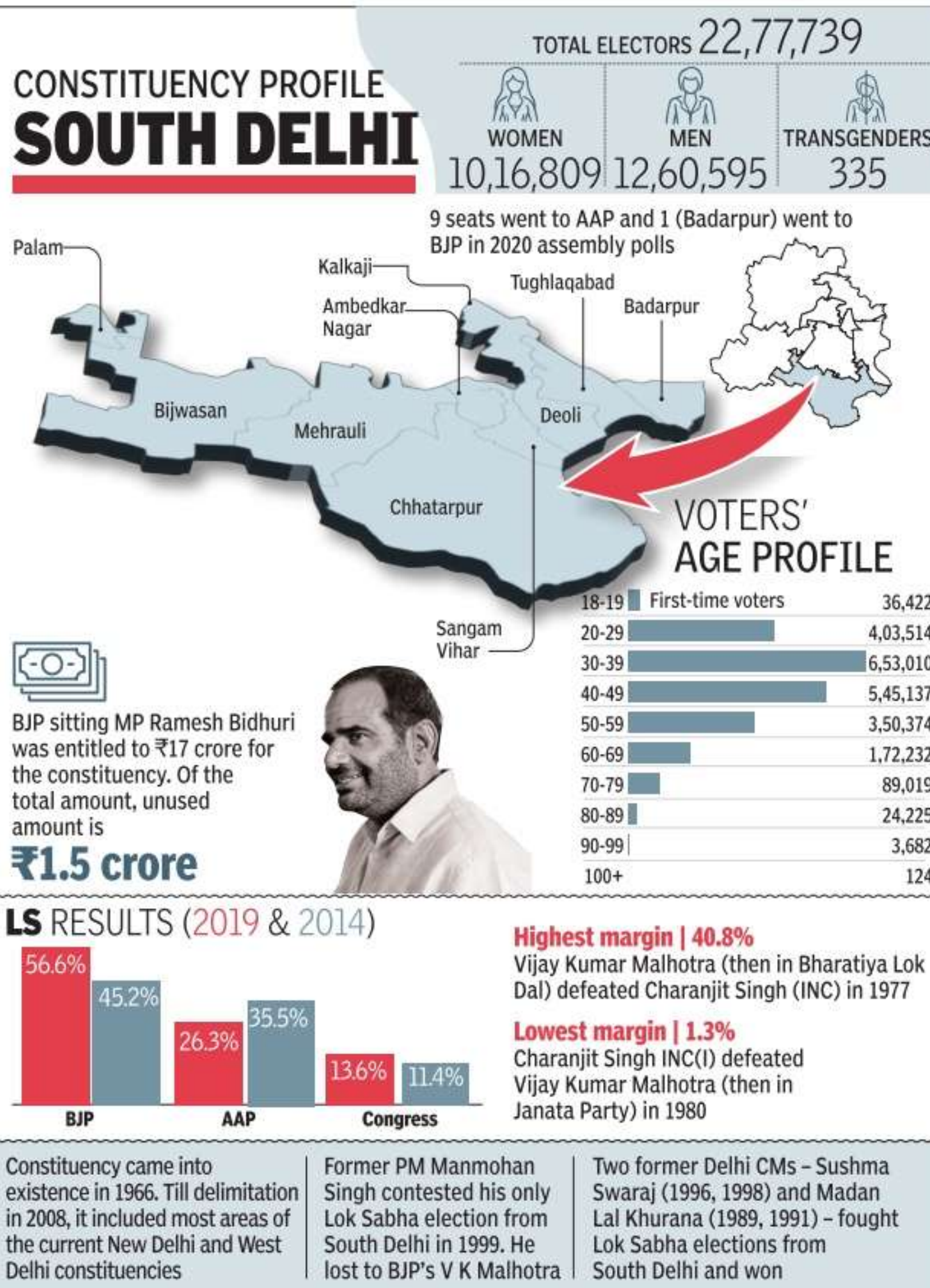
from the area's uber luxury retail stretch, said, "The AAP govt has repaired roads here and made electricity and bus rides free." Bus driver Babu Ram interjected with "Everyone knows Modi is the only fit candidate for PM." This sharp division in opinion is in evidence everywhere.

While confectioner Kishan Kant, 55, is sure that "jitegi toh BJP hi" due to Modi and Hardeep Singh Bhalla, president, Western Avenue RWA, Sainik Farms, is assured that BJP candidate Ramvir Singh Bidhuri will resolve their water, drainage, road maintenance and sanitation issues, Vandana, a domestic worker in Jaitpur, Badarpur, asserted, "I have been listening to such promises for two decades. Nothing has changed." Praveen Kumar at Sangam Vihar declared he would vote for the party that would give the locality water connections, sewer lines and roads.

At Lado Sarai, originally a Jat village, there are many Poorvanchali workers and students. Rajneesh, a sales executive for a private company, said, "People who come from outside Delhi and live on rent here are ignored by the state and central govt. In the last polls, AAP promised us prepaid electricity meters without the need of an NOC from the landlord, but nothing has happened." Paramjeet Sejwal complained about the lack of parking space.

The slums of Kalkaji—JJ Camp, Gandhi Camp, Nehru Camp, Bhoomiheen Camp, Navjeevan Camp and Karpori Thakur Camp—have different needs. As Bobby, 32, who has grown up in Bhoomiheen Camp, says, "Life in the slums means fighting for house, water and hygiene. Here, we are scared that if BJP comes to power, our houses will be demolished like half of the Bhoomiheen Camp was. Thanks are due to AAP which gave us free electricity and better education in the govt school for my kid." There is a similar anxiety in Tughlaqabad, where in May last year, large-scale demolitions had rendered hundreds of slum dwellers homeless.

In the high-rise Himgiri apartments nearby, homemaker Himani Dutta, 35, has another worry. "While the city has seen good development, there is a lot of work to be done in tackling air pollution," she said.



### KEY ISSUES



#### Modi factor vs Kejriwal's work

The constituency, which has been a BJP winning ground for the last two consecutive Lok Sabha elections, is likely to witness a balanced fight, with a section of voters choosing BJP because of the Modi factor, while the others, mostly from economically weaker sections, likely to opt for AAP for its freebie policy



#### WATER

In South Delhi, water still remains a major woe among voters. While the issue mostly plagues unauthorised residential areas, including JJ camps, other upscale areas of the constituency also face the crisis



#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Among voters in the constituency, many highlighted the lack of basic civic amenities that they don't get due to the unauthorised status of their colonies. Other residents from planned areas raised issues like traffic congestion, parking and encroachment

### PROMISES

#### RAMVIR SINGH BIDHURI | BJP

"We are telling people about the work done by PM Narendra Modi for Delhi. I have raised the matter before the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs. Hardeep Singh Puri will regularise 67 unauthorised colonies in South Delhi constituency

#### SAHI RAM | AAP

"I will have to ensure DDA provides land to construct a hospital and schools. In South Delhi, the village population is interested in sports, for which I will get a stadium built. Further, there is a need to get unauthorised colonies regularised

## BJP's Sehrawat files papers, 57 in the fray in Delhi now

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP's West Delhi candidate Kamaljeet Sehrawat and BSP's South Delhi candidate Abdul Basit were among the 15 candidates to file their nominations for the Lok Sabha elections on Thursday.

Returning officers received 23 nominations, including seven for the reserved constituency of North West Delhi, six for West Delhi and four for North East Delhi. No nomination was received for East Delhi parliamentary constituency. Officers said 72 sets of documents had been received from 57 candidates in the capital so far.

With three more days left for filing nominations, officials said more rush was likely at each office on Friday and Saturday. While more candidates from BJP and Congress are likely to submit their papers on Friday, AAP candidates will file their documents on Saturday.

The roads of West Delhi witnessed a major traffic snarl as BJP's Sehrawat led a cavalcade of cars and two-wheelers to the office of the returning officer to submit the documents supporting her candidature. She was accompanied by Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Rajasthan chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Delhi election in-charge Om Prakash Dhankar and Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva. Before starting her journey to the office of the district magistrate of West, Sehrawat visited a temple in her village Amrahi. Her roadshow started from BJP's election office in Vikasuri. It took her cavalcade more than three hours to cover a small distance of a few kilometres.

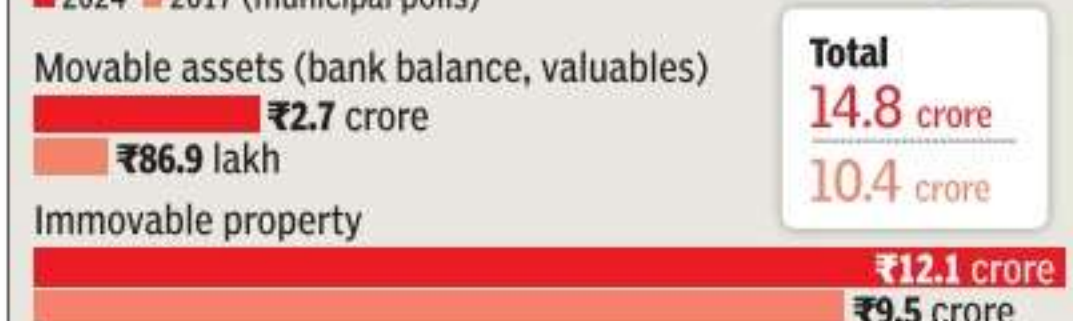
Puri said West Delhi constituency was a symbol of the countryside development undertaken by Prime Minister

### Kamaljeet Sehrawat (51), BJP Constituency | West Delhi

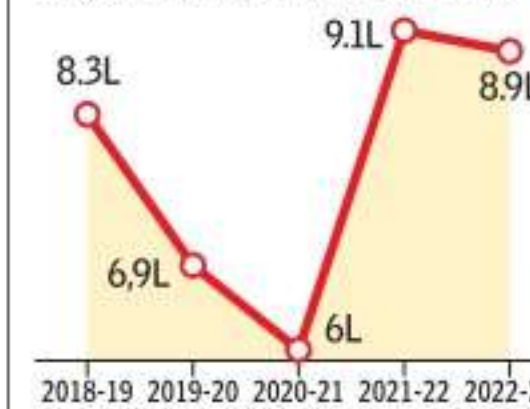
Education | Master's in commerce, Himachal Pradesh University

### INCOME, ASSETS OF KAMALJEET AND HER HUSBAND, RAJ KUMAR SEHRAWAT

■ 2024 ■ 2017 (municipal polls)



### INCOME OVER 5 FINANCIAL YEARS



### HUSBAND'S ASSETS AND INCOME

Raj Kumar Sehrawat's assets ₹9.8cr

Income (2022-23) ₹14.8 lakh

Narendra Modi's govt and had seen a number of projects coming up in the last 10 years. "Yashobhumi Complex, UBR-2 road project in Dwarka and the construction of several sports stadiums show how Modi govt has brought world-class development to West Delhi," said the Union minister.

After filing her nomination, Sehrawat said her self-confidence had increased after witnessing the support and affection from people. "The enthusiasm and excitement of workers and voters shown in this roadshow assures that everyone's blessings and support are with PM Narendra Modi and me," she said.

Meanwhile, the chief elec-

## Kanhaiya asks for people's feedback via WhatsApp

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Congress' North East Delhi candidate Kanhaiya Kumar has sought feedback from the voters on problems plaguing the area and facilities they want in the constituency.

In a video message that is being circulated among the public of the constituency through various social media channels, Kanhaiya has urged people to send their video messages listing what they think should be included in his election manifesto. He said it was important for democracy that all decisions were taken with the participation of people.

"Whatever you think are the issues in the constituency which you face every day, you can share with me directly," Kanhaiya said in his video message. "Share the injustice you face and we will include it in the 'nyaya patra' we are making for the constituency... it will not be my manifesto, it should be your manifesto," he added.

In a text message accompanying the video, the Congress candidate alleged that North East Delhi was lagging behind in terms of development due to the "negligence" of the sitting MP. "Our aim is to bring it at par with the developed areas of Delhi by 2029. We need your participation to achieve this goal," Kanhaiya said.

"Participation is the first step towards Mahatma Gandhi's dream of Swaraj. Only participation can ensure the all-round development of even the person standing at the last rung. So let's improve our beloved region with participation," he added.

The candidates of all the parties may release constituency-specific manifestos this time. While the BJP candidates have already started releasing their individual 'sankalpa patras', Congress and AAP functionaries said their candidates would come up with the manifestos after filing the nominations.

## Man held for sharing Yogi deepfake

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Noida: A Barola resident was arrested by the special task force for allegedly sharing a deepfake video of chief minister Yogi Adityanath on X.

Shyam Gupta, who uses the ID @shyamguptarpswa, shared a video on Wednesday, purportedly showing the CM speaking at a rally. Referring to the mangalsutra speech of PM Modi, Adityanath appears to be enquiring about the widows and families of soldiers who died in the Pulwama attack of Feb 2019.

"Brothers and sisters, I also want to ask Modiji... what happened to the mangalsutras of the widows of soldiers who were martyred in Pulwama? What happened to their families and their widows," the CM appears to be saying. Gupta, who claimed he hadn't created the

video but downloaded it from a social media platform, tagged the official X handles of BJP and offices of the PM and CM. Several comments on the post said the video had been generated with AI.

RK Mishra, additional SP (Noida zone) of UP STF, said they were trying to find out the source of the doctored video.

"On May 1, an AI-generated video of the UP chief minister was shared by the ID @shyamguptarpswa. It contained anti-national elements and threatened to spread misinformation," he added.

Mishra said a case had been registered against Gupta at Cyber Crime police station under sections 468 (forgery for cheating) and 505 (2) (statement conducting to public mischief) of the IPC and provisions of the Information Technology Act.



# What Is Keeping Heatwave At Bay? 5 Western Disturbances & Counting

Unlike Many Parts Of Country, Delhi Has Seen Mercury Crossing 40°C Just Once

Priyangi.Agarwal  
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Parts of the country are recording severe heatwave conditions with some stations touching 47 degrees Celsius, but the mercury in Delhi has remained below 40 degrees Celsius, except for one day so far this season. Delhi, which witnesses most heatwaves from April's third week to first week of June, has not seen any such day so far.

Met officials said strong winds and cloudy skies under the influence of five western disturbances in April did not let the temperature rise higher. The maximum temperature in summer till now has mostly seen temperatures around normal or slightly above normal. The highest maximum temperature was 40.5 degrees Celsius on April 27, shows India Meteorological Department's data.

"April this year saw five western disturbances. No significant amount of rainfall was recorded due to these western disturbances, but there was cloudiness and strong winds on many days, which prevented a rise in temperature. A dust storm was also seen on a few days,"

## STRONG WINDS, CLEAR SKIES HELP

| No. of heatwaves recorded at Safdarjung |       |       |     |      |                            |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|------|----------------------------|
| Year                                    | March | April | May | June | Total no. of heatwave days |
| 2024*                                   | 0     | 0     | 0   | 0    | 0                          |
| 2023                                    | 0     | 0     | 0   | 0    | 0                          |
| 2022                                    | 0     | 9     | 4   | 0    | 13                         |
| 2021                                    | 1     | 0     | 0   | 1    | 2                          |
| 2020                                    | 0     | 0     | 4   | 0    | 4                          |

- ▶ Delhi is yet to record a heatwave this season
- ▶ Five western disturbances in April did not let temperature to rise
- ▶ Peak season for heatwave is recorded from third week of April to first week of June

**Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are being recorded** in some areas of Gangetic West Bengal, east Bihar, east Jharkhand, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Odisha, Gujarat region, Konkan & Goa, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal, south coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, Telangana and interior Karnataka



**Criteria for heatwave**  
IMD defines a heatwave day when the maximum is 4.5 degrees and above normal temperature and the maximum is at least 40 degrees Celsius. A heatwave is also considered if maximum temperature touches 45 degrees Celsius or above. A 'severe' heatwave is declared when the maximum is 6.5 degrees and above normal

said Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist and head, Regional Weather Forecasting Centre, IMD. He added that another western disturbance would start impacting the region

from Friday and it would keep the temperature around normal for a few days.

In summer 2023, no heatwave was seen at Safdarjung, which is the city's base sta-

tion, but parts of Delhi were under the grip of heatwave for three to five days. 2022 saw the longest streak of heatwaves with nine such days in April and four in May at

# Rain likely tomorrow, but mercury may touch 40°C

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Persistent windy conditions in Delhi prevented a significant rise in the maximum temperature, which increased only by 2-3 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature too dropped below 20 degrees Celsius on the day wind speed reached up to 38kmph.

India Meteorological Department's (IMD) forecast indicates an increase of 4-5 degrees over the next three days. Although there is a chance of rainfall around Saturday, the day temperature might still reach 40 degrees Celsius.

On Thursday, the maximum temperature was 35.5 degrees Celsius, four notches below normal, against 33.7 degrees Celsius a day earlier. The minimum temperature was 19.3 degrees Celsius, five notches below normal, against 21 degrees Celsius a day earlier.

The clear sky during night allowed the heat from radiating earth to escape the outer atmosphere thus dropping the minimum temperature, an IMD scientist said, adding that the heat will

intensify as wind speed decreases over next few days. "The wind speed reaching up to 38kmph on Thursday barred the maximum temperature from rising drastically... There are chances of dust storm or thunderstorm towards Saturday evening, with possibility of drizzle at one

or two places. However, this will not impact the day temperature," said Kuldeep Srivastava, senior scientist, IMD.

IMD's data shows that April logged just 7.5 mm rainfall as against the

month's normal of 16.3 mm. It was a rain deficit of 54%. The city had seen deficit rainfall in March too. March recorded only 4.3 mm rainfall, making it a rain deficit of 75%.

IMD expects the maximum temperature to reach 40 degrees Celsius by Saturday. The maximum and minimum temperatures on Friday are likely to hover around 38 and 20 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Meanwhile, city's air quality remained moderate. The air quality index, on a scale of 0 to 500, was 196 on Thursday against 198 a day earlier.

# Fix fecal coliform issues at STPs: Ganga mission to DJB

Kushagra.Dixit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: National Mission for Clean Ganga has written to Delhi Jal Board (DJB), asking it to ensure proper sewage treatment, disinfection and control of fecal coliform at its sewage treatment plants (STPs), especially those funded by NMCG.

The letter also directed DJB to address the problem of fecal coliform, a pollutant indicating the presence of raw sewage and human excreta, in the next high-level committee meeting on the Yamuna under the chairmanship of Delhi chief secretary.

The direction came after National Green Tribunal (NGT) took suo motu cognisance of a TOI report about 75% of the city's STPs being unable to treat fecal coliform, which is causing environmental impact and making the Yamuna stink.

Referring to the Feb 9 report, "Why 75% of Delhi's STPs aren't ready to tackle Yamuna stink", the NGT bench headed by chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava sought explanations from the member-secretary of Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), Central Pol-

**NMCG also highlighted that it had extended financial support for the functioning of some of the STPs under the Namami Ganga project**

lution Control Board (CPCB), DJB CEO, director-general of NMCG, and secretary of Union environment ministry.

NMCG has directed DJB to take necessary measures to ensure compliance of all STPs. "It is alleged that about 75% of the STPs have no or insufficient disinfecting equipment. Hence, outlets of STPs are having high coliform and fecal coliform counts as per a report dated 12.02.2024 submitted by CPCB to NGT," NMCG pointed out in its report submitted to NGT on May 1. Out of the 19 STPs monitored by CPCB during Dec 2023-Jan 2024, only three — Delhi Gate phase-II, Keshopur phase-III, Okhla phase-VI — were meeting the fecal coliform norm, it added.

NMCG also highlighted that it had extended financial support for the functioning of some of the STPs under the Namami

Gange project, and DJB, being the executing agency, must ensure that they comply with fecal coliform standards. These are STPs at Coronation Pillar, Rit-hala, Kondli and Okhla.

All these projects have provision for treatment of fecal coliform and disinfection as per the required standards, NMCG pointed out. "Any issue with compliance may be reported to NMCG."

According to DPCC, the desirable limit for fecal coliform in the Yamuna is 500 most probable number (MPN)/100ml, while the maximum permissible is 2,500. For STPs, it shouldn't be more than 5,000 MPN/100ml.

The TOI report had highlighted that a majority of the STPs had no facility for bacterial disinfection through either chlorination, UV treatment or ozonation, despite a previous NGT order.

According to the bacteriological analysis reports available with TOI, the fecal coliform levels at one such major STP throughout Jan 2024 were 140 crore MPN/100ml, while at two others, it was 24,000 crore and 460 crore.

# PM2.5, PM10 levels down between 2018 and 2023: Environment dept to NGT

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi environment department has informed National Green Tribunal (NGT) that the annual PM2.5 concentration saw a reduction from 128 micrograms per cubic metre in 2018 to 106 micrograms per cubic metre in 2023.

The report, dated April 22, stated that Delhi witnessed a reduction of 17% in PM2.5 levels in 2023 in comparison to 2018 and a 22% reduction in PM10 levels.

The report, which has been submitted to the tribunal, said the PM10 levels were 216 micrograms per cubic metre in 2023 as against 277 micrograms per cubic metre in 2018.

The tribunal is hearing a matter related to cities recording higher Air Quality Index (AQI). NGT in Feb this year had directed 53 cities, which record high AQI, to submit reports on contribution by each polluting source in terms of identified pollutant (PM10/PM2.5) as per source apportionment and progressive reduction on account of measures taken.

Safdarjung. However, the summer of 2021 was different as it recorded one heatwave each in March and June and nil in April and May. Heatwaves are largely reported in April and May, but March and June also record heatwaves, shows IMD's data.

The met department's forecast shows that heatwave is unlikely over Delhi for the next seven days. However, the met department has predicted severe heatwave to heatwave conditions in parts over Gangetic West Bengal, east Bihar, east Jharkhand, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Odisha, Gujarat Region, Konkan & Goa, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal, south Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, Telangana and interior Karnataka in the next two days.

IMD defines a heatwave day when the maximum is 4.5 degrees and more above normal temperature and the maximum is at least 40 degrees Celsius. A heatwave is also considered if maximum temperature touches 45 degrees Celsius or above. A 'severe' heatwave is declared when the maximum is 6.5 degrees and more above normal.

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# Former AAP minister meets Saxena, alleges irregularities in govt

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Days after his resignation as a minister in AAP govt, Patel Nagar MLA Raj Kumar Anand on Thursday submitted a memorandum to LG VK Saxena, alleging widespread irregularities prevailing in social welfare, SC/ST welfare and labour departments and in Delhi Commission for Women, which, he claimed, he had seen himself.

No reaction was available from AAP govt. Anand had held six portfolios in CM Arvind Kejriwal's govt, which included the three departments he also mentioned in a post on social media. Technically, Anand is still a minister, as his resignation lies in CM's office while Kejriwal is in jail.

In his memorandum to LG, Anand said he had resigned due to "prevalent excessive corruption" in Delhi govt. He alleged that he "came face to face with fraud being run in the name of the poor" of Delhi and lies that were peddled to cover the wrong-doings. Anand has alleged flouting of reservation norms for SC, ST and OBC in reservation of seats in govt employment and in the appointments as consultants, experts and fellows.

The MLA also alleged that due finances to the MCD for paying sanitation workers were "deliberately withheld by Delhi govt, causing huge suffering to this mostly Dalit section of employees".

He also alleged that only a fraction of money collected as labour cess was spent for the welfare of labourers in 2023-24, but a huge amount given to "ghost beneficiaries" in 2021-22.

"It came to my attention as minister that thousands of crores of rupees from the SC welfare fund has remained unspent and has even been diverted for other activities over the past nine years," he alleged, seeking an investigation to identify the diverted and misused budget and allocate it towards SC welfare schemes.

# AIIMS death by suicide: Two nursing tutors sent on leave

New Delhi: A day after AIIMS nursing students took out a protest march to demand justice for a 21-year-old BSc Hons second-year nursing student who allegedly died by suicide in her hostel room on Tuesday, her two tutors have been asked to go on leave until the inquiry is over.

The students had written a letter to the institute's director demanding the "urgent" suspension of the responsible teachers (names withheld) and compensation of Rs 1 crore to the victim's family members. Besides, they are providing a photocopy of the suicide note written by the victim.

Media cell in-charge Dr Rima Dada said, "the tutors have been told to go on leave, pending inquiry."

In their complaint to the director, BSc second-year nursing students alleged that the tutor at the College of Nursing repeatedly humiliated the victim in front of the entire batch.

Such behaviour is unacceptable and must be addressed promptly, they said, demanding a thorough investigation into the circumstances leading to their batchmate's death. Additionally, they sought accountability and reform within the college to prevent such tragedies in the future. TNN

## Correction

In the May 1, 2024, edition of *The Times of India*, Delhi, the assets of BJP's East Delhi candidate Harsh Deep Malhotra's wife were inadvertently mentioned as Rs 26.6 crore, instead of Rs 26.6 lakh. The error is deeply regretted.

# What is a forest, really? On Haryana govt's table for the first time, criteria to define it

Ipsita.Pati@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: Haryana has for the first time come up with criteria to define a 'forest' — a move that could pave the way for a long-pending exercise to identify areas, particularly in the Aravalis, that will get legal protection either under Supreme Court orders or provisions of the Forest Conservation Act.

A forest official told TOI on Thursday that according to the proposal submitted by the forest department to the state govt, an area with "5 hectares or more of uninterrupted forest-like elements" will be recognised as a 'deemed forest'.

If the state govt approves the proposal, the forest department will form committees in every district to identify deemed forests. "As per the proposal, a minimum of 5 hectares of continuous patch will be considered as deemed forest if it has forest-like elements," the official said.

Haryana's move comes after the Supreme Court on Feb 19 told the Centre and all states to go by the broader "dictio-

nary definition" of forest as given in its 1996 ruling in the TN Godavarman vs Union of India case, irrespective of last year's amendments in the Forest (Conservation) Act that defined afresh what would be treated as a forest.

The FCA amendment excluded all areas that were not recorded or identified as 'forest' in govt records as of Oct 25, 1980. This change, experts had said, violated the 1996 SC ruling that defined forest as per dictionary meaning and not necessarily areas based on official records.

The top court in its Feb order also directed that all states must forward to the Union environment ministry reports made by expert committees after the 1996 ruling. These committees were supposed to identify all forests under the dictionary definition, but compliance lacks 27 years on.

TOI had reported in March that Haryana govt formed a committee in 1997 to identify and record 'deemed forest' but the norms weren't followed. The panel worked



According to the proposal submitted by the forest department to state govt, an area with 'five hectares or more of uninterrupted forest-like elements' will be recognised as a 'deemed forest'

for a few months but never published a report or submitted it to the environment ministry, a govt source had said.

Asked why it was coming up with criteria when the Supreme Court had already given a definition, the forest official said on Thursday that all states have different types of forests and will need to come up with their own set of rules that make a forest.

"Large patches of Aravalis will be included in this exer-

cise. The criteria have been made considering forest categories of Haryana, including sub-tropical thorny forest of Aravalis, tropical dry deciduous forest and subtropical pine forest areas," the official added.

Coming up with criteria is then the first step to identify 'deemed forest' and give it protection under FCA, which bars construction and human activities, the forest department said.

"We are awaiting govt's approval to begin the process of

demarcating 'deemed forest' category. We are optimistic about receiving the nod soon since the matter is in the Supreme Court," said Pankaj Goyal, principal chief conservator of forests, Haryana.

The exercise is crucial for Haryana as it has the lowest forest cover — just 3.6% of its area — among all Indian states. This is partially because over half of the Aravalis — more than 1 lakh hectares — in Haryana are not recognised as forests. Instead, Aravali lands are owned by panchayats, urban bodies or private owners. The only Aravali areas protected by FCA are those notified under the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) and the Aravali Notification of 1992.

In April this year, Haryana govt submitted to the environment ministry data about reserve forests, protected forests, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, PLPA land, and Aravali plantations, but not all forest areas under dictionary definition.

Experts underscored the importance of identifying forests in Haryana.

# Excise policy case: HC to hear Sisodia's bail petition today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia approached the high court on Thursday and sought bail in the cases lodged by the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate in connection with the alleged excise policy scam.

A bench of Justice Swarnan Kanta Sharma is likely to hear his bail plea on Friday. Sisodia moved HC following a trial court's order rejecting his petition on April 30.

Lawyers for the Aam Aadmi Party functionary mentioned the matter before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora, seeking an urgent hearing, which agreed to list the same for Friday.

"Let the judge go through the file. So let it come tomorrow," the court told the advocates representing Sisodia as they submitted that the petitioner is an MLA and requested that both the petitions on ED and CBI cases seeking bail be listed urgently.

The trial court had dismissed Sisodia's plea in the corruption and money-laundering cases lodged by CBI and ED, respectively, while noting that he has been "filing one or other application/making oral submissions frequently, some of them frivolous, that too on a piecemeal basis, apparently as a concerted effort for accomplishing the shared purpose of causing delay in the matter."

Sisodia had argued that despite an assurance before the Supreme Court last year that the trial would conclude in six-eight months, the prosecution had delayed it. The court, however, said the steady progression of the case, despite the apparent attempts to slow down its progress, couldn't by any standard be equated with a snail's pace.

"The beneficiaries diverted 'illegal' gains to the accused officials and made false entries in their books of account to evade detection, the probe agencies have alleged. Sisodia was arrested by CBI in Feb last year for his alleged role in the 'scam' while he was arrested by ED in March the same year. HC had earlier dismissed his bail petitions on May 30 and July 3 last year, respectively.

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# Intent Was To Create Mass Panic: Police

## Write To Interpol Via CBI Seeking Assistance In Bomb Hoax Case

Raj Shekhar Jha & Abhay | TNN

New Delhi: Delhi Police's FIR in the case of hoax emails sent to schools on Wednesday claims that the bomb threats were made with the "conspiratorial intention of creating mass panic and to disturb public peace". The cops have written to Interpol via CBI seeking assistance in the probe. Police want details of the email ID used for mailing the threat messages.

CBI is the nodal agency for police in India to connect with overseas law enforcement agencies via Interpol.

Sources said the sender's email ID might have been deactivated after two hours. This probability came to light when police tried to 'recover' the account on its website for more details

TOI had reported on Thursday that the cops would seek assistance from Russia via Interpol. The mail ID used by the email sender had a Russian server, mail.ru, owned by a firm named VK.

The initial probe suggests that the sender used a temporary email ID to register at mail.ru. Services named Tempail and Gufum were used to create the suspect id, sawarim@mail.ru, sources said. The cops are in the process of collecting details of the email headers received by the schools. VK, the parent firm of mail.ru, is being contacted through informal channels as well.

Police sources said that the information regarding the header and footer of the emails sent to various schools had been forwarded to Delhi Police's Special Cell from the districts. "One of

the districts received two IP addresses while scanning the header of the email ID. Another district carried out a reverse lookup of the IP to determine the places from where it was generated," the source said.

Another source said that the email ID might have been deactivated after two hours. This probability came to light when police tried to 'recover' the account on its website for more details.

The investigators have also written to Google seeking details of a Gmail ID used in sending a threat to a school on Wednesday afternoon.

Delhi Police on Thursday debunked the authenticity of viral audio clips circulating on WhatsApp and other platforms in which a woman claimed that bombs were actually discovered at some schools. "Some audio messages are being circulated on WhatsApp and other chat groups claiming that some suspicious objects were found in some schools. These messages are false and have no truth in them. I request everyone to please convey that these messages are false," said a police spokesperson.

At least 200 Delhi-NCR schools received an email warning them about a bomb on their premises on Wednesday morning. Responding to calls from the schools, parents rushed to pick up their wards while a massive search exercise was launched by several agencies, including police, fire service and bomb and dog squads. Students were evacuated and a stretched police force scrutinised every nook and corner of the schools. Even school bags were examined. Preliminary findings indicate links with China and with Pakistan's ISI with a suspected larger conspiracy of disrupting normal life.

# Check, sanitise & neutralise: How Delhi bomb squads keep you safe

Abhay@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: When police control room alerts about bomb threat emails to numerous city schools were received on Wednesday morning, the sleuths of the bomb detection and disposal teams sensed a busy day ahead. However, nobody had imagined the sheer scale of the threats. By 10am, every police district — each of which has one bomb detection team — was handling close to a dozen calls from panicked schools. In south west Delhi and Dwarka, the teams were busy, respectively, with 30 and 28 calls.

Wednesday's mayhem has put the spotlight back on Delhi Police's bomb handling squads. Typically, there are five bomb disposal squads (BDS) and around 18 bomb detection teams (BDT) in the capital's force that are responsible for identifying and neutralising bomb threats. As the names suggest, BDTs inspect a designated area for potential threats and if they discover a suspicious object, they notify the BDS, which isolates the object.

BDS and BDT have effectively resolved most cases they have handled. However, in certain situations, the assistance of other agencies was necessary. "There are bombs which BDS is capable of handling. And if it's a sophisticated improvised explosive device (IED), we seek the help of the National Security Guards," said a squad member. "This usually happens when we are unable to crack the ID of the bomb and it requires more sophisticated instruments which the other agency has."

A typical day in the life of a bomb detection team member involves inspecting a minimum of seven to eight critical facilities on a routine basis, a process that consumes around ten hours. "Following the completion of these searches, they maintain a state of readiness, prepared to respond to any potential threat calls or unplanned events like sudden visits by political leaders to some venues," explained an officer.

The work hours tend to be prolonged during national and international events. At such times, the bomb person-

## 5 BOMB DISPOSAL SQUADS, 18 DETECTION TEAMS



**Equipment used**

**SET 1**

- > Bomb suit, bomb blanket with rings, telescopic prod
- > Minesweeper, hook & line set, remote-operated wire cutter
- > Tactical ballistic shield
- > Non-linear junction detector, handheld/deep-search metal detector

**SET 2**

- > Under-vehicle search mirror, inverted/extension mirrors
- > Dragon light, fiber optic scope, helmet with headlamp
- > Bomb basket, magnetic floor sweeper, ice tong
- > Remotely operated vehicle, electronic stethoscope

**Composition**

**5** Bomb disposal squads (BDS)

**18** Bomb detection teams (BDT)

(1 in every district)

**BDS base stations (zones)**

West: Pitampura Police Lines

Metro/Railway: Old Delhi Railway Station

South/New Delhi: Mandir Marg police station

Central: Daryaganj police station

**Line of duty**

- > Check and sanitise important markets, malls, vital installations
- > Anti-sabotage checks of venues to be visited by VIPs
- > Immediately respond to SOS calls of suspicious objects
- > Assess, neutralise threat safely
- > All bomb disposal squads and bomb detection teams to be stationed strategically to minimise response time

nel are required to stay at the venue until the conclusion of events. "When VIPs are scheduled to visit important historical sites, one team searches the venue and another searches and sanitises the routes the guests will take," said a BDS personnel.

BDS and BDT have at least three teams working round the clock. Each BDS squad has 7-8 members in each shift while BDTs put 5-6 cops on duty. "Every team has an eight-hour shift. There are situations when the teams receive calls just before their shift ends, sometimes with a little 10 minutes remaining. In

**AN OFFICER SAYS**

There are situations when the teams receive calls just before their shift ends. In such cases, despite the shift timing, they have to respond and head to the location concerned

such cases, despite the shift timing, they have to respond and head to the location concerned," said a senior officer.

The squads are equipped with advanced gear. From re-

mote-operated vehicles, telescopic prodders, minesweepers and electronic stethoscopes for detection of bombs, the teams also have good quality bomb suits and blankets besides ballistic shields and remote wire cutters, an officer of the BDS informed.

The canine squad is an integral part of these squads and they play key roles at the spot. They are the first to be sent in to sniff out suspicious objects and alert the team to bombs or explosives. To stay informed about the latest technological advancements, officers of both BDS and BDT regularly attend refresher courses.

# Attendance low a day later, schools tighten security

Shreya.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The aftermath of Wednesday's bomb threat email continues to unsettle the stakeholders with varying impacts across schools in the city. While some institutions grappled with a significant plunge in student attendance on Thursday, others were able to reassure parents of their children's safety.

The principal of Mount Abu School told TOI, "Attendance was around 85% in the school today." Tania Joshi, principal of Indian School, also noted a stark decline, particularly in higher grades. "There is around 50% attendance in nursery and primary classes with a drop of 15-20% in every class thereafter," she said.

In contrast, Divya Bhatia, principal of Amity International School, remarked there was no noticeable decrease in attendance. "I had a briefing with the students during the assembly. We already have charters for disaster management," she said. "Our students council is framing one for bomb threats in the future. We carried out a thorough scanning of the campus with police and security at the school gate has been tightened."

In response to the security threat, school administrators have fortified safety protocols to reassure anxious parents. Joshi of Indian School lauded the students' resilience and said attendance was good and the children were doing things normally. "Parents have faith in the school administration," Joshi said. Bhatia echoed Joshi. "The attendance was slightly lower but not significantly so. The parents have been extremely appreciative and supportive of our efforts."

Meanwhile, proactive measures are underway to bolster security measures and instil confidence among students. Peer leaders were asked to step up to educate their juniors on school safety in the light of recent events. Sudha Acharya, principal of IITL Public School, Dwarka, emphasised on a collaborative approach, involving parents in safety initiatives and rein-

## NSG carries out drill near Parliament

New Delhi: Dramatic scenes were witnessed around Parliament on Wednesday as NSG sleuths carried out a drill using paramotors. The paratroopers were seen hovering around Vijay Chowk atop central government buildings. A few days ago, NSG had used helicopters in a similar drill in which the commandos were seen rappelling from helicopters atop Parliament as part of the aerial insertion drills to fine-tune the security preparedness and response mechanism against any terrorist-initiated incidents.

As part of the drill, NSG paratroopers could be seen flying around the security perimeter around Parliament House, North Block and South Block. This strategic manoeuvre aimed to bolster preparedness against potential terrorist threats by efficiently surveying key areas and gathering vital intelligence. Officials highlighted that paratroopers offer several advantages to NSG, adding a dynamic dimension to their capabilities. These aerial assets enable precision, speed, and discretion in mission execution. Paratroopers facilitate silent and unnoticed approaches to targets, crucial for surprise elements in operations, thus providing a tactical advantage. Since Feb, a series of security drills have been meticulously conducted by security forces to bolster the city's preparedness. On May 1, NSG conducted drills at the Israeli Embassy against the backdrop of heightened security concerns. TNN

forcing evacuation procedures with students.

"I am sending a special message to parents assuring them that safety and security measures are in place. The school is a happy and safe learning place. The safety of every child matters to us," asserted Acharya.

Some schools have decided to band together to ensure the well-being of their students, with a renewed focus on preparedness and vigilance.

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# Teeing off after a year's gap: DDA to hold golf tournament

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: After a gap of one year, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will organise Golf Tournament (LG Cup) 2024 at Qutab Golf Course (QGC) in Sept-Oct, which is likely to see participation of around 1,300 golfers.

DDA has already started preparations and will seek entries from members, invitees from other states, and non-members who have been playing golf regularly at the course for a long time.

Being organised since 2001 in Delhi, this is the largest golf tournament in the country in terms of the number of participants, said an official. "Usually, it takes place in Feb or March, but due to some reasons, it will be organised at the end of Sept or the beginning of Oct this year," said an official. The tournament usually

lasts six days — Friday, Saturday and Sunday — over two weeks. "Lieutenant governor will attend the event as the chief guest on the final day. We have invited applications from interested event management agencies with expertise in the field of organising golf tournaments and looking for sponsors," DDA stated. The event will conclude with a live band performance, the official said.

The selected agency will work under the overall supervision of the DDA commissioner (sports) and the secretary of QGC. The event manager, and not DDA, will borne the entire expenses and the club members will also not be charged any tournament fee. The golf course committee can fill up the vacant slots, the official added.

"The contract will be for

holding three annual golf tournaments, subject to the satisfactory performance as determined by the commissioner (sports). It may also be extended for two more years, depending on the performance," he added. In case of unsatisfactory performance, DDA can terminate the contract any time.

A pre-bid meeting was held on May 1 at QGC to clarify issues regarding the notice inviting proposal and the interested parties will have to submit their full-fledged proposals by May 6. DDA is hoping to open a golf course at Sector 24, Dwarka by the end of June. The course, which is likely to be the longest in the country, will be an 18-hole facility. Officials claimed the tournament might also be organised in Dwarka in future.

**1.3k**  
GOLFERS LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENT SET FOR SEPT-OCT

# DJB's peak summer challenge: Adequate water for schools

Siddhanta.Mishra@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB), which is struggling to address water supply issues as the summer season is about to reach its peak, is now unable to ensure adequate supply to schools. Directorate of Education (DoE) recently informed DJB about the insufficient water supply to numerous schools operating in the evening shift.

A note of a DoE meeting held on April 29 stated that officials had informed that adequate water was available in the schools running in the morning shift, but the evening-shift institutions were facing a scarcity issue as the water supplied in the morning was mostly used by the students, staff and visitors of the shift. At least 81 schools in the city also don't have water connection, it stated.

DoE has asked all district officials to monitor the situation and make arrangements for storing adequate water for the evening shift schools.

While no response was available from DJB, its officials earlier claimed that they had already started identifying the issues in the schools lacking adequate drinking water facilities. The initiative is part of DJB's ongoing infrastructure enhancement projects, they had added.

DJB currently faces a shortfall of around 290 million gallons of water per day (MGD). Last year, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had approved a short-term ac-



IN DEEP WATER

tion plan to increase water production by 131MGD and a bigger action plan to produce another 380MGD.

The board, which is in the process of finalising its summer action plan, is currently producing around 868MGD through water treatment plants, while the rest is drawn through tubewells. Under the proposed plan, DJB, which has around 27 lakh metered connections, plans to publish a summer bulletin to inform the public about the water production levels and the complaints it has received.

It is almost a year since DJB and Delhi govt's finance department have been arguing over the release of funds. According to officials, the tussle over DJB's pending bills is starting to have an impact in unauthorised colonies, urban villages and some other areas.

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# Delhi riots: HC grants bail to 3 in IB staffer's murder case

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Thursday granted bail to three men in a case related to killing of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma during the northeast Delhi riots in Feb 2020.

Justice Navin Chawla, underlining that during the pendency of trial, bail is the rule while jail is an exception, granted bail to accused Shoab Alam, Gulam and Javed. The court noted that the accused have been in custody for four years and the trial in the case is not likely to conclude any time soon. "Though a long period of incarceration alone may not be a sufficient reason to grant bail to an accused in a case which is punishable with death or life imprisonment, however, it would weigh with the court while considering a bail

lance to be struck between the interest of the prosecution or society and the rights of the accused guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution...It is to be remembered that pending trial, bail is the rule while jail is an exception.

Also, the purpose of keeping an accused in jail during the trial is to ensure that he faces trial, does not abscond and, if found guilty, is available to serve his sentence. The purpose is not to punish the accused," Justice Chawla noted in the order.

Rejecting the bail plea of the fourth accused, Nazim, by way of a separate order, the court said that important public witnesses are yet to be examined by the prosecution and there is a likelihood that if released on bail, he may influence or threaten them. "Though it may be true that in the present case, the trial

may take a long period to conclude, however, that alone cannot be a ground to release the applicant on bail where he is charged with a heinous and grave crime," Justice Chawla said.

The court said that some co-accused are being granted bail but Nazim's case has to be determined on its own facts and the evidence against him. The prosecution has alleged that Nazim is a declared "bad character" of the Dayalpur police station and has 12 FIRs against him.

The trial court had last year framed charges against Alam, Gulam, Javed, Nazim and former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and others under sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence) and 302 (murder).

# 24-year-old murder suspect arrested after shootout near Signature Bridge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 24-year-old murder suspect was injured during an encounter with police near Signature Bridge on Thursday. A police source said that the killing was the result of a gang war.

The suspect was identified as Umar, who resides in Chauhan Bangar. The incident occurred at 7:15am on Third Push-ta Road, near Signature Bridge. Deputy commissioner of police (Northeast) Joy Tirkey stated that they received information about Umar's movement in the Khadar area. "We laid a trap, and at 7.15 am, he arrived on a motorcycle.

In the police's retaliatory firing, Umar sustained a bullet injury on his right leg. He was apprehended at the scene

When he was signaled to stop, he fired upon the police party," the officer said.

In the police's retaliatory firing, Umar sustained a bullet injury on his right leg. He was apprehended at the scene and taken to a hospital where he was discharged after treatment.

Cops said a 7.65 mm pistol was recovered from his possession. "He had fired two rounds, while the police party fired a single round, which hit him in

the leg," the officer added.

According to police, the murder was reported on March 9 near a public toilet in Seelampur. "One Arbaz (24), who belongs to the Hashim Babagang, was shot dead multiple times on the left side of the head (temporal region), chest, and abdomen," the officer said.

Arbaz had five cases registered against him, including riot, extortion, Arms Act, attempt to murder, and murder. "During the investigation, it was found that the shooters were from the Chenu gang. It came to light that the reason was a gang war that has been going on between gangs over supremacy and extortion," the source said.



**Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd.**  
(CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001704)  
Regd. Office: 2nd Floor, JUSNL (SLDC) Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-02  
(E-mail: cetjusunl@gmail.com)



**2<sup>nd</sup> TIME EXTENSION NOTICE**  
Important date against NIT No. 724/PR/JUSNL/2023-24 for Left over work of Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 132 kV D/C 3 phase LILO of 132 kV D/C 3 ph Hatia-II – Kanke Transmission Line for connectivity of Railway TSS, Piska on Turnkey basis from LILO point to proposed UG cable termination point (Loc. No. 12/0) of 5.876 Km. revised line length under the jurisdiction of 220/132 kV GSS, Hatia-II is hereby extended in following manner: -

|                                                  |                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| End date and time of upload of BID               | 14.05.2024 up to 04:00 PM |
| BID Opening date for technical & commercial part | 15.05.2024 at 04.00 PM    |

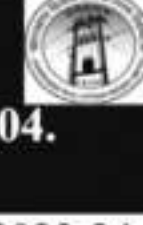
This extension notice is also available on the website [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in)  
PR No. 322542  
स्वीडित एंव राइटिंग में कर्जा बचावे। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को 18003456670 (कील सेन्टर) पर दर्ज कराये।

Sd/-  
General Manager, C&M (NWBP)  
JUSNL, Ranchi

PR.NO.324303 Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd(24-25):D



**Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Ltd.**  
(CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001702)  
Regd. Office:- Engineering Building, HEC, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004.  
fax # 0651-2400483 e-mail : cesd.jseb@gmail.com



**2<sup>nd</sup> time Extension cum-corrigendum Notice against NIT No. 569/PR/JBVNL/2023-24**  
Tender is invited for power improvement at FCI township Sindri through conversion of 3.3/0.4 KV distribution system by 11/0.4 KV distribution system under Electric Supply Circle, Dhanbad JBVNL.

| Sl. No. | NIT No.            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Estimate value (incl. GST Rs.). (In Crs.) | EMD value (incl. GST) (Rs. In Crs.) | Tender Cost (incl. GST) (In Rs.) | Downloadi ng/ Sale of Tender Document | Last date of sale of Tender Document | Last Date of submission of Tender Document | Date of Opening of Tender  |
|---------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.      | 569/PR/JBVNL/23-24 | (A) Construction and commissioning of 33KV line 2.5 Km from 132/33KV DVC Pathardih G/S to 33/11KV Gaushtala P/S<br>(B) Construction and commissioning of 11KV line 90 Ckt.<br>(C) Erection, installation & commissioning of 11/44 KV 200 KVA (120 nos.)<br>(D) Construction and commissioning of LT line 40 Ckt. | 43.45                                     | 0.87                                | 11,800                           | 20.03.2024                            | 20.05.2024 up to 05:00PM             | 20.05.2024 up to 06:00PM                   | 27.05.2024 4 up to 05:00PM |

Further details against the above Tender can be obtained from website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> and may be contacted on Mobile No. 8709711244/ 8936066052/ NIC helpline No. 0651-2400178. Submission of bid document fee and EMD will be accepted through online mode only and it's receipt should be submitted to the office of undersigned on or before 20.05.2024  
PR No. 322680  
स्वीडित एंव राइटिंग में कर्जा बचावे। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को टेलीफोन नं- 1800 345 6670 पर दर्ज कराये।

Sd/-  
GM (STN) JBVNL

PR.NO.324294 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd(24-25):D

**CINEMA OF THE WEEK**

**The Fall Guy (Action, Comedy) ★★★★★**

Cast: Ryan Gosling, Emily Blunt, Hannah Waddingham, Aaron Taylor Johnson, Stephanie Hsu, Winston Duke  
Direction: David Leitch  
Duration: 2 hours 5 minutes  
Language: English (U/A)

Colt Seavers (Ryan Gosling), a suave stuntman, finds his thriving career as the body-double of Tom Ryder (Aaron Taylor-Johnson), an egocentric Hollywood star, abruptly interrupted when he meets with an accident while filming. Derailing not just his work but also his on-set romance with Jody (Emily Blunt), a camera operator.



to find him before the studio pulls the plug on the film. Driven by the urge to bail Jody out, who is unaware of this development, Colt dives right into his new assignment. Only to realise that something sinister is at play here.

Written by David Pearce, the film is filled with meta moments, hat-tips and references, in addition to being a romantic-action-comedy, all rolled into a delightful and hugely entertaining watch. However, the film's storyline, with twists galore and a deep-fake angle thrown in, does go overboard. But it isn't bereft of emotional depth. The clash between Colt and Ryder, which is central to the movie's theme, is handled rather effectively, while keeping it witty and unpretentious.

**Exhuma (Horror, Mystery, Thriller) ★★★★★**

Cast: Kim Go-eun, Choi Min-sik, Yoo Hae-jin, Lee Do-hyun  
Direction: Jae Hyun Jang  
Duration: 2 hours 16 minutes  
Language: Korean with English subtitles (A)

A shaman and a geomancer join forces to break a dark curse afflicting a wealthy Korean-American family. The film depicts the disturbing events that unfold following the exhumation of a family grave located atop a mountain.



cheol), a wealthy Korean-American, to diagnose the mysterious illness afflicting the family's new-born son. Upon Hwarim's arrival, it becomes evident that a sinister curse has plagued the family for years. To tackle the task at hand, she enlists the help of Kim Sang Deok (Choi Min-sik), a geomancer and feng shui expert, and his apprentice Ko Young Geun (Yoo Hae-jin). Together, the four decide to break the curse by excavating the body of the family's patriarch from its mountaintop grave on the

**RATING SCALE**

TRASH ★ | BELOW AVERAGE ★★ | AVERAGE ★★★ | ABOVE AVERAGE ★★★ | GOOD ★★★★★  
VERY GOOD ★★★★★ | OUTSTANDING ★★★★★ | MASTERPIECE ★★★★★

| Notice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                        |                            |                                                                                  |                                             |                                                                                                            |                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Information for all concerned that the Hon'ble Expenditure Observer of 14 Bongaon PC, 15 Barrackpur PC will be available for public hearing in connection with General Election to Lok Sabha-2024. Anyone having any grievance w.r.t election can visit personally as per following schedule with prior appointment. |                                        |                            |                                                                                  |                                             |                                                                                                            |                                                    |
| Sl. No.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Observer's Name                        | Parliamentary Constituency | AC Segment                                                                       | Contact No. & E-Mail ID                     | Meeting Venue                                                                                              | Meeting Date & Meeting Time                        |
| 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Shri Akash Barnwal, IRS                | 14 Bongaon (SC)            | 95 Bongaon Uttar (SC), 96 Bongaon Daskhin (SC), 97 Gaighata (SC), 98 Swarnpnagar | 9748310636<br>ocexpbgn@gmail.com            | Office of the SDO, P.O. Bongaon, Dist: North 24 Parganas, Pin-743235                                       | 03.05.2024 and 04.05.2024<br>12.00 noon to 1.00 pm |
| 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Shri J.R. Inamdar, IA&AS               | 14 Bongaon (SC)            | 94 Bagdah (SC)                                                                   | 9748446794<br>ocexp2bgn@gmail.com           | Office of the SDO, P.O. Bongaon, Dist: North 24 Parganas, Pin-743235                                       | 03.05.2024 and 04.05.2024<br>3.00 pm to 4.00 pm    |
| 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Shri Ashutosh Kumar Sharma, IRS (C&CE) | 15 Barrackpur              | All under 15 Barrackpur PC                                                       | 9748310539<br>expobserveraksharma@gmail.com | Ichapur Satadbi Guest House, Room No. 1, Ichapur Metal & Rifle factory, P.O. Ichapur, Dist 24 Parganas (N) | 07.05.2024<br>12.00 noon to 1.00 pm                |
| Sd/-<br>District Election Officer & District Magistrate<br>North 24 Parganas<br>dt. 02.05.2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                        |                            |                                                                                  |                                             |                                                                                                            |                                                    |

Memo No.: 941(3)/DICO/N24Pgs

**नोटिस/आवश्यक सूचना**

माननीय जिला न्यायालय S.C.J-Cum-RC(East) कड़कड़डूमा कोर्ट नई दिल्ली में विचाराधीन पुराना (Old) Execution Number. 45449/2016 जो कि नया (New) Miscellaneous S.C.J 71/2019 State of U.P. V/s D.D.A. & 221 Others है, के प्रतिवादी (3) के समस्त प्रतिवादीगण (JD's) को माननीय जिला न्यायालय के आदेश दिनांक 24.07.2023 एवं दिनांक 05.03.2024 के अनुपालना में दिनांक 08.05.2024 को उपस्थित रहने हेतु आदेशित किया गया है।  
अतः समस्त प्रतिवादीगण (JD's) माननीय जिला न्यायालय S.C.J-Cum-RC(East) कड़कड़डूमा कोर्ट नई दिल्ली में उपस्थित रहना सुनिश्चित करें।  
आज्ञा से  
मा0 जिला न्यायालय S.C.J-Cum-RC(East) कड़कड़डूमा कोर्ट नई दिल्ली

UPID 205684 dt 01.05.2024,  
[www.upgov.nic.in](http://www.upgov.nic.in)



**ODISHA STATE SEEDSS CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING)  
SANTARAPUR, BHUBANESWAR - 751002.  
Tel- MD 0674-2340573, E-mail: hodsscd456@gmail.com  
NIT No. OSSC/ Mktg (Hort)-90/2024

**Short e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of TL Ginger Rhizomes for Kharif-2024.**  
OSSC Ltd. invites e-Tender only from Producers (and in case of GOI PSUs, their authorized Agencies) on item wise rate contract basis for Procurement of TL Ginger Rhizomes for Kharif-2024 in double cover system through online mode only for the works below.

| Name of the work                         | Purchase of TL Ginger Rhizomes for Kharif-2024.         |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| No of work                               | One                                                     |
| Availability of bid documents in portal  | 15 hours on dt.02.05.2024 to 17 hours of dt. 08.05.2024 |
| Last date of receipt of tender in portal | 17 hours of dt. 08.05.2024                              |
| Date and time opening of Bid             | 10.30 hours of dt. 09.05.2024                           |

The detailed descriptions of crops, varieties, quantity, parameters, terms and conditions and other details of tender specified in the tender schedule would be made available in the e-Tender portal [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in). Any addendum/ corrigendum/cancellation can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-  
Managing Director  
OSSC Ltd.  
OIPR-61106/11/0005/24-25

Shanties burnt by fire: As many as 40 shanties were gutted by a fire in southeast Delhi's Khadar area on Thursday. Scores of people were rendered homeless. No one was injured. TNN

**GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL**  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
Bid reference no. WBMSCL/NIT-253/2024, Dated-29/04/2024  
West Bengal Medical Services Corporation Ltd. is inviting online bids for "2 nos shades for laundry and civil renovation work at Kaldwip Super speciality Hospital(G+4), Kaldwip, South 24- Pgs-2" call." Last date of submission of bid (online)- 17.05.2024 at 3.00 P.M. The tender document can be downloaded from [www.wbmsc.gov.in](http://www.wbmsc.gov.in) and [www.wbtenders.gov.in](http://www.wbtenders.gov.in) on or after 03.05.2024 at 11.00A.M request for Clarification, if any, may be sent to [c.p.c@w.b.m.s.c.gov.in](mailto:c.p.c@w.b.m.s.c.gov.in) or [info@wbmsc.gov.in](mailto:info@wbmsc.gov.in) Sd/- Managing Director, WBMSCL & Special Commissioner, H&FWD, Govt. of West Bengal  
ICA-179123/2024

## CORPORATE BUZZ

### ICG organises medical camp in Lakshadweep

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) with support of the UT administration and in collaboration with AIIMS New Delhi, conducted a two-day medical camp in the remote islands of Kavaratti and Androth recently.

The outreach programme focussed on



providing super-specialist medical coverage in the far-flung islands and benefit the local populace through consultation with domain experts. Dr M Srinivas, director, AIIMS, headed the team of 15 specialist doctors from fields of Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Neurology, Dermatology, Orthopaedic, etc. Around 1500 people attended the medical camp and received medicines free of cost. The medical team also delivered basic life support (BLS) lectures to local medical professionals to enhance the standards of available medical infrastructure. The event was successfully

completed with support of UT administration.

### RITES celebrates its 50th anniversary

RITES Limited, an engineering consultancy firm in India, celebrated its 50th anniversary recently. The month-long Foundation Day celebrations that were carried across work sites, culminated with a cultural evening at Shikhar, RITES' corporate office in Gurugram.

On the occasion, the Chairman and Management Director, Rahul Mithal, launched RITES' coffee table book – Atulya, a compilation



tracing the organisation's illustrious journey of becoming 'The Infrastructure People'. Also, it marked the unveiling of 'RITES Dhariohar', a novel initiative to treasure the organisation's legacy and encapsulate the essence of its core values—integrity, professionalism, and excellence.

Addressing the gathering and paying gratitude to the founding fathers, Mithal said, "From pioneering projects to fostering sustainable practices, RITES' five-decade journey has been characterised by resilience, innovation, transformation, efficiency, and sustainability. Surging ahead, leveraging our expertise we will continue playing a meaningful role in sustainable infrastructure development."

### HUDCO observes its 54th Foundation Day

The Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) recently celebrated its 54th Foundation Day at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. HUDCO's CMD Sanjay Kulshrestha congratulated and encouraged the employees, stating, "Our journey has been a long one, and this incredible journey of ours is a testimony of the vision,



entrepreneurship spirit and commitment of our visionary heads of our esteemed organisation, along with the support of successive governments and our stakeholders including our borrowing agencies." On the occasion, awards for outstanding performances were given to stakeholders, agencies as well as HUDCO employees.

### Tata Power-DDL organises Urja Arpan Conclave

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL) hosted the second edition of Urja Arpan Conclave recently to commemorate World Earth Day. The conclave focussed on the Demand Side Management (DSM) journey of Tata Power-DDL along with raising awareness about responsible and efficient electricity consumption among individuals and organisations.

Talking about the second edition of the Urja Arpan Conclave, Gajanan S. Kale, CEO, Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited, said, "Urja Arpan initiative reinforces our commitment to sustainable development and energy conservation. Through our collaborative efforts and innovative initiatives, we aim to empower individuals and communities to make conscious choices towards creating a greener tomorrow."

Several impactful initiatives took centre stage at the conclave. A special educational

Add to that the spectacular stunts and Gosling-Blunt's sparkling chemistry that cover up for anything amiss. A particularly cute interaction is when Colt is made to repeatedly perform a fire stunt with Jody calling the shots. Another play-off has a dejected Jody waiting for him at a karaoke bar and he is out there jumping into speeding trucks, smashing through glass, somersaulting in the air, to clinch some coveted evidence. It's all very well-choreographed and pictured (Johnathan Sela) — the fight scenes, the helicopter jumps, chase sequences are pure adrenaline rush. Gosling's stunt driver, Logan Holladay, holds the record for most cannon rolls in a car in the film.

As lines begin to blur between Colt's real and reel life, Ryan Gosling transcends into the quintessential blockbuster action hero, juggling romance and comedy with equal ease. He pulls it off exceedingly well, dripping with delectable charm, added with his impeccable comic timing.

Blunt is absolutely on-point as the very focused Jody, who while nursing a broken heart, pulls in some mean punches too. In key supporting roles, Hannah Waddingham, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Stephanie Hsu, Winston Duke add to this screwball action-comedy.

With not a single dull moment, *The Fall Guy* is hilarious and entertaining with epic, exhilarating action as it pays a fitting tribute to the unsung heroes of action flicks.

— Sreeparna Sengupta

To review any movie and check show timings, visit [etimes.in](http://etimes.in)





**SP-CONGRESS ALLIANCE WILL DRAG INDIA BACK TO SLAVERY, SAYS YOGI IN MAINPURI**

**SHOULD HAVE SPLIT FROM UNCLE SHARAD PAWAR 20 YEARS AGO, SAYS AJIT PAWAR**



## Maoists kill 2 Bastar brothers who gave land for police camp

**Raipur:** Maoists murdered two brothers for giving their land to the administration to set up a police camp in Bijapur in Chhattisgarh's Bastar on Wednesday night.

Their retaliation came within 48 hours after 10 insurgents, including some senior commanders, were gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Abujmahar.

Maoists kidnapped Joga Madavi and Joga Hunga from Chhutwai village in Tarrem region of Bijapur, a hotbed of insurgency, police said. Puwarti, the native village of dreaded Maoist commander Hidma, is barely 7km away from Tarrem.

The duo was presented before senior Maoist leaders at a so-called 'jan adalat', where they were accused of working as police informers. Maoists strangled them with ropes and dumped their bodies outside the village on Thursday. **TNN**

## Reserve 33% of bar body posts for women: SC

**News Delhi:** Supreme Court Thursday directed that at least one-third of posts in the executive committee of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) should be reserved for women. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan passed direction granting reservation for women lawyers for polls scheduled this month.

The court directed that a minimum of three out of nine seats in the executive committee and at least two out of six senior executive members be reserved for women members of the Bar. It said that at least one post of office-bearer shall be reserved for women exclusively by turn and on rotation basis, and for the ensuing 2024-2025 election, the post of treasurer of the executive committee be reserved for women. **TNN**

## No clearance sought, none given: MEA on Prajwal trip

### 'MP Using Diplomatic Passport'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Suspended JD (S) functionary and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, accused of sexual harassment, did not seek political clearance from and none was issued by the ministry of external affairs for his trip to Germany, said MEA Thursday. However, MEA confirmed that he had travelled on a diplomatic passport.

**Related reports P 16**

"Obviously, no visa note was issued either," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. While the ministry had not issued any visa note for Prajwal, a reciprocal agreement between India and Germany allows all In-

dian diplomatic passport holders to visit Germany for three months without visa. The ministry had not issued visa note for any other country, Jaiswal added. Asked if Prajwal's passport would be revoked, the official said that the ministry had not received any instruction from any court in that regard.

"As regards the possible revocation of the passport of any individual, I would



ABVP members stage a protest in Hassan to demand Prajwal's arrest

refer you to the relevant provisions of the Passport Act 1967. We are not in receipt of any directions from any court in this regard," said the official.

While Prajwal was required to seek political clearance because he was using his diplomatic passport, he chose not to do so. The immigration staff at airports can stop a person from leaving the country only if there is a look-out notice for him.

### Book Shah, demands Rahul Gandhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Congress's Rahul Gandhi** on Thursday alleged Prajwal Revanna "raped 400 women" and accused PM Modi of endorsing him by soliciting votes for him.

Addressing poll rallies at Shivamogga and Raichur, Rahul demanded registration of a case against home minister Amit Shah's as "he was aware of the case and could have got Prajwal arrested, but allowed him to flee the country".

Earlier, Shah said it was a law and order issue, which is under the state govt. Karnataka's Congress govt was aware of the issue but didn't initiate any action till Vokkaligas had voted and allowed a "heinous criminal" to flee, Shah said.

## 2 years on, Padma awardee toils as a daily wager in Hyderabad

**'People Sympathise With Me, But Don't Give Me Work'**

Pinto.Deepak@timesgroup.com

**Hyderabad:** Honoured two years ago with Padma Shri for reinventing the rare musical instrument 'Kinnara', Darshanam Mogulaiah was recently spotted toiling as a daily wager at a construction site near Hyderabad. Life struck another jarring note when a post-award grant of Rs 1 crore in cash from the Telangana govt was spent on family exigencies, leaving the 73-year-old artiste popular as "Kinnara Mogulaiah" struggling for two square meals.

Mogulaiah outlines the reasons for the descent from the stage of the fourth-highest civilian award in 2022 to the construction site in Turakayamjal. "One of my sons suffers from seizures. For medicines (son and myself) alone I need at least Rs 7,000 a month. Then there are regular medical tests and other expenses," Mogulaiah, father to nine children, told TOI. Three of his kids died from ailments; three are married; three others are still students and dependent on Mogulaiah.

The artiste's wife passed away four years ago. "I tried to reach out to multiple people for work. People sympathised and politely turned me away. All hailed me for my glorious past and even gave me small amounts, but I got no employment," said Mogulaiah. Matters weren't so grim



Things got especially tough when a Rs 10,000 monthly honorarium sanctioned by the state was discontinued recently, said Darshanam Mogulaiah (right)

earlier. "I used that money (Rs 1-crore state grant) for my children's weddings. I even bought a piece of land at Turakayamjal on the city's (Hyderabad's) outskirts. I started building a house but had to stop midway as I ran out of funds," said Mogulaiah.

Things got especially tough when a Rs 10,000 monthly honorarium sanctioned by the state was discontinued recently, rued the artiste, not sure why it happened. "I have been making the rounds of govt offices and meeting public representatives for help. All respond positively but do nothing. What's worse, many people click photos with me and circulate them saying I am begging for existence. It is very painful," Mogulaiah said.

Along with the Rs 1-crore grant, the state had also announced a 600-square yard plot in Rangareddy district, near Hyderabad, for the artiste. The allotment is still pending.

## Mock slaying turns real: 14-year-old playing Kali ends up killing 11-yr-old

Faiz.Siddiqui@timesgroup.com

**Kanpur:** A dramatic enactment of a mythological-religious story during a Bhagwat katha in a Kanpur village resulted in a tragedy, when a 14-year-old boy playing Goddess Kali slashed the neck of an 11-year-old, resulting in his death.

The incident took place in Bambhiyapur village on Wednesday. The Bhagwat katha, organised by the family of one Subhash Saini at their house, had been going on for the past several days. On Wednesday, as

part of the event, children were taking out a tableau depicting and enacting various religious characters.

The teen playing Goddess Kali was mock-slaying a 'demon', played by the 11-year-old, when his knife

### TABLEAU TRAGEDY

struck the neck of the younger boy and injured him fatally. Villagers said the elder boy had been told to use a blunt trident for the act, but he couldn't find one and brought a knife instead.

The family that had organised the event informed police and the injured child

was rushed to the community health centre, where he died during treatment.

On reaching the spot, police detained the 14-year-old for questioning and sent the body for postmortem examination.

On a complaint lodged by Bablu Kashyap, father of the deceased boy, an FIR was registered against the accused teen under section 304 of IPC for causing death by rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide. Assistant commissioner of police Ajay Kumar Trivedi said the organiser of the event had also been taken into custody.

## Pfizer wins trademark battle in HC

**New Delhi:** Delhi HC has permanently restrained use of the 'Vigoura' mark by a homeopathic drug maker to sell its medicine for sexual disorders. The decision came on a lawsuit for trademark infringement filed by Pfizer Products Inc., which sells erectile dysfunction allopathic drug under the 'Viagra' trademark.

HC said there is 'strong potential' for confusion and added that 'Vigoura' and 'Viagra' exhibited a degree of phonetic similarity that could mislead consumers that the former was either a variant of or endorsed by makers of the latter. Pfizer is entitled to nominal damages of Rs 3 lakh, it said. **TNN**

## SC registrar junks govt plea on 2G: 'Review bid in guise of clarification'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** SC's registrar has refused to accept the application filed by the Union govt seeking clarification of the 2012 judgment in the 2G spectrum case for allowing administrative allocation of spectrum in some special cases.

Registrar of judicial listing Pavanesh D refused to accept Centre's miscellaneous application and said, "From a perusal of the prayer made in the application, it is clear the applicant intends to seek review of the order passed by the SC in the guise of filing the present application." "When the application is considered keeping in mind the principles laid down by this court, it is clear

Noting that SC had already refused to review its 2012 verdict, the registrar said, 'Applicant is again attempting to obtain rehearing... in the guise of filing the present application with a similar prayer which was already made in the review petition...'

that the same is not maintainable and it does not disclose any reasonable grounds to be entertained," his order said.

Noting that SC had already refused to review its 2012 verdict, the registrar said, "Applicant is again attempting to obtain rehearing of the matter in open court after a long lapse of time, in the guise of filing the present application with a similar prayer which was already made in the review petition filed by the applicant.

"I am of the considered view that application is misconceived... The pronouncement in the judgment of Feb 2, 2012, does not entitle the applicant herein to file an application of this nature seeking clarification of the judgment... more so, when review petition filed on behalf of the Union of India seeking review of the law (laid) down by SC was withdrawn on May 10, 2012."

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## Sharad-Ajit shadow Pawarplay in Baramati

Behind The Face-Off Between Supriya Sule & Sunetra Pawar, The Two Faction Chiefs Fight For Supremacy In Family Stronghold, & 'Real NCP' Legacy

Ardhra Nair & Alim Shaikh | TNN

The uncle is the unquestionable king of this realm, his calculations never go wrong, and his political acumen is still relied on, overtly or covertly, for almost every decision in Maharashtra. The nephew, who has been quick on the uptake, has learnt every trick from him but his ambitions are clearly not in line with the clan's precepts.

In the last three decades, countless challengers have attempted to breach the Pawar dynasty's bastion, yet electoral victory has always favoured the patriarch and NCP founder Sharad Pawar, or his chosen heirs. However, this time, the 83-year-old warhorse is not facing an external adversary but a shrewd insider, his nephew Ajit Pawar who seeks to test the limits of his dominance. Once the senior Pawar's protégé, Ajit has broken away, taking along the party's name and its symbol — a clock.

Reigning over a fractured fortress — now called NCP (SCP) — Sharad Pawar has anointed his three-time MP daughter, Supriya Sule, to lead the charge from Baramati, which is the family's citadel. Ajit Pawar, currently one of Maharashtra's two deputy CMs, has fielded his wife, Sunetra Pawar. On the surface, it is a Supriya vs Sunetra battle, but it symbolises a desperate struggle for legitimacy and supremacy within Baramati's most powerful family.

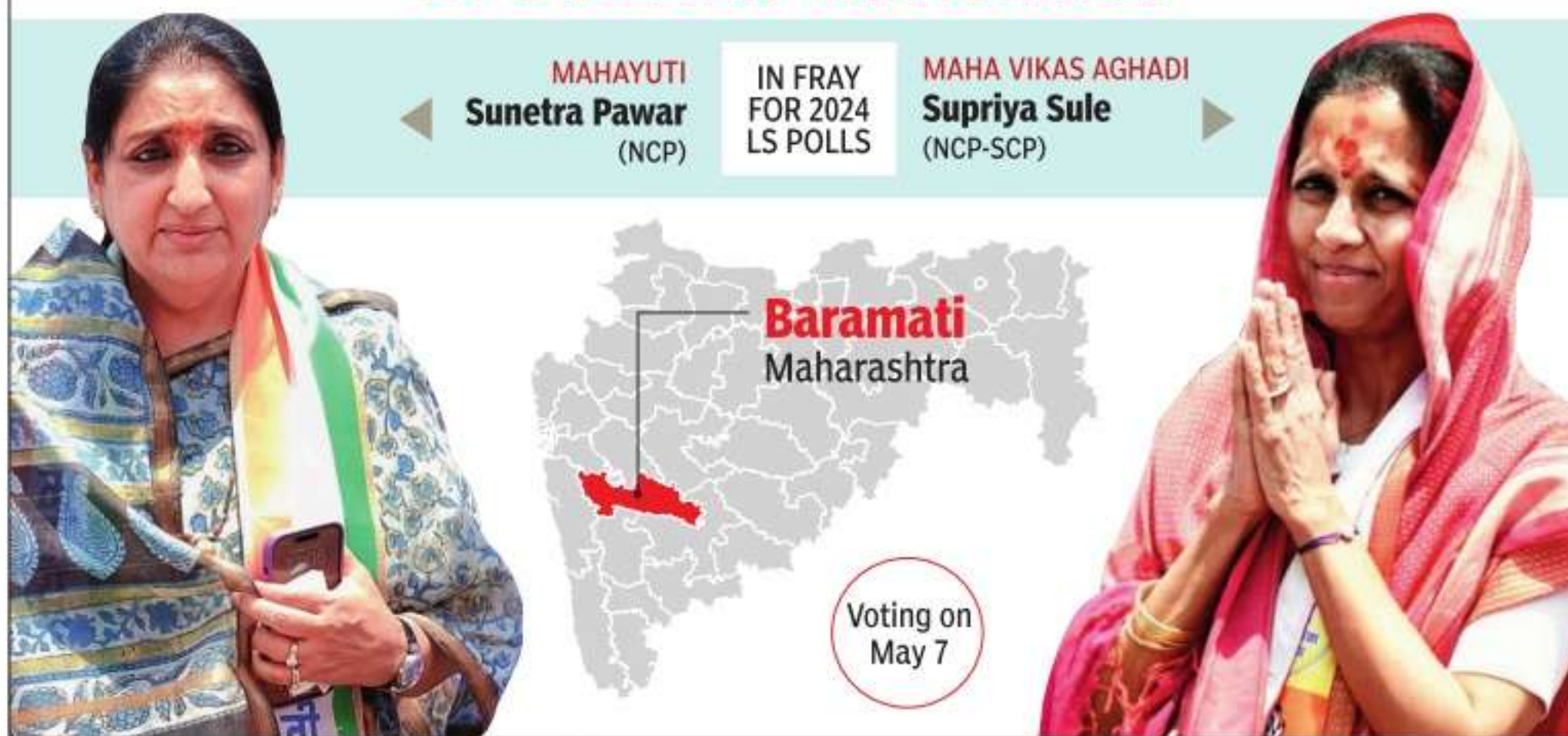
Supriya has inherited splintered support and unfamiliarity among voters with a new symbol — 'a man playing tuturi', and faces the formidable NCP-BJP-Shiv Sena coalition, Mahayuti. While Sunetra has neither the voter connect nor the politician's charisma.

Political analyst Abhay Deshpande says Supriya may leverage the victim card while Sunetra, being a novice, can only bank on her husband's track re-



Once Sharad Pawar's protégé, Ajit Pawar (L) has broken away, taking along NCP's name and its symbol — a clock

### IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY



#### 2019 LS POLL PERFORMANCE

Winner: **Supriya Sule (NCP)**  
Votes: **6.9 lakh**  
Runner-up: **Kanchan Rahul Kool (BJP)**  
Total voters: **23.7 lakh**

#### SIX ASSEMBLY SEGMENTS & 2019 WINNERS

| Baramati              | Indapur                | Purandar            |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Ajit Pawar   NCP      | Dattatray Bhanne   NCP | Sanjay Jagtap   INC |
| Bhor                  | Khadakwasla            | Daund               |
| Sangram Thopate   INC | Bhimrao Tapkir   BJP   | Rahul Kool   BJP    |

cord. Additionally, Supriya faces anti-incumbency sentiments, he says.

Situation on the ground, meanwhile, seems favourable for Sunetra. Of the six assembly segments under Baramati Lok Sabha seat, four are with the governing Mahayuti — two with NCP and two with BJP; and two with Congress which, along with NCP (SCP), is part of the opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). So, in Baramati LS seat, Sharad Pawar's faction does not have any MLA while his nephew's group has two — Baramati assembly seat (which Ajit

Pawar himself represents) and Indapur (NCP's Dattatray Bhanne).

After former state ministers Harshvardhan Patil (BJP) and Vijay Shivtare (Shiv Sena), who holds sway in Indapur and Purandar and were earlier at odds with Ajit Pawar, declared their support for the deputy CM, he is now hoping to get support in Khadakwasla and Daund, the two assembly segments held by BJP.

On the other hand, Supriya is counting on support from loyalists and sympathy for her father, besides votes from the two Congress-led assembly constitu-

encies of Bhor and Purandar.

**The Rise Of Pawar, & The Other Pawar**  
A look at Sharad and Ajit Pawar's career graphs shows that they both had humble beginnings and meteoric rises.

In the early 1960s, Yashwantrao Chavan, the then chief minister, spotted potential in Sharad Pawar during his college days in Pune. Sharad Pawar grew influential in Youth Congress and at 27, he won his first assembly polls from Baramati, followed by becoming Maharashtra's youngest CM and getting

central ministerial berths.

Under his uncle's guidance, Ajit started as a director in a sugar cooperative. In 1991, he made his political debut and won the Baramati LS seat. However, he had to resign later to accommodate his uncle's central ministerial duties. Rising swiftly, Ajit secured the Baramati assembly seat and became a minister in Sudhakarrao Naik-led Congress govt in Maharashtra. Sharad Pawar splitting from Congress in 1999 and forming NCP further spurred Ajit's ascent. Becoming a key figure, Ajit extended his influence statewide while his uncle focused on national affairs.

Through all of this, the uncle-nephew rivalry, even if subdued, existed, political analysts say. It reached its peak in 2019 when a rebellious Ajit Pawar marched to Raj Bhavan and took oath as the deputy CM, aligning with BJP's Devendra Fadnis as the CM. This honeymoon proved shortlived and Ajit returned to the fold. The cracks, however, remained.

"Within NCP there were always two factions. This led to frequent power struggles between the two. The fact that Ajit is scarcely mentioned in his uncle's autobiography, 'Lok Maze Sangati', points to the long-standing differences between them," says Prakash Pawar, professor of political science at Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

In 2023, Sharad Pawar declared he would step down as NCP's national president, a position Ajit vied for. Later, he reversed this decision following overwhelming demand from followers. Eventually, in July that year, Ajit decided it was time to fulfil his ambitions and joined the Eknath Shinde-led govt, along with a group of MLAs and MLCs.

The Baramati seat, with the Pawars since 1996 (Sharad Pawar from 1996 to 2009 and Supriya Sule from 2009 to 2019), is the only Maharashtra seat which will see a woman vs woman battle.

## Kharge's Gulbarga gambit: 1 step back, 2 forward?

By Opting Out Of Race, Cong Chief Bids To Widen Presence In N K'taka

Chethan Kumar  
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**Kalaburagi:** PM Narendra Modi's decision to kick-start the national election campaign from Karnataka's Kalaburagi district was a calculated move, aimed at sending a clear message on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's home turf, which falls under Gulbarga Lok Sabha seat.

At that time, none of the parties had released their list of candidates and speculation was rife that Kharge, who had suffered his first and only electoral defeat since 1972 in the last Lok Sabha elections, would refrain from contesting again.

Kharge, 81, a Rajya Sabha member, eventually decided to stay off the ballot, marking a significant departure from his decades-long presence on Congress's candidate lists for assembly and parliamentary elections from Gulbarga.

Kharge not being in fray is being viewed as a significant development, affecting optics not just for Congress but also for the coalition of opposition parties — INDIA — that he was instrumental in stitching together. Some INDIA members had even pitched Kharge as a potential prime ministerial candidate to take on Modi.

Some local Congress insiders feel Kharge not contesting in the backdrop of PM Modi

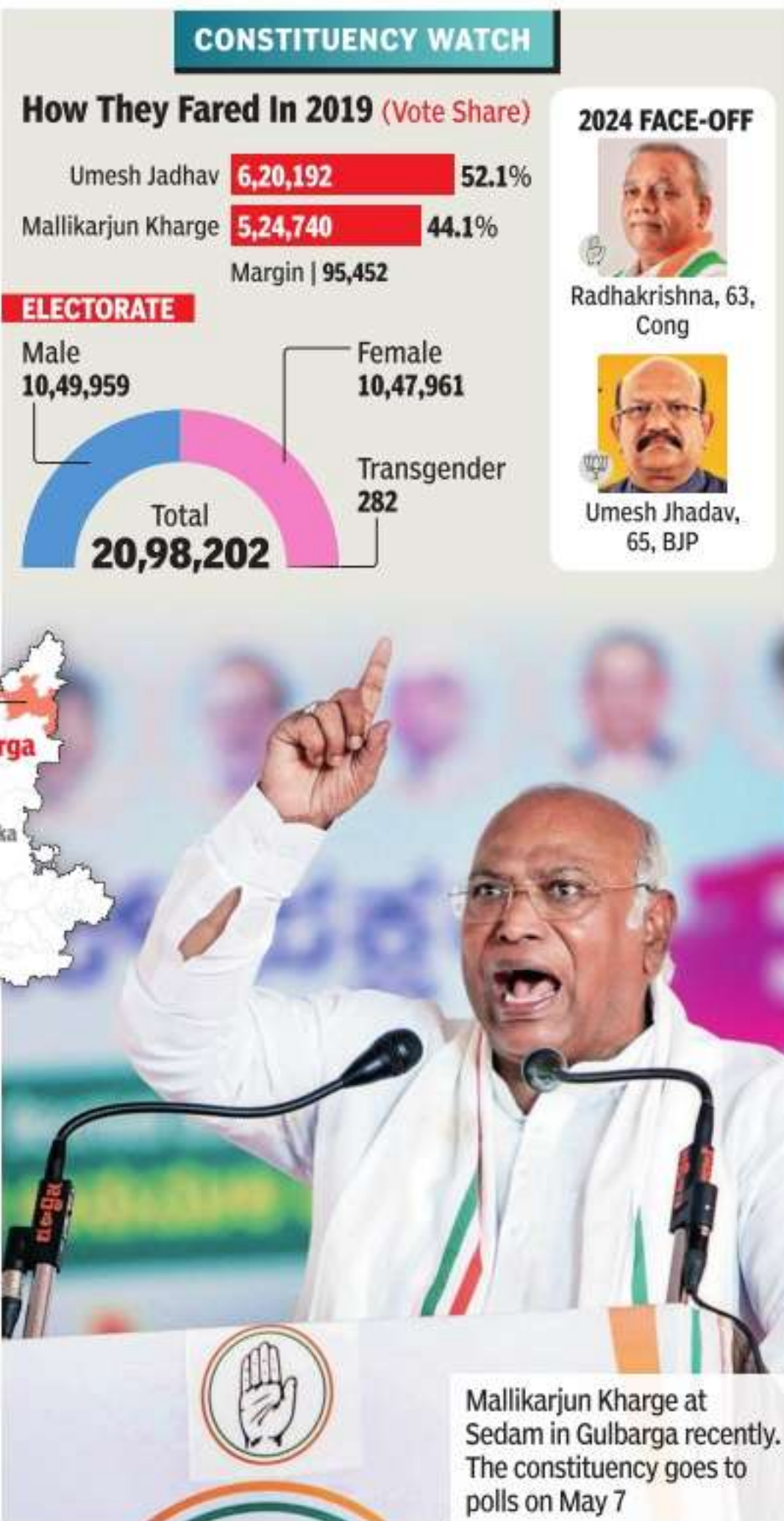
challenging him and ensuring BJP won in Gulbarga in 2019 could further impact the party's image in the region.

But Karnataka minister and Kharge's son, Priyank, said, "His decision to not contest is strategic to consolidate and focus on other winnable seats for Congress, given his stature as a national leader whose influence transcends the confines of a single constituency."

Kharge, who has fielded his son-in-law, Radhakrishna, reiterated that he is at the forefront in Gulbarga and expressed confidence in INDIA coalition's prospects nationally. "These are, more than ever, people's elections — people of India versus 10 years of anti-people policies of BJP whose campaign will evaporate just like in 2004," Kharge had told TOI a few weeks ago.

"There's no doubt about victory," Radhakrishna says, as he battles BJP attacks and soaring temperatures — it was 45°C on April 30, when TOI visited.

Priyank, a key figure in Congress's campaign, says: "Things have improved with every passing day of our campaign. BJP cannot repeat its 2019 performance. Some communities, especially the Kolis and Kurubas, have now realised why they should vote for Congress."



#### Kharge-Modi Battle

The possibility of Kharge becoming PM in case of a fractured verdict has been speculated upon after his elevation as the chairman of INDIA coalition. Congress is even nursing ambitions of a post-poll alliance like in 2004. However, BJP has termed such anticipation "far-fetched", confident of returning to the treasury benches of Lok Sabha with greater numbers.

Parliament has witnessed engrossing battles of wits and words between Kharge and Modi. On Feb 5, Modi told Parliament: "...Even Kharge ji is saying 'this time, it's Modi govt'. Mr Speaker, I usually don't get caught up in statistics. But I can see the mood of the nation; it will ensure NDA crosses the 400-mark."

On Feb 7, he said: "I couldn't say it that day, but I express special thanks to Kharge ji... I was listening very attentively to Kharge ji, and I was thrilled... One thing was very pleasing. I respectfully accept the blessing that he gave to NDA for 400 seats." Kharge, too, has been taking on Modi on a variety of topics, ranging from economic policies and social issues to matters of national security and governance.

Modi has been clear with his messaging, launching his first election campaign from Kharge's Kalaburagi (Gulbarga seat), rather than his own seat (Varanasi) or perceived Congress strongholds, signalling the significance of the region and the challenge posed by

Kharge. Former PM HD Deve Gowda had said, "If Congress wanted to make him the PM, it should have fielded him from Gulbarga... They didn't make him CM even in 2018 when I had suggested it. Will they ever make him PM?"

#### High Stakes

In Gulbarga, Kharge is engaged in a high-stakes battle to reclaim the seat he lost to BJP's Umesh Jadhav — a friend-turned-foe — in 2019. For Kharge, the defeat was an aberration as he held sway as an unbeatable Congress titan in the region until then.

The Congress veteran, who played a crucial role in securing special constitutional status for Kalyana Karnataka region under Article 371(J), seems confident of defeating Jadhav, a Banjara who is seeking votes in PM's name and Hindutva push.

BJP is accusing Kharge of pandering to minority interests, while Congress is selling its secular, inclusive agenda, highlighting BJP's "failures".

After SCs, Lingayats are the largest community in this reserved seat, with around 5 lakh voters, followed by Muslims and land-owning Kolis — Kabbaligas — having 2-3 lakh voters each. Both BJP and Congress are vying for the votes of Lingayats and Kabbaligas. A strong performance by Kharge in Gulbarga could reinvigorate Congress's prospects in the region and prepare the ground for the next assembly polls' fight.

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### SURROUND SOUND

#### No cash in hand, woman hopes to open LS account in Odisha



A 25-year-old woman from Odisha with no cash in hand and bank deposits of Rs 20,625 is contesting from Koraput Lok Sabha seat on an SUCI (Communist) ticket. **Pramila Pujari**, an arts graduate, said, "I don't have enough money to compete with wealthy candidates in the fray but I will have an impact in the election." Despite financial constraints, her party has arranged a vehicle for campaigning. The Koraput seat will go to polls on May 13. — **Satyanarayan Pattnaik**

## Mama, Maharaja & Raja make MP's Round-3 battle of bigwigs

Suchandana Gupta  
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**Bhopal:** The third phase of LS elections is a blockbuster round for Madhya Pradesh. It will decide the political future of three bigwigs — 'Maharaja' Jyotiraditya Scindia, 'bachchon ke mama and behno ke bhaiya' Shivraj Singh Chouhan and 'raja' of Raghogarh Digvijaya Singh aka Diggy Raja.

Scindia, the Union aviation minister, returns to Guna to try to reclaim the family seat after his shock loss to former aide K P Yadav in 2019. He had won four times from the seat that has traditionally voted for the Scindias — from 'Rajmata' Vijayraje to Madhavrao and Jyotiraditya — and hadn't expected to be the first to lose it. That, too, by over 1.25 lakh votes.

The equations have changed since Scindia quit Congress in March 2020 and is now the BJP candidate. Yadav, hailed as a hero by BJP in 2019, finds himself sidelined and understandably not very pleased.

At a rally in Guna, Union home minister Amit Shah called Scindia "Maharaj" and appealed to voters to "not worry about K P Yadav" as BJP will take care of his future. "You will get two leaders," he told the voters of Guna. "Jyotiraditya and K P Yadav."

"Jyotiraditya is BJP's candidate. Among us, if any person is totally dedicated to development, then it is this Maharaj. The Scindia family has nurtured this region more than their children," Shah said.

Despite Shah's campaign, Guna may not be easy for Scindia. One of the major reasons is the predominant Yadav vote bank which turned its back on him in 2019. Also, the Congress candidate, Rao Yadendra Singh Yadav, is a former BJP worker with a Jan Sangh legacy.

His father, Rao Deshranj Singh Yadav, had established the saffron party in Chambal and challenged Scindia in the 2002 LS bypoll, held after the demise of Madhavrao Scindia in an air crash. In the sympathy

wave, Jyotiraditya defeated Deshranj by over 4 lakh votes.

Deshranj had also contested unsuccessfully against Madhavrao Scindia in 1999. His son, Yadendra, recently switched to Congress after over two decades with BJP. He is also a member of Ashokenagar district panchayat.

It's again a family vs family contest with the sides switched. In Rajgarh, it's Digvijaya's homecoming after 30 years. He contested this seat thrice and won in 1984 and 1991. He was defeated in 1989 by Jan Sangh leader Pyarelal Khandelwal.

In 1991, Singh defeated Khandelwal by just 1,470 votes.

After becoming CM in Dec 1993, Digvijaya vacated Rajgarh seat. His brother Lakshman Singh won the bypoll that followed, and four more polls from Rajgarh, the last one on a BJP ticket in 2004.

To prove his loyalty to Congress, Digvijaya fielded Narayan Singh Amlave as the party's candidate against his brother in 2009 and personally cam-

#### TITAN WATCH

Shivraj Singh Chouhan | BJP

SEAT | Vidisha

➤ Won in 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004  
CONTEST STATUS | Comfortably placed  
➤ The former 4-time CM returns to the parliamentary seat after 18 years. Vidisha remains a BJP fortress where Cong last won 40 years ago. Cong has fielded Pratap Bhanu Sharma, the last partymen to win Vidisha in 1980 & 1984

Jyotiraditya Scindia | BJP

SEAT | Guna

➤ Won in 2002, 2004, 2009, 2014 (as Cong nominee). Lost to BJP's K P Yadav in 2019  
CONTEST STATUS | Tight race

➤ Up against Cong's Rao Yadendra Singh Yadav, a former BJP man with Jan Sangh legacy. Scindia's campaign boosted by Amit Shah rally but he may struggle to get predominant Yadav vote, which was one of the reasons for his 2019 loss



Digvijaya Singh | Cong

SEAT | Rajgarh

➤ Won in 1984, 1991. Lost to BJP's Pyarelal Khandelwal in 1989  
CONTEST STATUS | Tight race

➤ Diggy Raja's running a determined campaign in a seat which Cong last won in 2009. Six of 8 assembly segments have BJP MLAs. BJP candidate Rodmal Nagar won in 2019 with a massive 65% vote share



paign to ensure Congress' win. Amlave beat Lakshman by 24,388 votes. That was the last time Raghogarh royal family represented the seat. The Modi wave caught up with Rajgarh

in 2014 and 2019 when BJP's Rodmal Nagar, a local businessman close to RSS, won by margins of 2.2 lakh and 4.3 lakh.

This is Digvijaya's turf where the 77-year-old is known

as Rajasahab. The Raja returned, albeit wounded, from Bhopal in 2019 when he lost to Malegaon blast accused Pragya Singh Thakur, BJP's candidate. Diggy Raja is running a de-

termined campaign, addressing public meetings and contacting voters in 25 villages a day. But it is a hard fight.

Six of the eight assembly segments of Rajgarh have BJP MLAs. The only two Congress-held ones are Raghogarh, where his son Jaivardhan is the MLA, and Sunser where Congress' Bhairon Singh is the MLA. Jaivardhan won by a margin of 4,505 votes in the Nov 2023 assembly elections and Bhairon by 12,645 votes.

Compared to Maharaja and Raja, former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is sitting pretty in Vidisha — an impregnable BJP fortress last won by Congress in 1984.

Before becoming CM, Chouhan represented Vidisha five times in LS from 1991 (when Atal Behari Vajpayee vacated it) till 2006. Chouhan returns to his LS seat after 18 years. Congress has fielded Pratap Bhanu Sharma, the last partymen to win Vidisha in 1980 and 1984.

Vidisha is where Sushma Swaraj won by over 4 lakh votes

in 2009 and 2014. In 2019, a relatively less known Ramakant Bhargava won by over 5 lakh votes. Mama Shivraj — chief minister for 16 years whose popularity hit the peak with Ladli Bahna Yojana — is targeting a victory margin of 8 lakh votes. If he achieves this, Chouhan will again emerge as the most popular political face of Madhya Pradesh despite not being chief minister anymore.

At a public meeting in Betul last Wednesday, PM Modi said he was taking Chouhan to Parliament. "On May 7, there is an election in Vidisha where my brother Shivraj ji is the candidate. Shivraj Singh Chouhan and I used to work together in the organisation. When he was chief minister and I was chief minister, we used to work together. He went to Parliament when I used to work as general secretary. And now again I want to take him with me," the PM said. This, however, means that Chouhan's era in Madhya Pradesh is over; he will now return to central politics.

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# Kharge to Modi: You are desperate, lying

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has written to PM Narendra Modi that his letter to NDA candidates betrays a desperation, and he wants the candidates to "amplify lies" because his own lies are not having the effect he had hoped.

Kharge said the claim that Congress will snatch the reservation of SC/ST/OBC is a "blatant lie" because people know it is RSS that is opposing reservations since they were introduced post-Independence, and now BJP leaders are saying that openly in the campaign. He said the PM should instead clarify why he is opposed to giving reservation in proportion to population.

Kharge said Modi has asked candidates to talk about Congress snatching people's wealth by bringing 'inheritance tax' when no such issue has been mentioned in the party manifesto and when it is a fact that BJP has looted Rs 10 crore from farmers in Gujarat for electoral bonds, and collected over Rs 8,000 crore in all.

"From the tone and content of the letter it seems that there is a lot of desperation and worry in you which is leading you to use language that does not suit the office of the PM. Repeating a lie a thousand times will not make



Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with Rahul Gandhi and Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah at a rally in Karnataka's Shivamogga on Thursday

it the truth," the Congress president said, citing the PM's letter to all NDA candidates about what they need to communicate to the voters.

Kharge challenged the PM for a debate on the Congress manifesto and concluded his letter saying, "when the elections are over, people will only remember you as the PM who indulged in divisive and communal speeches filled with lies to avoid an inevitable defeat."

He goes on to talk about the guarantees in the Congress manifesto focussed on the rights of the youth, women, farmers, labour force and the empowerment of the poor: "Our guarantee is Nyay to all," Kharge emphasises. "We have heard you and the home minister say that Congress is practising appeasement politics. The only ap-

peasement policy that we have seen in the last 10 years is the appeasement of Chinese by you and your ministers," Kharge said.

"Even today, you refuse to call China as 'ghuspaithiye (intruder)', instead on June 19, 2020, you said 'na koi ghusha hai, na hi koi ghusha aaya hai', insulting the supreme sacrifice of 20 Indian soldiers in Galwan. "Your public 'Clean Chit' to China, has weakened India's case and made it more belligerent," he added.

Kharge goes on to highlight that the PM has appealed to BJP workers to mobilise voters in the name of religion. "It is better as the PM if you seek votes on the performance of your government over the last ten years instead of indulging in hate speeches," the Congress President states.

# BJP to Congress: You are desperate, lying

**New Delhi:** Congress has been carrying out a "desperate campaign of lies, misinformation and appeasement politics" for votes in the Lok Sabha polls as it is left with no other option after having betrayed the people's trust repeatedly during its rule in the past, BJP alleged on Thursday.

Addressing a press conference here at the BJP headquarters, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said PM Narendra Modi has put the country on the path of progress in the last 10 years and India became the third largest economy in the world under his leadership from the "fragile five" during the UPA rule.

"Congress, which was given multiple opportunities by the people to serve them, has betrayed their trust repeatedly and is today left with no other alternative but (to carry out) a desperate campaign of lies, misinformation and appeasement politics," he said.

While the BJP's campaign for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls is based on the "performance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi", Congress is not speaking a word on the 10 years of the UPA rule but is spreading lies on various issues including reservation to SCs, STs and OBCs, Chandrasekhar said.

The BJP functionary dismissed as false propaganda Congress' claim that BJP was



BJP supporters during PM Modi's rally in Gujarat's Anand on Thursday

seeking 400-plus seats in the parliamentary polls because it wants to change the Constitution and end the provisions made to provide reservation to the SCs, STs and OBCs.

He alleged that the Congress is trying to build a "false narrative". It is spreading this "lie" while visiting every archbishop, Christians and Muslims, he charged.

"We protect the reservation. They want to provide religion-based quota to which BJP is completely against. The people are aware of this fundamental difference between the BJP-led NDA and the Congress," he headed.

Chandrasekhar also took on Congress over its "redistribution of wealth" poll promise and said, "At a time when we are making policies to empower the youth and enable them to achieve their as-

pirational goals, Congress has brought Marxist economic policy of redistribution of wealth."

Addressing the press conference, BJP national spokesperson Sayed Zafar Islam highlighted the Modi government's achievements in the last 10 years and hit out at the Congress over its claim of growing inequality during NDA rule.

"The Indian economy is growing at a faster pace. Congress and its economists talk about equality and inequality while in reality, inequality is the lowest in the country today," he said.

"While there was double digit inflation during UPA rule, it is the lowest at 3.2 per cent today. PM Modi controlled inflation and did not let it rise in the last 10 years," the BJP functionary said. PTI

# Naidu playing dirty, instigated my sister against me: Jagan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during the release of party's manifesto

**Vijayawada:** Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday accused his rival, TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu, of "playing dirty" by "influencing" his sister, YS Sharmila, to contest elections in the state against him. Sharmila heads Congress's Andhra unit, which is contesting Lok Sabha and assembly elections against TDP and Jagan's YSRCP.

In an interview with Times Now, Jagan was moved to tears when asked about fighting polls against his estranged sister. Accusing Naidu of being hand-in-glove with Telangana CM Revanth Reddy, Jagan said: "TDP head remote-controlled Revanth and my sister. My familial relations (with Sharmila) are disturbed due to TDP."

Jagan said he had implored his sister to pick any profession other than politics, but she was "influenced" by rivals who exploited the fissures in the family. When asked why he blocked his sister from joining politics, Jagan said: "I don't prefer family-run politics... how many members will opt for politics?"

Congress is projecting Sharmila as the daughter who deserves the legacy and inheritance of the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy. When asked how his mother is coping with the friction among the siblings, Jagan dodged the query saying: "Politics is not just about contesting, it is about delivering to people."

Claiming that YSRCP will sweep the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Jagan said both NDA and INDIA bloc were "insignificant" in the state. When asked to choose between PM Narendra Modi and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi at a national level, Jagan said his support will be issue-based and not specific to an individual.

Jagan said while he backed the PM's 'One Nation, One Election' proposal, he disagreed with him over his views on the minorities. On Rahul, he said: "Given the history I have with Rahul... I was sent to jail by them. So, my opinion of Rahul cannot be unbiased." He blamed Congress and Telugu Desam Party for trying to malign his family's reputation when he was sent to jail for 16 months in the disproportionate assets case registered against him by CBI.

Jagan also blamed erstwhile UPA govt for promising 'special status' for Andhra Pradesh but stopping short of turning it into an Act. He said this allowed BJP a chance to deny special status to Andhra Pradesh.

# Cong altered quota system several times to benefit Muslims: BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Responding to senior Congress veteran P Chidambaram's claim that PM Narendra Modi continued to fight ghosts in his election speeches on the quota issue, BJP on Thursday circulated a long list of occasions when the quota system was altered especially to benefit the Muslim community.

"Congress ensured that SC/ST reservation, as mandated by the Constitution, was removed from Aligarh Muslim University (1981) and Jamia Millia Islamia (2011) in fa-

vour of Muslims, even though both are govt funded. Congress also ensured that 'minority' institutions, even if state funded, don't have to provide reservations for SC/ST/OBCs." BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said as he posted a list of times when the quota structure was altered. He said not just this, Congress tried to give reservation to Muslims in Andhra Pradesh five times but the courts struck it down every time.

After citing several attempts by Congress to introduce 5% Muslim quota in govt jobs and educational institu-



BJP's Mandi candidate Kangna Ranaut during campaigning on Thursday

tions between 2004-14, BJP claimed that in June 2013, then minority affairs minister K Rahman Khan said UPA was

committed to implement a 4.5% Muslim quota. "Finally, the UPA govt went to SC to plead for Muslim reservation.

The SC clubbed the central Muslim quota case of UPA govt with the Andhra Pradesh Muslim quota case and heard the matter through a constitutional bench," Malviya said.

Rebutting Chidambaram's claim, Malviya said the 2024 Congress manifesto unequivocally implied Muslim reservation. "For instance, what is the difference between Point 3 and Point 6 in the minorities section of the manifesto? Point 3 says 'encourage' minorities to take full advantage of opportunities. If the Congress manifesto had limited itself to just this, it would have

been okay. But Point 6 says 'ensure' minorities receive 'fair share' on exactly the same issues as mentioned in Point 3," Malviya said.

Meanwhile, Baby Rani Maurya, a senior minister in Yogi Adityanath's cabinet and a known Dalit face, cited the several positions she held, from governor to a senior minister, and said Congress and its allies should respond to Modi's "challenge" that there will not be any alteration in the quota system to accommodate Muslims for their politics of appeasement and vote bank.

# My father inherited martyrdom, not wealth: Priyanka

Suchandana Gupta  
@timesgroup.com

**Bhopal:** Congress national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Thursday hit back strongly at BJP's accusation that former PM Rajiv Gandhi abolished inheritance tax in 1985 so that he wouldn't have to give away part of the wealth he inherited after the death of his mother, Indira Gandhi.

"My father inherited martyrdom," she said at an election rally in MP's Morena. It was her first visit to Madhya Pradesh for Lok Sabha elections. Morena votes in the third phase on May 7.

A week ago, in Morena, PM Modi had said: "It was widely said that when Indira Gandhi passed away and her son Rajiv had to get her property, as PM, he abolished the inheritance law of that time to save his property and ensure the money didn't go to govt."

"I know what martyrdom means. Today, I am 52, and I'm saying this for the first time in public. How do I make you understand how much love I have for my country? When Modi ji stands on the dais and calls my father a 'traitor', when Modi ji says that my father changed a law to take inheritance from his mother, he will never real-



Priyanka during a public meeting in Chhattisgarh's Korba on Thursday

ise that my father did not get riches and wealth as inheritance. My father got the sentiments of martyrdom as inheritance," she said.

She argued that the people of Morena can understand the feeling. Morena is in Chambal where every village takes pride in sending their young men and women to military.

Attacking PM Modi for his allegation that Congress will "X-ray bank lockers", Priyanka said, "They are deceiving you by claiming that Congress is going to 'steal your mangalsutra'. The PM says that with X-Ray machines, Congress will enter your homes and take away your mangalsutra, gold and property. Have you heard of anything more absurd?"

# Cong aims to create rift between Ram & Shiva devotees : PM

► Continued from P1

We have heard about 'love jihad' and 'land Jihad' so far. This campaign for vote jihad is the latest. I presume you all know what the meaning of 'jihad' is," PM told a gathering in Anand, Gujarat's milk city. "Worse, not a single Congress functionary has condemned it yet."

Modi also tore into Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge for his allegedly disparaging remarks about Ram and Shiva devotees, accusing him of trying to create a rift among Hindus in pursuance of his party's 'appeasement' of Muslims.

At an election rally in Surendranagar, the PM said, "Congress chief Kharge has made a very dangerous statement with malafide intentions. They (Congress) aim to create differences among devotees of Ram and Shiva so that they fight with each other. Even the Mughals could not break our traditions dating back thousands of years, but now Congress wants to break it?"

Modi iterated that the Congress manifesto smacked of "Muslim League's declarations", carrying forward its

intent to grant reservation based on religion to Muslims for three decades.

"Congress betrayed the Constitution... Its manifesto proposes a separate quota for minorities, especially Muslims, in the allocation of all govt tenders," he said.

"Govt contracts are not awarded based on caste or religion. But Congress wants to do that for its vote bank. Govt buys arms and ammunition for our Army from private players. So, are we going to give contracts to people from a specific religion or select qualified contractors?"

Declaring that nobody would be able to divide the country until he was alive, the PM announced the launch of a nationwide campaign to spread awareness about the Constitution after the vote count on June 4.

"I will expose this gang that wants to alter the Constitution. I will reach out to people living in every corner of the country. It's time we teach a lesson to these people," he said.

Modi addressed four rallies covering Anand in central Gujarat and several constituencies of Saurashtra, including Junagadh, Jamnagar and Surendranagar.

# Polling booths in tiger territory get fresh net cover in Sundarbans

Krishnendu Mukherjee | TNN

**Kolkata:** A 12km river stretch skirting the villages of Lahiripur, Jamespur, Kumirmari, Choto Mollakhali, and Jharkhali in Sundarbans in West Bengal has got fresh nylon nets to prevent tigers that stray out of the reserve forest from encroaching into human habitats and disrupting the poll process on June 1.

There are at least 57 polling booths in these villages on the edge of the forest. Spread across Gosaba and Kultali assembly constituen-

cies under Jaynagar Lok Sabha seat, these villages have over 5 lakh voters.

Indian Sundarbans is home to at least 101 tigers, according to the latest census.

"With the elections approaching, vigilance has been increased and a 12km section of old fencing replaced," Justice Jones, deputy field director, said, adding that much of their focus is on booths located along this vulnerable stretch.

Officials from South 24 Parganas division are monitoring additional 92km stretch protected by net fencing.

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## CHANGE OF NAME

**I PRATEEK KUMAR JAIN S/O NAVEEN KUMAR JAIN R/O D120 ANAND VIHAR DELHI 110092 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM PRATEEK JAIN TO PRATEEK KUMAR JAIN FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES**

**BHAVYA** Mohan S/o Ankush Mohan R/o Greater Noida West has changed his name from Bhavya Mohan



## TMC sharpens attack on Adhir over 'vote for BJP' video clip

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress has accused Bengal Congress chief Adhir Chowdhury of being a "BJP agent", latching onto a campaign video where he is allegedly heard saying "voting for BJP is better than voting for Trinamool", reports **Tamagna Banerjee**.

Congress has labelled the clip "doctored" and blamed TMC for spreading "misinformation".

West Bengal CM **Mamata Banerjee** seized on the video to allege that "BJP and (Bengal) Congress were working in tandem to engineer TMC's defeat".

TMC Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale shared the 8-second clip on X. "Finally — from the B-team horse's mouth! Chowdhury publicly asks people in his rally to vote for BJP and not TMC. While Mamata fights against the full might of Modi and central agencies machinery, Bengal Congress is openly asking votes for BJP. Congress and CPM have chosen to become Modi's loyal soldiers...beyond shameless," Gokhale wrote.

In its rebuttal, the state Congress shared a video of Chowdhury's speech, made while campaigning for Jangipur party candidate Mortuza Hossain.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh claimed Chowdhury's comment had been taken out of context and stressed that Congress' only goal was to significantly reduce BJP's seats from the 18 (out of 42) seats it won in Bengal in 2019. "This is not an assembly election. These are Lok Sabha elections and Congress is in INDIA bloc with allies. Mamata has said she is also part of INDIA bloc, although seat-sharing with us could not happen," added Ramesh.

## Shah: Many will get citizenship under CAA this month

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid growing claims by opposition parties that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) will be scrapped immediately if they come to office, Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday declared that the process of giving citizenship under the law will begin this month, while also defending the "timing" of Arvind Kejriwal's arrest by saying it was occasioned by the Delhi chief minister's repeated non-compliance with Enforcement Directorate's (ED) summons.

"Applications have already started to come in. The scrutiny is happening according to the rules. And I think before the elections, before the last phase, the process of giving citizenship will start," Shah told News18 Network.

The assertion follows Congress joining Left, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Communist Party of India (Marxist) to promise repeal of CAA, meant to provide citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who have taken shelter here to escape religious persecution. Opposition parties have called the law discriminatory on the ground that it does not cover Muslims.

Govt has justified the omission by saying that CAA is meant to help religious minorities from the three neighbouring Muslim countries and that it does not provide for cancellation of anyone's citizenship.

In the interview with the TV channel, Shah dis-



Home minister Amit Shah and BJP candidate Prahlad Joshi being garlanded during a poll rally in Karnataka's Dharwad

missed the contention that the dip in polling numbers could hurt BJP and said outdated electoral rolls and lack of "competition" were the main reasons why turnout in the first two phases lagged the poll percentage in the first two rounds in 2019. "There are many reasons for the lower turnout. After 12 years, the electoral rolls have been revised. The second reason is that there is no contest from the other side, which affects the turnout in a way," he said.

On the timing of arrests of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, Shah emphasised that both had repeatedly refused to answer summons. "They did not appear after many summonses. If they had appeared (before the agency) after the first summons, they would have been arrested six months before the elections. Many times, summonses were sent, but they did not come," he said.

## Oppn sensing defeat, resorting to communal agenda: BJP

New Delhi: BJP Thursday reacted strongly to a TMC MLA publicly threatening to "flush the Hindu community into the Ganga", and said the opposition bloc had sensed "inevitable defeat" and was resorting to a headline communal agenda to polarise a section of society.

BJP spokesman Sudhanshu Trivedi said it was a threat to the Hindu community as he appealed to people to give a befitting reply to such people by voting in maximum numbers. A video of Humayun Kabir, TMC MLA from Bharatpur in Murshidabad district, in which he is threatening to drown the Hindu community in the Ganga has gone viral.

Trivedi cited an "INDI Alliance" member in Farrukhabad speaking of "vote jihad". "Congress has sensed its inevitable defeat and INDI Alliance is now going berserk. They are losing their mental cool and balance so they are going to the extent of invoking violence on the headline communal agenda. First, they tried to put a communal lining in their manifesto. Then they tried to communalise the reservation issue," he said.

"TMC MLA Humayun Kabir has gone to the extent of saying that we will drown you in the Ganga. Your hatred against Hindu dharma and sanskriti stands exposed," he said. **TNN**

## Yogi slams Kharage for 'pitting Ram against Shiv'

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath Thursday lashed out at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharage for his remark on Ram and Shiv at a poll rally in Chhattisgarh saying it was against the religious sentiments of the majority in India.

While trying to explain the 'significance' of Congress candidate Shivkumar Dahariya's name, Kharage said: "Ye Ram ka muqabla kar sakta hai kyunki ye Shiv hai (He can compete with Ram because he is Shiv)." On Thursday, Yogi said Congress' history was replete with instances of the party insulting Sanatan Dharma. But such statements became even more conspicuous during polls when Congress disrespected "India's faith". Yogi claimed Kharage was steering Congress towards oblivion through divisive actions and hoped that Lord Ram and Lord Shiv would guide the grand old party's leadership to embrace path of truth. **TNN**

## Amid Kshatriya ire, 45 Guj 'royals' back Modi

### Cite 'Broader Nat'l Interest', Need To Protect Sanatan Dharma

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Rajkot: Heirs of 45 erstwhile princely states in Gujarat on Thursday adopted a resolution to support PM Narendra Modi in winning a third consecutive term in "broader national interest" and for "protecting Sanatan Dharma".

A "contemplation meeting" of princely states was organised by the Rajkot royal scion Mandhathasinh Jadeja.

The meeting was called in the wake of the Kshatriya community's protest against Rajkot BJP candidate and Union minister Parshottam Rupala, which has now converted into anger against the saffron party.

"PM is an ascetic and a brave man working for well-being and protection of 145 crore Indians," Jadeja said.

During the meeting, the heirs of 28 states were present, and 16 declared their support through letters. Jadeja read out the letters from the empress of Kutch, Priti



Members of erstwhile royal families in Rajkot on Thursday

## Kumbhani finally surfaces, says no to meets

Nilesh Kumbhani, the disqualified Congress candidate for Surat LS seat, finally surfaced after several days and reached his house on Thursday, but refused to meet anyone, including the media. There was a heavy security bandobast at his apartment to ensure no unlawful situation took place, and cops didn't allow anyone to enter without proper verification, in view of protests held earlier by Congress and AAP, declaring him "wanted", after his disqualification and disappearance.

Before he reached home, Kumbhani had told a couple of people to alert media persons about his plan to address reporters at his farm in Sarthana, sources said, adding that he dropped the idea later "due to unknown reasons". "He was to describe the entire episode in detail (of candidature withdrawal) to make his stand clear, but changed his mind," a source claimed. **TNN**

Devi, and the king of Bhavnagar state, Vijayrajsinhji.

Jadeja said in the current global turmoil, India requires a strong govt. "It is the view of all royal families that 2024 election is for bright future of our next generation, culture & sanatan dharma."

Replaying to a question from the media on the ongoing protests by the Kshatriya community, Jadeja said "Dialogue between the coordination committee (of Kshatriya community) and BJP leaders is on and I believe the issue will be settled soon."

## Jittery over his namesake, BJP nominee moves HC for 'shield'

Hyderabad: BJP's Konda Vishweshwar Reddy petitioned Telangana HC Thursday for a directive to EC to eliminate the "unfair" possibility of voters getting "confused" by the presence of a namesake from Forward Bloc among his 42 rivals in the polls to the Chevella LS seat, reports **Sagarkumar Mutha**.



The ex-MP, among the richest politicians with total declared family assets of Rs 4,568 crore, is No. 2 on the list of candidates that voters will see. The other Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, a resident of Karmanghat in Hyderabad, is No. 5.

The petition urges the court to direct EC to arrange the list in such a way that there are at least 10 other names between the two Kondas. "My email representation to EC in this regard still hasn't received a response," the BJP member said.

He said that since BJP, BRS and Congress were vying for the seat, the victory margin could be small. "Even if I lose a few votes on account of this confusion about two people with the exact same name, my chances of winning could be affected." HC directed EC to take a decision on the BJP candidate's representation soon.

## EC shunts out Pandian's wife after claims of bid to influence voters

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Election Commission on Thursday ordered the transfer of Sujata R Kartikeyan, commissioner-cum-secretary of Mission Shakti in Odisha to a non-public dealing department with immediate effect.

Sources said the action was taken based on complaints of alleged misuse of public office by the officer. Earlier in the day, BJP had complained to the Election Commission against Sujata for allegedly "influencing voters through SVEEP

for electoral gains for BJD."

Sujata is the wife of former IAS officer and BJD functionary V K Pandian. Both BJP and BJD are locked in a tight contest in Odisha, after alliance talks between the two collapsed close to the polls.

BJP had demanded that she not be assigned any public dealing duty till the conclusion of the Lok Sabha and the Odisha assembly polls.

Earlier, BJP also lodged a complaint with EC against Congress for no effective action taken against Rahul Gandhi and party president

Mallikarjun Kharage for "continuous violations of MCC". A BJP delegation comprising finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, skill development minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Sudhanshu Trivedi and Om Pathak met EC.

Its complaint against Congress demanded action and "meticulous scrutiny of patently false narratives". BJP claimed that despite earlier representations to EC, Congress has continued "spreading falsehoods through not only their public utterances, but also through doctored and morphed video and surrogate advertisements" against BJP.



## Ind wanted in old case gives cops slip after filing papers

Bokaro: In a major embarrassment to Jharkhand Police, Jairam Kumar Mahto, independent candidate from Giridih Lok Sabha seat, managed to give cops the slip on Wednesday when they attempted to detain him in a two-year-old case, reports **Divy Khare**.

Mahto filed his nomination papers with the returning officer, attended a public meeting and escaped despite significant police presence at Bokaro Collectorate and ITI More ground. Senior police officials refused to comment regarding this.

Sources say the case against Mahto pertains to holding demonstration at the Vidhan Sabha. As many as 11 people, including Mahto, are named in the FIR.

## Jairam Mahto filed his nomination and attended a public meeting in Bokaro before escaping despite significant police presence

Mahto, a popular leader, has gained significant support from the locals through his organisation Jharkhandi Bhasha Khatian Sangharsh Samiti. His large gatherings have become a cause for concern for major political parties.

A samiti functionary said the FIR was filed on March 21, 2022. He claimed Mahto was not aware of the case until police came to arrest him. "The protest in 2022 was peaceful and administrative officials assured no case was filed against us. Now we've come to know about the FIR. We did not receive any notice regarding the case," the samiti functionary added.

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( ₹ in crores, except ratios)

## Extract of audited consolidated financial results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2024

| S. No. | Particulars                                                                                                                                 | Quarter ended<br>(31/03/2024) | Current<br>year ended<br>(31/03/2024) | Corresponding<br>quarter ended<br>(31/03/2023) | Previous<br>year ended<br>(31/03/2023) |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1      | Revenue from operations                                                                                                                     | 2,814.64                      | 12,404.01                             | 2,677.80                                       | 11,529.89                              |
| 2      | Net Profit for the period / year (before tax, exceptional items and share of (loss) / profit of joint venture)                              | 453.06                        | 2,359.25                              | 396.44                                         | 2,220.31                               |
| 3      | Net Profit for the period / year before tax (after exceptional items and share of (loss) / profit of joint venture)                         | 452.66                        | 2,358.74                              | 396.25                                         | 2,218.68                               |
| 4      | Net Profit for the period / year after tax and share of (loss) / profit of joint venture                                                    | 341.22                        | 1,811.31                              | 292.76                                         | 1,701.33                               |
| 5      | Net Profit for the period / year after tax (after non controlling interest and share of (loss) / profit of joint venture)                   | 349.53                        | 1,842.68                              | 300.83                                         | 1,707.15                               |
| 6      | Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprising profit for the period / year (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax) ) | 259.93                        | 1,750.82                              | 196.14                                         | 1,481.66                               |
| 7      | Paid-up equity share capital (Face Value of ₹ 1 each)                                                                                       | 177.20                        | 177.20                                | 177.18                                         | 177.18                                 |
| 8      | Reserves (excluding Revaluation/capital Reserve)                                                                                            | 9,586.58                      | 9,586.58                              | 8,769.16                                       | 8,769.16                               |
| 9      | Securities Premium Account                                                                                                                  | 534.39                        | 534.39                                | 520.95                                         | 520.95                                 |
| 10     | Net worth                                                                                                                                   | 9,763.78                      | 9,763.78                              | 8,946.34                                       | 8,946.34                               |
| 11     | Outstanding Debt                                                                                                                            | 1,365.09                      | 1,365.09                              | 1,173.79                                       | 1,173.79                               |
| 12     | Debt Equity Ratio                                                                                                                           | 0.14                          | 0.14                                  | 0.13                                           | 0.13                                   |
| 13     | Earnings per share (Face value of ₹ 1 each) (not annualised)                                                                                |                               |                                       |                                                |                                        |
|        | (a) Basic                                                                                                                                   | 1.97                          | 10.40                                 | 1.70                                           | 9.64                                   |
|        | (b) Diluted                                                                                                                                 | 1.97                          | 10.38                                 | 1.69                                           | 9.61                                   |
| 14     | Debt Service Coverage Ratio                                                                                                                 | 12.67                         | 17.39                                 | 13.04                                          | 22.72                                  |
| 15     | Interest Service Coverage Ratio                                                                                                             | 16.90                         | 23.21                                 | 16.52                                          | 33.35                                  |
| 16     | Other Equity                                                                                                                                | 9,689.10                      | 9,689.10                              | 8,796.08                                       | 8,796.08                               |

Notes:  
1. Additional information on standalone financial results is as follows:

| Particulars             | Quarter ended<br>(31/03/2024) | Current year ended<br>(31/03/2024) | Corresponding quarter<br>ended (31/03/2023) | Previous year ended<br>(31/03/2023) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Revenue from operations | 2,039.46                      | 9,135.60                           | 1,939.48                                    | 8,684.35                            |
| Profit before tax       | 373.12                        | 1,966.70                           | 319.94                                      | 1,828.67                            |
| Profit after tax        | 283.15                        | 1,509.21                           | 233.03                                      | 1,373.26                            |

2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of audited consolidated financial results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2024 filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the standalone and consolidated financial results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2024 are available on the Stock Exchange websites ([www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)) and Company's website ([www.dabur.com](http://www.dabur.com)).

For and on behalf of Board of Directors

Mohit Burman

Chairman

DIN: 00021963

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 02 May 2024

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MUSIC BY ARIANA GRANDE, OTHER ARTISTES UNDER UNIVERSAL TO BE BACK ON TIKTOK AFTER DUO SETTLE DISPUTE OVER ROYALTIES

# Biden breaks silence on college protests: 'Order must prevail'

200 Held At UCLA, Taking Arrest Numbers To 2,000+ Since Mid-April

**Washington:** US Prez Joe Biden Thursday defended the right to protest but insisted that "order must prevail" as college campuses across the country face unrest over the war in Gaza. "Dissent is essential for democracy," he said at the White House. "But dissent must never lead to disorder."

"Destroying property is not a peaceful protest. It's against the law. Vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancelling of classes and graduations—none of this is a peaceful protest," he said.

The prez spoke as authorities across the US stepped up efforts to dismantle pro-Palestinian protests at universities. Police officers in riot gear cleared a pro-Palestinian encampment Thursday at the University of California, Los Angeles. Biden said he did not support calls to send in the National Guard. He also said that the protests have not prompted him to reconsider his approach to the war. The US prez has occasionally criticised Israel's conduct but continued to supply it with weapons. His remarks came after days of silence about the protests and criticism of his handling of the situation.

Republicans have tried to turn the scenes of unrest into a campaign cudgel, and Biden said he rejected efforts to use the situation to "score political points". Former prez Donald Trump, Republican presumptive nominee, said Wednesday: "Radical extremists and far-left agitators are terrorising college campuses. And Biden's nowhere to be found."

The Democratic prez has



As police clashed with pro-Palestinian protesters on UCLA campus on Thursday, sound of helicopters hovering, flash-bangs — which produce a bright light & loud noise to disorient & stun people — pierced the air

## 90 arrested at Dartmouth College

Ninety pro-Palestinian demonstrators — students and outsiders — were arrested at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire on Wednesday hours after an encampment had set up protesting the Gaza war. They were charged with criminal trespass. College prez Sian Leah Beilock said that while protests were an important form of speech, opinions can "never be used to justify taking over Dartmouth's shared spaces". A member of the Ivy League, Dartmouth is known for its rigorous academics, particularly in the fields of economics, political science and engineering. AP

walked a careful line of denouncing antisemitism while supporting young Americans' right to protest and trying to limit longer-term political damage. He will be making his own visit to a college on May 19 when he's scheduled to deliver commencement address at More-

## Protesters block gate of a US air force base

About two dozen protesters sat in the middle of a road-way blocking access to one of the main gates at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque in the US state of New Mexico on Thursday morning, vowing to "shut everything down" over US military support for Israel's war in Gaza. A base spokesman said Kirtland supports citizens' rights to peacefully assemble and protest and that base security would monitor the situation throughout the day. The gate would remain closed indefinitely and people who work on the base were advised to use other routes, the spokesman said. AP

house University in Atlanta.

At the protest front, police officers in riot gear tore through barricades, pulled up tents and corralled protesters at UCLA, leading some away with their wrists zip-tied. At least 200 people were arrested in the before-dawn operation,

bringing the nationwide total of arrests to over 2,000 at dozens of college campuses since police cleared an encampment at Columbia University in mid-April. As sun rose, the UCLA encampment was a field of ruin. Tensions had been brewing since Tuesday night, when university officials, who had initially adopted a tolerant approach to the encampment, declared it illegal for the first time. Then, counterprotesters attempted to breach the encampment, and some of them attacked pro-Palestinian students.

The confrontation at one of California's largest campuses came after a tense 24 hours during which police made arrests at Fordham University's campus in Manhattan, the University of Texas at Dallas, Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and Tulane University in New Orleans, among other places.

Yale University police arrested four people Wednesday night after around 200 demonstrators marched to the school prez's home, school officials said. The protest group, Occupy Yale, said campus police were violent and did not issue warnings beforehand.

In Oregon, police have started working to clear pro-Palestinian rights demonstrators out of a library at Portland State University. The protesters have been occupying the Millar Library since Monday. University Prez Ann Cudd said Wednesday that about 50 protesters had vacated the Millar Library after administrators promised not to seek criminal charges or expulsion, but others — including non-students — remained. NYT, AP & REUTERS

## Turkiye 'halts' trade while Colombia breaks diplomatic ties with Israel

Turkiye stopped all trade with Israel as of Thursday, according to two Turkish officials familiar with the matter, adding to already high-running tensions between the once-close allies over the war in Gaza.

The move expands last month's restriction on some Turkish exports to Israel, as Prez Recep Tayyip Erdogan steps up criticism of the Jewish state. Ankara hasn't formally announced the suspension and it wasn't clear under what conditions trade would resume. Trade between the countries was worth \$6.8 billion in 2023, according to Turkish statistical institute. "This is the behaviour of a dictator who tramples the interests of the Turkish people and business community, while ignoring international trade agreements," Israel's foreign minister Israel Katz said in a post on X.

Turkiye's move comes a day after Colombia Prez Gustavo Petro announced that his country is severing all diplomatic ties with Israel, describing the Israeli govt as "genocidal". Colombia is the second South American nation to break off relations with Israel after Bolivia, which cut ties in Nov over Gaza war. The Israeli govt denounced Petro's move. AGENCIES

## Iran slaps sanctions on US and Britain over Israel support

**Tehran:** Iran announced on Thursday sanctions on several American and British individuals and entities for supporting Israel in its war against the Hamas. Iran, the regional arch-enemy of Israel, unveiled the punitive measures in a statement from its foreign ministry. It said the sanctions targeted seven Americans, including General Bryan Fenton, commander of the US special operations command, and vice-admiral Brad Cooper, a former commander of the US navy's fifth fleet. UK officials and entities targeted include secretary of state for defence Grant Shapps, commander of the British army strategic command James Hockenhull and the UK Royal Navy in the Red Sea. Penalties were also announced against US firms Lockheed Martin and Chevron and British counterparts Elbit Systems, Parker Meggitt and Rafael UK. The impact of the measures on the individuals or entities, as well as their assets or dealings with Iran, remains unclear. AFP

## Labour probing councillor for praising pro-Khalistan groups

Naomi Canton

**London:** Sikh Labour councillor Parbinder Kaur is being investigated by her own party for allegedly sharing posts that support pro-Khalistan terrorist groups and militants who have assassinated public figures in India. Kaur represents Smethwick on Sandwell council and was standing in the local elections on Thursday. According to the Daily Mail, she allegedly praised Babbar Khalsa online, the Khalistan movement responsible for killing 329 passengers with a bomb downing an Air India flight over the Atlantic Ocean in 1985. It is proscribed as a terrorist group in India and UK.

The Daily Mail also said she shared a post on a WhatsApp group of Labour councillors and activists in praising one of Babbar Khalsa's founders, Sukhdev Singh Babbar, who claims to have killed

## Russia using chemical weapons in Ukraine, says US; Kremlin denies

The US has accused Russia of using chemical weapons, including poison gas, "as a method of warfare" against Ukrainian forces, in violation of a global ban on the use of such weapons.

The state department said in a statement on Wednesday that Russia had used chloropicrin, a "choking agent" widely used during World War I, as well as tear gas, against Ukrainian troops. The use of these gases in warfare is banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention, an arms control treaty ratified by more than 150 countries, including Russia. "The use of such chemicals is not an isolated incident and is probably driven by Russian forces' desire to dislodge Ukrainian forces from fortified positions and achieve tactical gains on the battlefield," the state department said.

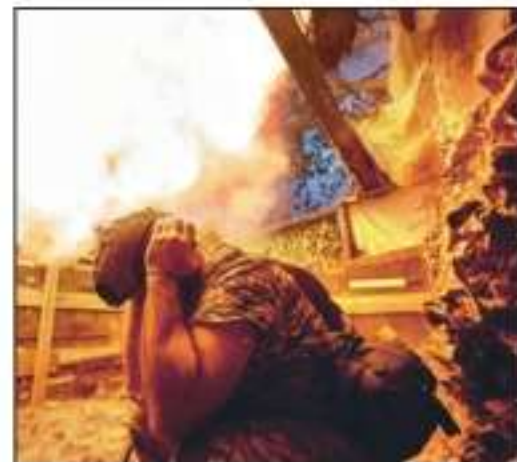
The state department also said that the US would impose sanctions on three state entities linked to Russia's chemical and biological weapons programmes and four companies that support them.

Anatoly Antonov, Russia's ambassador to the US, called the accusations that Russian forces had used chemical weapons "odious and unsubstantiated" in a post on the Telegram messaging app. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Moscow remained bound by its obligations under the treaty that bans chemical weapons. "As always, such announcements are absolutely unfounded... Russia has been and remains committed to its obligations under international law in this area," he said.

The Ukrainian authorities have reported hundreds of cases of suspected chemical weapons use on the battlefield by Russia since invasion began in Feb 2022. Lt. Col. Artem Vlasuk, an expert in the Ukrainian army department that deals with nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological security, said that about 250 cases of suspected chemical weapons use by Russian forces had been reported in Feb, about five times the number in March 2023. He said that most of the chemical substances used in the attacks had been identified as CS gas, a tear gas commonly used by riot police to control crowds.

Although govts use tear gas for domestic law-enforcement purposes, it is considered a chemical weapon when used in warfare, according to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Civilians can usually escape tear gas during protests, but soldiers in trenches have little choice but to flee under enemy fire or risk being suffocated.

Gyunduz Mamedov, Ukraine's deputy prosecutor general, said last week that the Russian army had used tear gas against Ukrainian troops at least 900 times in the past six months, with more than 1,400 incidents reported since the start of the war. In addition to tear gas, the state department said that Russian forces had used chloropicrin, a choking agent that irritates the nose, throat and the lungs when inhaled and can cause nausea and vomiting. Ukrainian army officials have said that the chemicals are usually contained in grenades that Russian forces throw at Ukrainian positions, forcing soldiers out of their fortified positions. NYT



The US state department said Russia had used chloropicrin, a poison gas widely used during World War I against Ukrainian forces, an act that would violate a global ban signed by Moscow

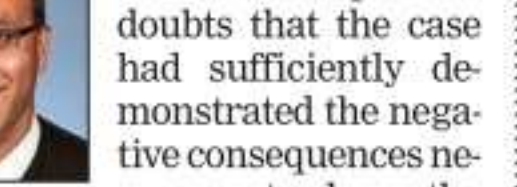
engine as the default on iPhones, web browsers and other products. In 2022, Google paid Apple \$20 billion for the default status, documents unsealed this week showed.

DoJ lawyers allege that Google achieved and perpetuated its dominance through these default deals that also expanded to Samsung and other device makers. But Mehta expressed doubts that the case had sufficiently demonstrated the negative consequences necessary to deem the deals anti-competitive according to US law and precedent. Mehta also said the Google case was very different from Microsoft's as it did not involve agreements to outright exclude competing browsers and other products.

He also poked holes in Google's defence, wondering how any rival search engine could win access to default deals if the cost would require tens of billions of dollars. AFP

**Washington:** A US judge on Thursday pushed against the central pleas of both US govt and Google lawyers as he heard closing arguments at a landmark antitrust trial. Federal judge Amit Mehta, whose decision is not expected until later in the year, raised his questions during two days of hearings that come six months after the conclusion of testimony.

The case is the first of five major lawsuits by the US govt to reach trial, with Meta, Amazon, Apple and a separate case against Google also heading for federal court. The trial is the first time the US department of justice (DoJ) has faced a big tech company in court since Microsoft was targeted more than two decades ago over the dominance of its Windows operating system. At the heart of the govt's case is the massive payments made by Google to Apple and other firms to keep its search



Amit Mehta

## Pak army aware of our constitutional limits: Gen Munir

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

**Islamabad:** Pakistan army chief General Asim Munir said Thursday that the military was "well aware" of its "constitutional limits" and that it "expects others to prioritise adherence to the constitution as well", a statement seen by observers as a veiled warning to opponents and critics. The military's blatant interference in the civilian domain has been a contentious issue in Pakistan and public disapproval of its role in politics has grown since jailed ex-PM Imran Khan was removed from office in April 2022.

He said that Article 19 of Pakistan's constitution clearly defines the limits on freedom of speech. "Those who flout the clear restrictions cannot point fingers at others," he asserted. Pakistan SC is currently hearing a case involving accusations levelled by six out of eight Islamabad HC judges of intimidation and interference by the ISI.

## Pak embarks on moon mission, on China wings

Srinivas Laxman

Nearly nine months after India's Chandrayaan 3 soft-landed on moon's south pole and set records, Pakistan is set to embark Friday on its maiden lunar mission on board China's Change 6 orbiter.

Change 6 is slated for lift-off around 1.30pm (Indian time) from Wenchang Satellite Launch Centre on China's Hainan Island. According to Pakistan's Institute Of Space Technology (IST), the moon-bound spacecraft is a lunar cubesat, named ICube Qamar (ICUBE-Q), with a three-month mission span. It is a collaborative effort of IST's faculty and students, Pakistan's national space agency Suparco and China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU).

According to IST, ICUBE-Q weighs approximately 7kg and is equipped with two optical cameras to capture the lunar surface. It features systems for altitude control, thermal management and deep-space communication.

## WH: Biden was making broader point about US posture on immigration

Continued from P1

Biden's Xenophobia remark came just three weeks after the White House hosted Japanese PM Fumio Kishida for a lavish official visit, during which the two leaders celebrated what Biden called an "unbreakable alliance," particularly on global security matters. Japan is a critical US ally.

The White House welcomed PM Narendra Modi for a state visit last summer. And India is a vital partner in the Indo-Pacific despite differences

on human rights.

At a hotel fundraiser where the donor audience was largely Asian-American, Biden said the upcoming US election was about "freedom, America and democracy" and that the nation's economy was thriving "because of you and many others". "Why? Because we welcome immigrants," Biden said. "Look, think about it. Why is China stalling so badly economically? Why is Japan having trouble? Why is Russia? Why is India? Because they're xenophobic. They don't want

immigrants." The president added: "Immigrants are what makes us strong. Not a joke. That's not hyperbole, because we have an influx of workers who want to be here and want to contribute."

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Biden was making a broader point about the US posture on immigration. "Our allies and partners know well in tangible ways how Prez Biden values them, their friendship, their cooperation and the capabilities that they bring across the

spectrum on a range of issues, not just security related," Kirby said Thursday when asked about Biden's "xenophobic" remarks. White House press secretary Karine Jean Pierre, said, "The broader case that he was trying to make, which most leaders and allies across the globe understand that when it comes to who we are as a nation, we are a nation of immigrants. That is in our DNA. You have heard the prez say it, it makes us better, and we are stronger for it and that is a very important point to know." AP

## Rare editions of Pushkin are vanishing from libraries around Europe

**Paris:** In April 2022, soon after Russia invaded Ukraine, two men arrived at the library of the University of Tartu, in Estonia's second-largest city. They told the librarians they were Ukrainians fleeing war and asked to consult 19th-century first editions of works by Alexander Pushkin, Russia's national poet, and Nikolai Gogol. Speaking Russian, they said they were an uncle and nephew researching censorship in czarist Russia so the nephew could apply for a US scholarship. Eager to help, the librarians obliged. They spent 10 days studying the books.

Four months later, during a routine annual inventory, the library discovered that eight books the men had consulted had disappeared, replaced with facsimiles of such high quality that only expert eyes could detect them. At first, it seemed like a one-off — bad luck at a provincial library. It wasn't. Police are now probing what they believe is a vast, coordinated series of thefts of rare 19th-century Russian books — primarily first and early editions of Pushkin — from libraries across Europe.

Since 2022, more than 170 books valued at more than \$2.6 million, according to Europol, have vanished from the National Library of Latvia in Riga; Vilnius University Library; the State



More than 170 rare Russian books — primarily first and early editions of Alexander Pushkin — have vanished, replaced by very high-quality fakes

Library of Berlin; the Bavarian State Library in Munich; the National Library of Finland in Helsinki; the National Library of France; university libraries in Paris and Lyon in France, and Geneva; and from the Czech Republic. The University of Warsaw library in Poland was hardest hit, with 78 books gone.

The books are worth tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars each. In most cases, the originals were replaced with high-quality copies that mimicked even their foxing — a sign of a sophisticated operation. The disappearance of so many books of the same ilk from so many countries in a relatively short period is unprecedented, experts said. The thefts have led libraries to boost security.

According to Europol, authorities have arrested nine people in connection to the thefts. Four were detained in Georgia

in late April, along with more than 150 books. In Nov, French police placed three suspects in custody. Another man has been convicted in Estonia and a fifth suspect is in jail in Lithuania. A special French police unit dedicated to fighting cultural theft is overseeing the investigation in France and coordinating across Europe. Authorities paint a picture of a network of associates, some blood relatives, travelling across Europe by bus with library cards sometimes under assumed names to scout rare Russian books, make high-quality copies, then swap them for the originals, case files reveal. The probe has been dubbed "Operation Pushkin".

Prices of books published during the lifetimes of the holy trinity of Russian romantic writers — Pushkin, Gogol and Mikhail Lermontov — have risen dramatically in the past 20 years, in line with the rise in wealth of Russian collectors. Western sanctions put in place after Russia invaded Ukraine prohibit dealers in the West from selling to residents of Russia, fueling an existing shadow market for rare books. Europol said that some of the stolen books had already been sold by auction houses in Moscow and St Petersburg, Russia, "effectively making them irrecoverable". NYT

## AROUND THE WORLD



**MAASAI MARA DELUGED:** The number of people who have died in floods in Kenya since March has risen to 188 as the country sees heavy rains. On Wednesday, nearly 100 tourists were among people marooned after River Talek overflowed in Kenya's famed Maasai Mara wildlife reserve. Rescuers successfully evacuated 900 people by ground and air in the Maasai Mara, where 19 lodges were flooded

## Amsterdam parking space up for grabs for 495,000 euros

Housing is at a premium and so is parking in the Netherlands, but a parking space put up for sale this week for almost half-a-million euros — more than the average home price — has raised eyebrows. Located in P.C. Hooftstraat next to Amsterdam's famous Vondelpark, the indoor 18-square-metre space was advertised at 495,000 euros on Dutch property website funda.nl. The parking space is a stone's throw from the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum. Dutch commercial broadcaster RTL Nieuws called it "the most expensive parking space in the Netherlands". The parking space can also be rented for 750 euros a month. The Netherlands is facing an acute housing shortage of some 390,000 homes, according to a recent study. The average house price was 430,000 euros in the Netherlands last year.

**Halle Berry shouts from US Capitol, 'I'm in menopause'**  
Halle Berry is joining a group of bipartisan US senators to push for legislation that would put \$275m toward research and education around menopause. The legislation calls for the federal govt to spend



more on clinical trials on menopause as well as the hormone therapy that is used to treat hot flashes and other symptoms. Berry, 57, shouted about menopause outside the US Capitol on Thursday. "I'm in menopause, OK?" Berry yelled, eliciting chuckles from the crowd. "The shame has to be taken out of menopause. We have to talk about this very normal part of our life that happens. Our doctors can't even say the word to us, let alone walk us through the journey."







**POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH**  
**CORRIGENDUM**

Ref : Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. PHEP/23-24/G/06

Following changes are made:-

| Sr. No. | Equipment/Item Name  | Original Bid submission Date | Revised Bid Submission Date | Original Bid Opening Date | Revised Bid Opening Date | Dept. Name         |
|---------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1       | Echo and USG Machine | 02.05.2024                   | 20.05.2024                  | 03.05.2024                | 21.05.2024               | CTVS & Anaesthesia |

All other details shall remain the same. Professor In-Charge (EP)

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY** **G20**

**E-Tender Notice**

Sr. DEE/TRD/Agra for & on behalf of President of India invites "Open Tender" through on-line only (e-Tendering) for the following work:

| Tender No.    | Approximate Cost | Earnest Money | Period of Completion |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| AGCTROT202402 | Rs. 3588882/-    | Rs. 71800/-   | Nine months          |

Name of work: Modification in OHE due to modification of various Station Platforms by Engineering Department of Agra Division.

1. For full details and submission of the bid please see the Indian Railway website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). 2. Tender can only be submitted through web portal "www.reps.gov.in" up to 16.00 Hrs. on date 21.05.2024 769/24(K)

**CPRONCR** **@northcentralrailway** **North central railways** [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in)

**U.P. State Road Transport Corporation**  
Parivahan Bhavan, Tehri Kothi, 6 M.G. Marg, Lucknow-226001 (U.P.)

NIT No. -117PPCELL/2024-08 PPP/2024 Vol-13 Dated 02.05.2024

**CORRIGENDUM**

**DEVELOPMENT OF BUS STATIONS ON PPP MODEL**

Uttar Pradesh Road Transport Corporation (UPRTC) is pleased to announce the publication of a corrigendum in the tender for selection of developers for the development of bus stations under UPRTC on a PPP model.

Prospective bidders can download the corrigendum document containing responses to the queries received during Pre Bid Meeting. The corrigendum is available for download on the official website: <https://www.uprtc.up.gov.in> or <https://etender.up.nic.in>

**Submission Deadline**  
All interested and competent bidders are requested to submit their proposals no later than 5:00 PM IST on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Managing Director**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY** **OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE**

For and on behalf of President of India, Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Cord.), Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites sealed e-tender on "Single Packet System", for the following work from experienced and capable tenderers:-

- e-Tender No.:** 116-S-HNZM-LA-RT
- Name of work:** Hazrat Nizamuddin - Capacity Augmentation & Other Improvement Works at Departmental Mechanized Laundry
- Work Place:** Hazrat Nizamuddin
- Period of Work:** Nine Months
- Advertised Value:** Rs. 2,22,34,997.39 (Including GST)
- Bid Security to be deposited:** Rs. 2,61,200/-
- Tender Document Cost:** Nil
- Date and time of availability of e-Tender Document:** 01.05.2024; 18:30 Hrs. to 24.05.2024; Up to 15:00 Hrs.
- Date and Time of E-tender Closing:** 24.05.2024, 15:00 Hrs.
- Date and time of E-tender Opening:** On 24.05.2024 after 15:00 hrs. If the date of opening happens to be a holiday the E-Tender shall be opened on the next working day.
- Place for opening E-tender:** Mechanical Department, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055

**Note:** The complete particulars of the tender may be found in website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in)

No.: 116-S-WP-22-23-DRMLSP-HNZM-LA-RT-MC-IV Dated: 01.05.2024 1324/2024

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**SEARCH OF MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Sumit Sagar, H/o Kusam, R/o H.No.C-34 Gai No 3 Near Post Office Wali Gali Auchandi Road Bawana, Delhi.** Permanent Address: Village Burna, PS Baraha, Distt Bakha, Bihar. **Aged: 30 years**, has been missing from above address since 15.04.2024. In this regard a **DD No. 36A Dated 17.04.2024, has been registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi.** His physical description is as under:

**Height: 5'10", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: On Face near nose small small moles, Wearing: Black Colour Shirt and Blue colour Jeans Pant and Chappal in feet.**

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing male may inform to the following at **E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641** **S.H.O P.S. Bawana, Delhi Ph: 7065036321**

**DP/5027/ON/2024**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**  
(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Shankar Yadav @ Shankar Saxena S/o Malik Yadav R/o H.No. 247, Gali No-3, Shanti Marg, Mandawali, Delhi-110092** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 303/2014 U/s 408/120B/34 IPC at PS: Madhu Vihar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Shankar Yadav @ Shankar Saxena** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Shankar Yadav @ Shankar Saxena** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Shankar Yadav @ Shankar Saxena** of **FIR No. 303/2014 U/s 408/120B/34 IPC of PS: Madhu Vihar, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **30.07.2024**.

By order  
**Udbhav Kumar Jain**  
Metropolitan Magistrate-04  
Room No. 13, Shahdara  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

**DP/5092/ED/2024**

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY** **G20**

**E-Procurement Tender Notice No.:** 24/28 **Date:** 30.04.2024

**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-procurement Tenders.

| S.N. | Tender No.      | Short Description                                         | Qty.       | Tender Opening Date |
|------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1    | 38241463        | AIR BRAKE HOSE COUPLING                                   | 24910 Nos. | 20.05.2024          |
| 2    | 38243151        | BODY SIDE ARRANGEMENT COMPLETE                            | 22 Set.    | 20.05.2024          |
| 3    | 38241438 (e-RA) | WIDE JAW ADAPTER                                          | 22805 Nos. | 27.05.2024          |
| 4    | 38241468        | CUT OFF ANGLE COCK WITH VENT                              | 9122 Nos.  | 10.06.2024          |
| 5    | 80231017B       | Shell Gadus                                               | 2367 Kgs.  | 20.05.2024          |
| 6    | 38241246        | COUPLER BODY FOR TRANSITION CBC                           | 674 Nos.   | 29.05.2024          |
| 7    | 38241627 (e-RA) | ADAPTER [NARROW JAW]                                      | 52857 Nos. | 03.06.2024          |
| 8    | 20232138        | SET OF BEARING COVER                                      | 84 NOS.    | 29.05.2024          |
| 9    | 20243722        | PRIMARY VOLTAGE TRANSFORMER                               | 03 NOS.    | 21.05.2024          |
| 10   | 20243724        | HIGH VOLTAGE BUSHING                                      | 04 NOS.    | 21.05.2024          |
| 11   | 20243364        | WIPER BLADE ASSEMBLY                                      | 1602 NOS.  | 22.05.2024          |
| 12   | 10243110        | LOCO SIDE BUFFER ASSEMBLY                                 | 90 Nos.    | 29.05.2024          |
| 13   | 10241908        | EQUALISER BEAM                                            | 70 Nos.    | 11.06.2024          |
| 14   | 40241042        | MOULD RELEASE SHEET NOMEK                                 | 2381 MTR   | 29.05.2024          |
| 15   | 40241036        | SPIRAL TUBE KAPTON CONEX                                  | 2240 MTR   | 29.05.2024          |
| 16   | 40241053        | TEFLON PTFE BUSH FOR HITACHI                              | 348 Nos.   | 29.05.2024          |
| 17   | 20233692A       | SET OF OPERATING HANDLE LONG AND SHORT WITH OUTER BRACKET | 400 SET    | 20.05.2024          |
| 18   | 40233290        | Electronic Controller Card                                | 1739 Nos.  | 29.05.2024          |
| 19   | 30242601        | HIGH TENSILE TIGHT LOCK CENTRE BUFFER COUPLER             | 168 Nos.   | 29.05.2024          |
| 20   | 30242604        | BOGIE BOLSTER ARRANGEMENT                                 | 40 Nos.    | 29.05.2024          |
| 21   | 30241757        | BRAKE BLOCK HANGER [MODIFIED DESIGN]                      | 2300 Nos.  | 29.05.2024          |

**Note:** The complete information of above tenders can be seen and downloaded from IREPS website i.e. <https://www.reps.gov.in>. For any change/corrigendum in tender, please visit this website regularly. No separate corrigendum/change will be published in news paper. 767/24(A)

**North central railways** [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in) **@northcentralrailway** **CPRONCR**

**School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal**  
(An Institute of National Importance, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)  
Neelbad Road, Bhauri, Bhopal - 462 030 (M.P.) INDIA.  
Phone : 0755-2526800, 2526837, 2526843

No.SPAB/RGO/Advt./2024-25/28 Date 03/05/2024

**Expression of Interest (EOI)**

School of Planning and Architecture Bhopal (SPAB) invites expression of interest from eligible firms or companies, to provide services for the following project:  
Designing, Execution and Maintenance of permanent exhibits at Harappan Knowledge Centre, Rakhigarh, Haryana.

Interested parties are requested to refer to The Terms of Reference (ToR) documents from: <https://www.sampleindiaexpress.com/> and register on the same link, on or before 18 May 2024, 04.00 pm.

Link shall be open for registration from : 10 May 2024.

**Director**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**  
(See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Sajid R/o Jhuggi No. 254, Gali No. 1, Chanderpuri, Dharmapura, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi, Age: 27 years**, has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 832/2014 U/s 498A IPC, P.S. Khyala, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Sajid** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Sajid** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Sajid** of case **FIR No. 832/2014 U/s 498A IPC, P.S. Khyala, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **04.06.2024**.

By Order  
**Ms. Shivli Talwar**  
Metropolitan Magistrate, Mahila Court-01  
Room No. 358, 3rd Floor,  
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

**DP/5134/WD/2024 (Court Matter)**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**  
(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Afroj S/o Mohd. Ishak R/o H.No. 147, Gali No.05, IInd Pusta Usman Pur, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 968/2015 U/s 379/411/427/34 IPC at PS: Khajuri Khas, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Afroj** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Afroj** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Afroj** of **FIR No. 968/2015 U/s 379/411/427/34 IPC of PS: Khajuri Khas, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **03.06.2024**.

By order  
**Sukhjeet Singh**  
Metropolitan Magistrate-03  
Room No.22, NE District  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

**DP/5227/NE/2024**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**  
(See Section 82 Cr. P. C.)

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Bheem Kumar Tanti S/o Bhopendra Tanti R/o H.No.27, Vill. Aya Nagar Baba Mohalla Delhi** have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **FIR. No. 559/13 u/s 279/337/338/471 IPC. has been registered at P.S. Vivek Vihar Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, **Bheem Kumar Tanti** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Bheem Kumar Tanti** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused, **Bheem Kumar Tanti** of **FIR. No.559/13 u/s 279/337/338/471. registered at P.S. Vivek Vihar Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **29.06.2024**.

By Order  
**Ms. Isra Zaidi, Ld. MM, SHD,**  
Karkardooma Court Delhi

**DP/5158/SHD/2024 (court matter)**

**SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AHMEDABAD ("AIRPORT")**

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN BIDDING PROCESS FOR CARGO HANDLING O&M SERVICES AT THE INTEGRATED CARGO TERMINAL, AIRPORT**

Ahmedabad International Airport Limited ("AIAL") invites participation by interested parties in the competitive e-tendering process for Cargo Handling O&M Services at the Integrated Cargo Terminal, Airport.

Interested parties are requested to visit the website, <https://airports.abcpocure.com/> and register to access the Request for Qualification (RFQ) document(s).

RFQ access shall be available from 03 May 2024, till IST 5:00 pm on 15 May 2024.

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person **Namely: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 55 years, Height : 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Oval, Built: Normal, Wearing: T-shirt & Pant** was found in unconscious condition at CNG Pump, Near Gagan Cinema, Nand Nagri, Delhi on 20.04.2024. He was shifted to GTB Hospital, Delhi, where during treatment doctor declared him dead on 20.04.2024. In this regard a case vide DD No. 140A dated 20.04.2024 had been lodged at Police Station Nand Nagri, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved in G.T.B. Hospital Mortuary, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this unknown dead person may kindly inform to the following: **SHO : P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi North East Distt., Delhi Tel. No. 011-22583307, 22585985, 8750870733, 9716543228**

**DP/5200/NE/2024**

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**  
(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Shyam @ Shyam, S/o. Joginder Pandit, R/o H.No. 20, Gali No. 2, Surat Vihar, Mukandpur Part-II, Delhi**, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 549/2020 U/s 356/379/411/34 IPC** registered at P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Shyam @ Shyam** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Shyam @ Shyam** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Shyam @ Shyam** accused of **FIR No. 439/2012 U/s 411 IPC P.S. North Rohini, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **03.06.2024**.

By Order  
**Sh. Rohit Kumar,**  
Metropolitan Magistrate -04,  
North District, Room No. 110,  
Rohini Courts, Delhi

**DP/5106/RD/2024**

# Prajwal ex-driver shifted by DKS to Malaysia: HDK

## Dy CM Denies Charge As Ex-Driver Goes Into Hiding

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna's former driver, Karthik, has gone into hiding following a notice from the SIT. He had admitted to handing over a pen drive containing videos of the JD(S) politician's alleged sexual misconduct to BJP worker Devaraje Gowda. Karthik had been employed by Prajwal for 13 years and parted ways a year ago over an alleged land deal.

In a video statement, Karthik expressed uncertainty about whether Gowda utilised the pen drive for personal gain. He also disclaimed knowledge about the distribution of pen drives containing explicit video clips. "I don't know who distributed the pen drives," he said.

He vowed to provide comprehensive details to the investigators, stating, "They are levelling allegations against

## Kidnap case filed against Prajwal mom

In yet another case against JD(S) MLA HD Revanna's family, a youth has filed a FIR accusing his wife Bhavani of kidnapping his mother. An officer confirmed the FIR at KR Nagar police station in Mysuru and said the probe was underway. Cops were tight-lipped about details, only saying it had been handed over to the SIT. **TNN**

## Plot to weaken us politically: Prajwal's bro

JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna Thursday said the sexual harassment allegations against his brother, Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, and father, MLA HD Revanna, were part of a conspiracy to weaken their family politically. He also claimed he had no information about the whereabouts of Prajwal. **TNN**

me. I will disclose everything in detail before the SIT."

Former CM HD Kumaraswamy accused deputy CM DK Shivakumar and his brother, DK Suresh, of involvement in the disappearance of the driver and raised questions about the circumstances surrounding the release of the driver's video statement.

"The driver's video statement has been released... Where is Karthik? Where was it (video statement) made and released? Why was the video hurriedly made and given to news channels? Who gave it? He is in Malaysia," Kumaraswamy said. "Who sent Karthik to Malaysia? What is the need for the video to be sent from there?"

he added.

However, Shivakumar responded, "Is it so? My brother (HDK) has all the information. Let him take information from the Centre (as to) who has sent (the video) and who has made it. Am I mad (to send Karthik to Malaysia)? I will fight on the streets, but not by sending someone somewhere. I don't need to do such things; he (Kumaraswamy) may be in need to do such things."

Rejecting the allegations, Gowda stated that Karthik had been associated with Congress's Hassan Lok Sabha constituency candidate Shreyas Patel, implying motives behind the release of the video for the party's political benefit.

**TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL** **SANDEEP ADHWARYU**



## Revanna moves MP/MLA court for pre-arrest bail in sexual harassment case

► Continued from P 1

With this, the noose around Prajwal and his father HD Revanna will tighten as they were earlier charged with bailable offences under IPC Sections 354A (sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment), 354D (stalking), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman). Sec 376 is a cognisable and non-bailable offence entailing over 10 years in jail.

The first woman who lodged the complaint against Prajwal and his father worked in their household as domestic help. The second woman, who allegedly figured in one of the Prajwal Revanna sleaze videos, appeared before the 32nd additional chief metropolitan magistrate in Bengaluru and recorded her statement

under CrPC Sec 164 (statement recorded by a magistrate). Parameshwara, while addressing media in Kalaburagi, said: "At this juncture, the details of the complaint cannot be made public." The minister assured protection to other survivors who voluntarily come forward and lodge complaints relating to the alleged sex scandal.

Prajwal's father, H D Revanna, who was a minister in the previous JD(S)-BJP and JD(S)-Congress govts, moved a special court for elected representatives seeking anticipatory bail in the sexual harassment case filed by his former domestic help.

When the court asked Revanna's attorney why he was not approaching the trial court as the offences are bailable, the latter pointed out that the SIT was invoking IPC Sec 376 against him based on the statement of another woman. The court adjourned the bail plea to Friday.

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY** **G20**

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

**Tender Notice No. AGC-ELG-T-03-2024-25** **Date: 01.05.2024**

**Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) N.C. Railway, Agra** for and on behalf of President of India invites "Open Tender" through on line only (E-Tendering) for the following works.

**Name of work with its location & Completion period:** Agra-Division Prepaid energy meter at stalls, GPS based energy meter and automation of pump and replacement of HT/LT overhead conductor of various size. Completion period-09 months.

**Approx Cost of the work: ₹ 7079654.49/- (Including GST).**

For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). Tenders can only be submitted through web portal [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) up to 15.00 hrs. on 22.05.2024. 779/24 FA

**North central railways** **CPRONCR** **@northcentralrailway** [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in)

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**  
(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Kundan Kumar S/o Virender Mandal R/o A-959, JJ Colony, Pankha Road, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence **FIR No. 183/2018 u/s 380/411 IPC P.S. Tilak Nagar, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Kundan Kumar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Kundan Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Kundan Kumar** accused of **FIR No. 183/2018 u/s 380/411 IPC P.S. Tilak Nagar, New Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **03.06.2024**.

By Order  
**Sh. Devanshu Sajjan**  
Metropolitan Magistrate-07  
Room No. 289, 2nd Floor,  
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

**DP/5205/WD/24**

## Not Goldy Brar, shooting victim is Gladney Xavier: US cops

**Rajshekhar Jha**  
@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** A man named Gladney Xavier was killed in a gang-related shooting in Fresno, California, on Tuesday. But by the time the news reached India, Gladney had become Goldy. Before police in the US could declare the identity of the deceased, the "death" of gangster Goldy Brar had become a rage on social media and trended for close to 18 hours.

Over a dozen accounts based in the US and Canada, supposedly of rival groups, started the rumour early on Wednesday, it is believed.

Netizens on Thursday came up with interesting memes that included Brar claiming his own death as the gangster has been quick in claiming responsibility for killings carried out by his gang on social media. Users termed him "the reincarnated" and memes showing him with Sidhu Moose Wala also surfaced.

TOI had reported how a bar fight and a shooting incident in Fresno had fuelled rumours of Brar's death. The Fresno police told local media: "We can confirm that the victim was not a man named Goldy Brar. The victim's identity is in the press release and his picture is attached. We do not know where the rumour that it was Goldy Brar started from, but it wasn't from us."

The Fresno police statement read: "On Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 5:30pm, Fresno police officers in northwest district responded to Fairmont Avenue and Holt Avenue for a shot spotter activation. Responding officers found 37-year-old Gladney Xavier suffering from a gunshot wound. Gladney was transported to CRMC, but he was pronounced dead. Additionally, a 13-year-old juvenile was dropped off at CRMC with a non-life-threatening gunshot wound. This juvenile was also present at Fairmont Avenue and Holt Avenue when Gladney was fatally shot."

## Reserve right to take steps to safeguard our interests: MEA

► Continued from P 1

We further reserve the right to take necessary measures to safeguard our interests, said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. He was reacting to media queries about reports that China is constructing a road in the area. India maintains that under the 1963 agreement, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in Shaksgam Valley from areas illegally occupied by Pakistan in UT of Ladakh to China. It has also maintained China continues to be in illegal occupation of approximately 38,000 sq kms of Indian territory in Ladakh for the past six decades.



## Shein Takes 3rd Spot Among Biggest US Fashion E-tailers

➤ Amazon and Walmart are the biggest online fashion retailers in the US, with \$12.3bn and \$8.9bn worth of apparel net sales recorded in 2023

➤ Chinese co Shein, which only launched in the US around 2017, holds the third rank

➤ It has pulled past US legacy retailer Macy's as well as Nike. The cos recorded 2023 fashion net sales of \$6.4bn and \$4.5bn, respectively

Source: Statista

# TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024

Biggest online fashion stores in the US (net sales in 2023)

\$12.3Bn

amazon

\$8.9Bn

Walmart

\$8.1Bn

SHEIN

\$6.4Bn

macy's inc

\$4.5Bn

Nike



## RBI lifts digital lending curbs on Bajaj Finance after 6 mths

### NBFC Takes Steps To Boost Transparency | Relief For Investors

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai:** RBI has lifted digital lending restrictions on Bajaj Finance nearly six months after it imposed them for violation of its guidelines. RBI had, on Nov 15, 2023, directed Bajaj Finance to halt loan issuance through its 'eCOM' and 'Insta EMI Card'.

RBI had imposed the restrictions due to a lack of transparency and disclosure of conditions like fees, charges, and recovery practices in a key fact statement, which is a crucial requirement for digital loans.

The EMI card allows customers to shop with a flexible repayment tenure for purchases of consumer goods and elec-

### PROFIT TOOK A HIT

**Nov 15, 2023** | RBI directs Bajaj Finance to halt loan issuance through 'eCOM' & 'Insta EMI Card' due to transparency issues

**4%** | Hit to Bajaj Finance's pre-tax profit for the March qtr due to the embargo

**42L** | EMI card users -5% | Bajaj Finance's stock since RBI action

**May 2, 2024** | Bajaj Finance says RBI, based on remedial actions taken by co, has lifted the curbs with immediate effect

➤ Bajaj Finance investors had turned cautious as RBI had taken over a year to lift similar curbs on **HDFC Bank**

➤ Bajaj Finance had started to address some of the issues before RBI took action

tronics without an additional cost. Similarly, the eCOM product enables online purchases on platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart through loans.

Bajaj Finance informed the stock exchanges that RBI, ba-

sed on the remedial actions taken by the company, has lifted the restrictions with immediate effect. The company will resume sanction and disbursement of loans in the two segments.

RBI's curbs had turned in-

vestors cautious as restrictions imposed on HDFC Bank in 2020 had lasted for over a year. Bajaj Finance, which had started to address some of the issues before RBI's action, had recently requested the central bank to lift the ban.

Bajaj Finance had 42 lakh digitally sourced users for the EMI Card at the end of Sept 2023. RBI's embargo had resulted in the company's Q4FY24 profit before tax being hit by 4%. Last week, Bajaj Finance had reported a net profit of Rs 3,825 crore for the March quarter, an increase of 21% over the year-ago period. However, its stock fell 7% following the results on concerns over profit growth.

## Adani Ent gets 2 Sebi notices over related party deals

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai:** Adani Enterprises on Thursday said that it had received two show cause notices from markets regulator Sebi during the March quarter.

The notices alleged "non-compliance of provisions of the Listing Agreement and LODR (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulations pertaining to related party transactions in respect of certain transactions with third parties and validity of peer review certificates of statutory auditors with respect to earlier years".

The management believes that there is "no material consequential effect of the show cause notices to relevant financial statements". The company also believed there was no such non-compliance with laws and regulations, it said in a regulatory filing on the exchanges.

In Jan 2023, US-based short seller Hindenburg Research had alleged serious corporate governance and other issues within Adani Group companies. As a result, over the next five weeks, the group's stocks were on a free fall, wiping out about 65% of the group's total market value. Following those allegations a case was also filed in the SC which then had asked Sebi to investigate the allegations made in the Hindenburg report. In Jan this year, the SC had passed its order in the investigation and had asked Sebi to complete two of the 24 issues it was looking into and were still incomplete then.

**Q4 profit falls 39% to ₹449cr** Adani Enterprises said its consolidated net profit for the March quarter dropped 39% to Rs 449 crore. This drop was due to one-time past airport dues and commercial mining losses.

## India big opportunity for growth: Citroen

### Co, Parent Stellantis Won't Apply For EV Policy, Will Make Green Vehicles Locally

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

Koskas told TOI.

**Chennai:** French carmaker Citroen and its parent Stellantis will not apply for investments and benefits under India's ambitious new electric vehicle policy for foreign carmakers. Their focus will be on making green vehicles locally, rather than go for subsidised imports, said Thierry Koskas, Citroen CEO and Stellantis chief sales & marketing officer.

"Our strategy is to make EVs in India for India. We don't see much point in importing cars here. We want to continue our strategy to make cars in India, and our priority is not to import electric cars," Koskas said. The EV policy promises subsidised customs duty of 15% for companies to import their green models here, but only when they commit to invest a minimum of \$500 million for a factory, apart from substantial local value addition.

Citroen, that has followed group company Jeep into India, also said it sees India as a big opportunity for growth, though stiff competition from rivals and demanding customers are challenges ahead.

"If you succeed in India, you can succeed anywhere in the world. It is one of the most competitive markets in the world. Cars here are most competitive and expectations of customers is among the highest. It is very difficult... though we will do everything that we need to for succeeding here,"

The Stellantis group is also hiring more engineers for research and tech development work at its centres in Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore, where it is developing technology for global markets. "While it is surely cheaper to hire here when compared to European and other developed economies, the availability of

launch fifth product Basalt coupe later this year. Koskas said that to succeed in India, companies will need to constantly launch new cars and variants to excite the market.

"One key learning is that you need to bring in novelty, constantly. Indian customers are really moving quickly from one thing to another. If you

Our strategy is to make EVs in India for India. We don't see much point in importing cars here

If you succeed in India, you can succeed anywhere in the world. It is one of the most competitive markets in the world

Around 1,500 engineers are working in India and hiring will go on for another 1,100 over 12 months

Indian customers are really moving quickly from one thing to another. If you don't get new features and new cars, you will not be able to sustain

talent is also a crucial factor. Around 1,500 engineers are working in India and hiring will go on for another 1,100 over 12 months," an official aware of the development said.

Koskas said India is "extremely important" for Citroen regarding business and sales. This is his third visit to the country over last 12-13 months. He has also visited dealerships of rival brands and done market research as the brand looks to launch new cars and understand customer psyche better.

Citroen sells models such as C3 hatchback, C3 Aircross SUV, electric C3 mini and premium C5 off-roader. The company will

don't get new features and new cars, you will not be able to sustain... This is so different from other parts of the world, particularly Europe."

Citroen is a part of Stellantis group, which was formed in 2021 by merger between Fiat Chrysler and Peugeot-maker PSA. Jeep is also a part of the group and has been selling SUVs in India, which it produces in a JV with Tata Motors.

The PSA group operates in India through a joint venture with the C K Birla group. The JV has seen the companies manufacture vehicle assembly and powertrains in Tamil Nadu. This has a capacity of 1 lakh units annually.

## ET Money emerges top online wealth mgmt player

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Investment platform ET Money has become a top player in the online wealth management market, focusing on long-term wealth accumulation for affluent Indians.

It has helped users manage Rs 63,000 crore (approximately \$8 billion) as of March 31 in investment assets and, on an average, is adding Rs 2,700 crore of new assets every month.

The company's subscription-based advisory service ET Money Genius has witnessed its paid-subscriber base expand at 162% CAGR over the past two years, making ET Money India's largest Registered Investment Advisor in terms of the number of paid customers. ET Money Genius is unlocking a new customer segment with annual income of Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore — that was previously unable to afford high-end wealth management services offered only to the ultra-rich Indians.

ET Money has been gross-profitable for each of the last 11 months and has seen its revenue grow at 90% CAGR over the last three years. Also, about 70% of its revenue is recurring in nature. ET Money boasts of an annual user retention rate of over 90% and Execution Only Platform (EOP) license from Sebi is expected to boost its financial profile further, allowing it to monetise direct mutual funds and improve gross margin to go beyond 80%.

## Cognizant cuts 2024 revenue estimate

**Bengaluru:** Cognizant Technology Solutions has reduced its revenue projection for FY24 to \$18.9 billion from \$19.7 billion, representing a growth rate of -2% to 2%. This includes a 100-basis-point contribution from acquisitions. The Nasdaq-listed company, which follows a Jan to Dec fiscal, had previously guided for 2024 revenue to be between \$19 billion and \$19.8 billion.

Cognizant reported subdued financial results for the March quarter, with a revenue of \$4.8 billion. This represents a 1.2% constant currency decline compared to the year-ago period. The company's net profit also decreased by 6% to \$546 million for the March quarter. **TNN**

## Nomination in joint MFs optional

**Mumbai:** Markets regulator Sebi has said that investors holding mutual fund units jointly may not nominate someone or willingly opt out of nomination, as is the case when investments are in the name of a single investor. There were MF distributors and financial planners who had raised the issue with the regulator when a nomination in all MF accounts, held by a single investor or jointly, was made compulsory. **TNN**

## Adi & Nadir Godrej make open offer for Astec stake

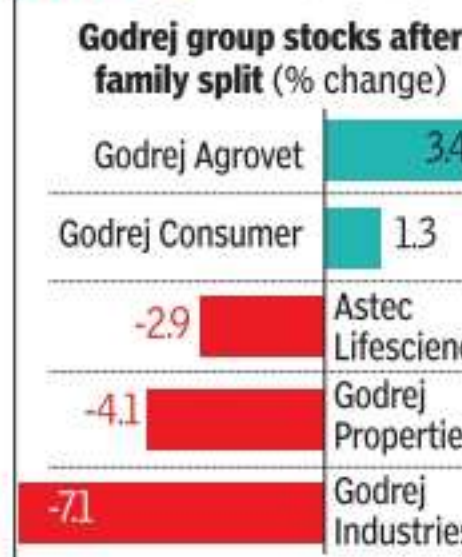
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai:** Adi and Nadir Godrej-led family group has made an open offer to acquire 26% from public shareholders of Astec Lifesciences as part of a settlement arrangement between them and the faction led by Jamshyd Godrej and Smita Crishna.

They are offering a price of Rs 1,070 apiece, which is at a discount to Astec's closing price of Rs 1,235 on the BSE on Thursday. At this rate, the total consideration to buy an additional 26% in Astec amounts to Rs 545 crore.

The open offer has been triggered after Adi-Nadir group's move to acquire 33% in Godrej Industries from the Jamshyd-Smita faction. Godrej Industries is the holding company of the \$7-billion

### REJIG REACTION



Godrej conglomerate, which will be split into two groups as part of the arrangement.

Godrej Industries has an indirect holding in Astec Lifesciences and the open offer has been triggered because of the indirect change in shareholding of the latter. Anamudi Real Estates, which

has 0.57% stake in Godrej Industries, will also become a part of Adi-Nadir group as part of the settlement.

Rishad Naoorji, cousin of Adi, Nadir, Jamshyd and Smita, will retire from Anamudi and the Adi Godrej family will continue to be partners of the company.

Godrej Industries holds 65% in Godrej Agrovet, 24% in Godrej Consumer Products and 47% in Godrej Properties. Before the planned stake-purchase, the Adi-Nadir group's share in Godrej Industries was 31%. After completion of the transaction, their stake in Godrej Industries will increase to 65%.

Astec's stock is down 5% over the last 12 months but has gained 20% so far this year, most of which has come in the last month itself.

## Byju's links pay of sales staff to weekly revenue

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai:** Amid the cash crunch and delay in disbursement of full salaries to employees, Byju's has started paying its sales staff on the basis of the revenue they generate for the company every week.

Under the new structure which the company claims is temporary, employees across all levels of the department will get a certain percentage of the revenue they generate for the company by converting their sales leads credited to their salary accounts. Sales associates are eligible to get a 50% share of the revenues whereas for vice-presidents, the payout will be in the range of 1.1-2.4% of the revenues, according to an internal company document reviewed by TOI. This arrangement will be in place till at least May 21.

To put it simply, if a sales associate manages to collect

Rs 50,000 in revenue generated from orders through seven days, he will receive Rs 25,000 after the close of the period. While this may help employees of the struggling edtech startup — several of

**Those who fail to generate revenues in a week will not get any salary for the period**

whom are yet to get full salaries for Feb and March — get access to a steady flow of cash in hand, it will also put pressure on them to perform, failing which their earnings will get impacted. The document showed that associates who fail to generate revenues in a week will not get any salary for the period.

"Since the base salary has been suspended, you will not receive any payout or salaries for the given period," the document said. Byju's did not respond to queries.

## Mfg activity 2nd highest in 3.5 yrs: Survey

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Riding high on robust domestic demand, activity in the country's manufacturing sector in April recorded the second fastest expansion in three and a half years as companies reported higher intake of new orders and scaled up production, a survey showed on Thursday.

Despite slowing a tad from 59.1 in March to 58.8 in April, the HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) signalled the second-best improvement in the health of the sector for three-and-a-half years. The PMI was comfortably above both the neutral mark of 50 and its long-run average (53.9). The 50-point mark separates expansion from contraction.

Since the lifting of Covid-19 pandemic-induced curbs, the sector has staged a smart recovery, thanks to robust domestic demand. The PMI survey is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

## Freshworks founder quits as CEO, stock tanks 25% in US

Vaitheewaran.B@timesgroup.com

**Chennai:** Freshworks founder Girish Mathrubootam has stepped down as CEO of the Nasdaq-listed software firm. He made his decision public early on Thursday, surprising investors and employees alike.

Dennis Woodside, the company's president, has been named the new CEO effective May 1, while Girish will take over as executive chairman and focus on product development. Freshworks stock plunged 25% in extended trading hours in the US.

Amid the disruption in software business (SaaS) brought by the new wave of AI adoption, Girish said his focus will be on building new products, including AI-based offerings. He said the decision is not sudden, but succession planning is something he's been discussing with the board for a few years.

This next phase has been charted with hopes that Dennis could lead the team while Girish focuses on long-term product vision, AI strategy and innovation, according to market filings with the US SEC. The company intro-

duced a customer service chatbot 'Freddy AI' last year and is working to monetise it.

"A couple of years ago, I started talking with our board about my longer-term plans for Freshworks. I shared that when the time is right, I would like to shift my focus to our long-term product vision and invest in our presence in India," he said in a separate message to his team. Going forward, Girish is expected to be more active in the Chennai office and working closely with the India team. Founded in 2010, Freshworks was listed on Nasdaq in Sept 2021, making it the first Indian SaaS firm to trade on a US exchange.

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CONTRAPUNTO

We are responsible for our own ignorance

-ISABEL WILKERSON, CASTE

# My Marriage, My Way

Laws make marriage complicated. State's role should only be in registering marriages, not specifying sacraments

Divorce can be the true test of marriage. This was one takeaway from a case SC judged this week. It was hearing a couple that on its path towards divorce, took a singular leap, and asked for its marriage to be declared invalid instead. On the grounds that no “customs, rites and rituals” had been performed. Justices BV Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih granted the required “relief” and also an illuminating tutorial on the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. In a nutshell, per law, a marriage performed without “appropriate ceremonies” cannot be said to be “solemnised”.

Why is this jaw-dropping? Because up and down the country Indians get married in a glorious diversity of ways. And all of these should have equal standing in the eyes of modern law. But between the different laws that pronounce rigidities on the matter, they don't. The judges in this instance declared, “marriage is not an event for ‘song and dance’ and ‘winning and dining’.” But why can't it be? Or rather, in the countless cases where it already is, surely law shouldn't ruin the party.

HMA itself has been criticised for flattening wedding practices over time. As examples, scholars point to the fading of matrilineal practices like Aliyasantana in Karnataka and Marumakkathayam in Kerala. Besides, it only refers to Sagai, Kanyadan and Saptapadi. That's very despiriting for, say, Shubho Drishti and Arundhati Nakshatra. Not to mention all the marriages that completely sidestep the named trinity.

Is there any elegant solution to all this confusion and exclusion? Yes! The state should remain the registry for all marriages, but no longer have anything to do with sacraments and ceremonies.

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 does wear the dress of such a solution. But, from its 30-day notice to how it's being undermined by anti-conversion laws, its embodied reality is citizen-unfriendly. Moreover, the vast majority of marriages take place under other, religion-based laws, which, like HMA, have very specific requirements for a “solemnised” marriage. What we need is a dramatically reformed version of SMA, where it becomes the sole interface between the state, law and citizens. Why should the state only recognise marriages that limit themselves to a rigid menu of options? Real India certainly doesn't. Quite happily so. But SC reminded us how vulnerable this happiness is. Better check if your wedding meets the “appropriate ceremonies” criteria.

# Uncertainty's Bankers

Central banks have survived an inflation stress test. But they are not sure if they passed

The US Federal Reserve's monetary policy meeting concluded on Wednesday by retaining status quo on interest rates. A subsequent explanation contained the all-purpose reason given by central banks: uncertainty. Stress tested by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, major central banks coped admirably. But success has only left them on the edge.

**21st century onions** | In Indian political folklore, a surge in onion prices can topple govts. Today, they can undermine RBI's equanimity. RBI's monetary policy committee has overseen disinflation over the last year. Yet, MPC collectively votes to keep interest rates high even if RBI's analysis suggests acting otherwise.

The April edition of the biannual monetary policy report showed for the last seven quarters it's supply shocks that have mainly driven inflation. As shocks ease, the report concluded that a generalised and durable disinflation is underway. Still, MPC is haunted by the ghost of “overlapping food price shocks”. Even central banks can't control the climate.

**Whose expectations?** | Central bankers are displaying an intriguing approach. They have been quick to credit monetary policy credibility with anchoring inflation expectations. It's a frequently cited reason for disinflation. That didn't hold back France's central bank governor candidly admitting: “We do not fully understand how households and business form expectations nor how this maps into their actions.”

**No surge pricing** | The Swedish central bank offers a clue: it's about consumers' psychology. They don't like surge pricing but adapt quickly if input costs have gone up because that's in sync with their sense of fairness.

The battle's won but central bankers appear unsure of what worked. It's certainly not ‘the end of history’ moment for them. Perhaps they should take a cue from the approach of GOI economists. A question about employment elicits a reply on GDP.

# Tree temples

Gulmohurs, amaltas, and other species could become a major tourist attraction – and much more than just that

The Earth is ablaze with red, and the sky swoops down to encircle the flames with blue. The fire is the vivid flowering of the gulmohur and the blue, the bloom of the jacaranda, both heralding the advent of a north Indian summer in a botanical display of exuberant colour.

They are the precursors of the amaltas, which blossoms in mid-May in cascades of brilliant yellow, sunlight ensnared and transformed by secret alchemy into glowing gold.

The living canvas of colour the trees paint are largely disregarded by us, or worse. We cut down these and other trees, to make way for more and more blocks of concrete and steel.

How different is this from the near-worship accorded to the cherry tree in Japan whose seasonal blossoming is an efflorescence of almost mystical enrapture, drawing visitors from across the country and from far off parts of the world.

Similarly, in America's fall, when the deciduous woods of the north Atlantic coast are alight with the autumnal embers of brilliant reds and browns, visitors from distant lands come to witness the changing of colours on the palette of nature.

Our varied geography, ranging from the high alpine to the lush tropical, hosts amazing arboreal wealth, from the sub-Himalayan conifers to the amaltas and gulmohur of the north, and the flame of the forest, and the majestic raintrees of the Deccan.

If we were to create arboreums, parks devoted to the variety of indigenous trees, like Japan's cherry blossoms and America's fall woodlands, they could well become a travel destination. But much more than that, such parks could not only provide sylvan sanctuaries from urban squalor but also help to make us realise how interlinked our lives are with the lives of our trees.

The word tree is derived from the Old English ‘treow’, which also means trust or promise. Trees are repositories of faith, living temples made not of stone and brick, but sap, and root, and leaf, and flower.

Trees are worthy of our reverence. The question is are we, transgressors of a latter-day Eden, worthy of honouring them.



jugularvein

# Where Goes The Lingayat Vote

● North Karnataka is a BJP base ● It's built on the Lingayat vote ● But the bloc's divided over its place in caste hierarchy ● Mathas' take on retaining autonomy will be decisive

Narendar Pani



As the third phase takes polling from Karnataka's southern regions to the northern, it enters a very different political terrain. For BJP, the election moves from Vokkaliga-dominated constituencies where it needed an alliance with JDS, to Lingayat-dominated regions that had allowed the party to claim a base in south India. Lingayat politics may have been more welcoming to BJP than the politics of the other dominant caste in the state, but it has also added new fault lines to the party's relationship with the region.

Lingayats are, arguably, the most persuasive historical example of the resilience of caste in India. The group emerged out of a strong anti-caste movement of the 12th century. Driven by ideals of saint-poets and oral tradition of the *vachanas*, the movement took on positions that would be considered radical in present-day India. The ideas that founded the movement helped develop institutions – the mathas – to put these beliefs into practice. Over the centuries, Lingayats developed an identity of their own, one of the main features of castes in modern India. With the coming of colonialism and its Census, Lingayats as an identity group were officially recognised as a caste.

**Shared politics** | Having brought together persons from a range of castes basis shared ideals, Lingayats soon became Karnataka's largest caste. Their emphasis on ideas provided a prominent place in their mathas for education. And their historical association with dominant groups enabled economic success. Their numeric, educational, and economic success ensured Lingayats soon gained a position of dominance in the region that's now northern Karnataka.

Lingayats have seamlessly taken this dominance into the political realm through their emphasis on education. Its mathas ensured members from remote regions, and without economic resources, could get the benefits of education. The more forward-looking mathas provided education to non-Lingayats too, thereby increasing the mathas' and the community's political influence.

Even as the movement under Basavana and later poet-saints had brought in people from different castes, these differences of origin were not always forgotten

POLLITICS  
Special Series on Elections

**Organisation matters** | Hindutva's politics could find common strands with the way Lingayats carried out their politics. Both

Hindutva and the mathas placed a premium on organisation. The mathas had also come to focus on seeking a prominent place in the Hindu hierarchy rather than being the force of rebellion that Basavana had envisaged in the 12th century.

Lingayats thus had no objection to the goals of Hindutva, even if the community's more dominant leaders preferred a quieter tone. Lingayat mathas' support played a prominent role in BJP's rise in northern Karnataka, the party's first electorally substantial base in south India.

**Freedom from control** |

This support was, however, not unconditional. Lingayat mathas weren't willing to give up the autonomy they had built over centuries. While the head of the Brahmin matha at Udupi in coastal Karnataka had allowed himself to be absorbed into the heart of the Ram temple movement, Lingayat mathas were more circumspect. They would support Hindutva but not give themselves up to RSS's control.

BJP has had to walk the tightrope on the issue, with some local seniors recognising the mathas' autonomy, while others seek a more aggressive Hindutva dominance. Choice of candidates in this round of parliamentary elections did suggest a tilt in favour of mathas' autonomy, but the language of BJP's campaign in the region presented a tilt in the direction of hard Hindutva.

**Caste away** | Another set of fault lines emerged from among the Lingayats. Even as the movement under Basavana and later poet-saints had brought in people from different castes, these differences of origin were not always forgotten. As Lingayats carved a niche for themselves among upper caste Hindus, those whose forefathers were upper castes were seen to have an advantage. Those Lingayats who saw their forefathers as belonging to lower castes, challenged this need to find a place within the Hindu caste hierarchy, leading to a demand for Lingayats as a separate religion.

The demand for a separate religion came to a boil in the 2018 assembly elections when the then Siddaramaiah government had tended to support the cause. Congress's loss in that election is taken as a Lingayat rejection of the idea of a separate religion. That demand isn't a part of the current campaign, but beneath the surface it hasn't completely disappeared. Congress's support for the cause in 2018 has some appeal for this section of Lingayats.

**Issue-based vote** | Polling on Tuesday will determine whether BJP will retain northern Karnataka as its largest source of MPs in south India. At a time when the party has made an aggressive effort to grow in the south, it can ill afford to see an erosion of its support in a region that has emerged as its base here.

The course of the support it receives from Lingayats, though, is not entirely in its hands. Much will also depend on how Lingayat mathas feel about their autonomy from Hindutva, and what happens to the belief of a section of Lingayats that Basavana wanted them to be a separate religion.

The writer is JRD Tata Chair Visiting Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

Karnataka votes on May 7 (14 seats) in the second of its two-phase election

# Equality Of Wealth Is A Bad Idea

A GOI bureaucrat and a history professor argue that taxing the rich at prohibitive rates is detrimental to the common good and punishes self-made wealth creators

Meeta and Rajivlochan



To imagine wealth can only be created through unfair means and therefore it's fair to expropriate it, is unfair to anyone who adds value to their enterprise. Only a handful inherit their wealth in India. The bulk of wealth creators are self-made.

In 2021-22, per income tax data, there were 887 people with annual incomes of ₹25cr plus or monthly incomes of ₹2cr-plus; they had a share in total reported individual incomes of 1.5%. Only 0.2% of income came from interest, and only 0.66% came from house property income. Of 1,319 individuals with wealth over ₹1,000cr on the Hurun India Rich List of 2023, 64% were self-made.

**Bogus inequality claim** | Human effort to improve skills and material conditions results in gain of wealth. To define how much gain is appropriate is an exercise designed to kill all entrepreneurship and initiative. In 2021, a private member's bill was tabled in Parliament to remove the word 'socialist' from the Preamble, and replace it with the word 'equitable'. Those two words sum up years of debate on what social goals make societies both happy and prosperous.

The modern world is a better place because it's striven to provide equality of opportunity. Equality of wealth and equality of opportunity are different social goals. The bogus cry of inequality of wealth in India raises a fundamental question: is equality of wealth even desirable? That's a moral choice for society to make, and not a question about strategies for economic growth.

**Wealth equality not a social goal** | Except for brief periods in history, no society has chosen to pursue equality of wealth as a social goal. Those experiments have only caused greater disaster. Inequality in some

form or the other exists in every society, either because of institutional constraints or individual aspirations.

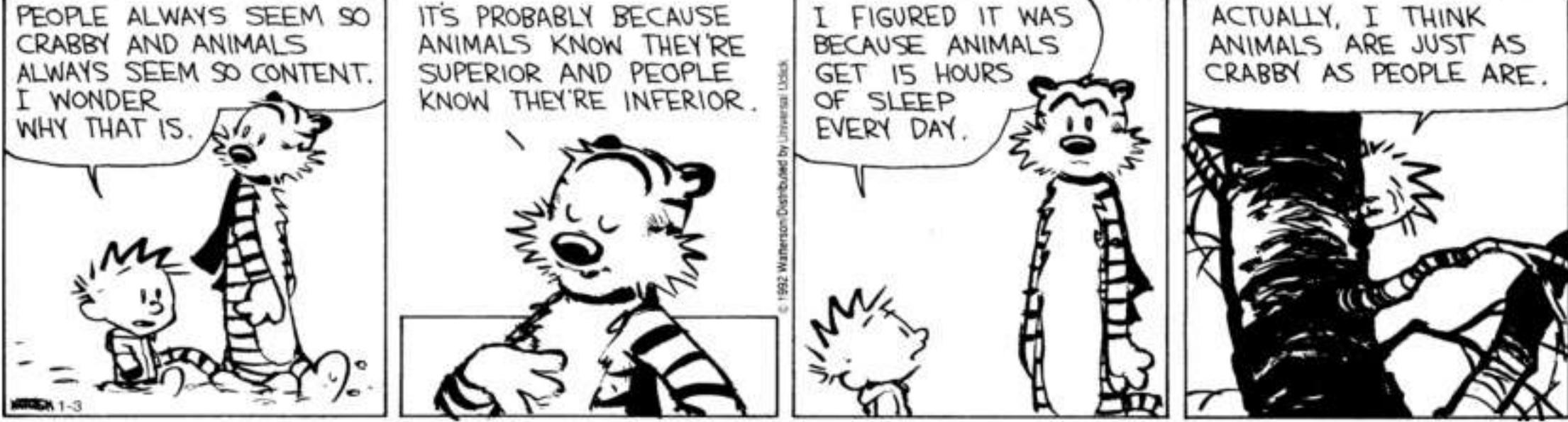
On April 23, a nine-judge bench of Supreme Court initiated proceedings to interpret Article 39 (b) of the Constitution. Does this directive principle of state policy empower the state to manage and redistribute privately managed properties? Article 39 of the Constitution tasks the state to ensure that “operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common



detriment” and “that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good”.

**High tax bar** | Can taxing the rich at prohibitive rates lead to common good? India is no stranger to such policies. Till 1974-75, the highest marginal tax rate for individuals was 97.75%. The story of taxation since then has been to successively reduce that rate – to 75% in 1974-75, 50% in 1985-86, 40% in 1992-93 and to 30% in 1997. The tax kitty has only increased.

## Calvin & Hobbes



# Desireless Performance Can Produce The Best Results

Swami Nirvisheshananda

People often question whether anybody can work sincerely and efficiently without desire. Sincerity becomes natural, and efficiency peaks when actions are no longer motivated by desires. Desire makes the mind cling to future gain or loss instead of the present task. It accompanies expectation, anxiety, and fear and affects attention and performance.

We are born with an insufficiency that makes us look for happiness externally. We are born with the delusion that something from the world will fulfil that lack and make us happy.

Has anybody ever become permanently happy by gaining anything from the world – money, power, companionship,

fame, or appreciation? Even the most overwhelming happiness lasts until the mind picks up some other lack or a fear of losing what we have gained. It is not the fulfilment of our desires that makes us happy. It is the elimination of desires that truly makes us happy.

When a desire is fulfilled, the mind becomes 'desireless' for a while. It remains contented and peaceful until another desire for gaining something or fear of losing something agitates it again. It is the undisturbed state of the mind that makes us happy. It reveals for a while the placid joy that is always there within as a natural characteristic of our inmost identity, the Self. It is like seeing the bottom of the lake clearly

when there are no waves or ripples. That is why we experience unprecedented joy or bliss in meditation, when the whole world is forgotten, and the mind is absorbed in its Source.

The day we realise that joy comes from within, it is a natural property of our Self; we understand that desires make us unhappy because they take us away from the Self. If joy lies within, why should we chase external objects that give us pleasure?

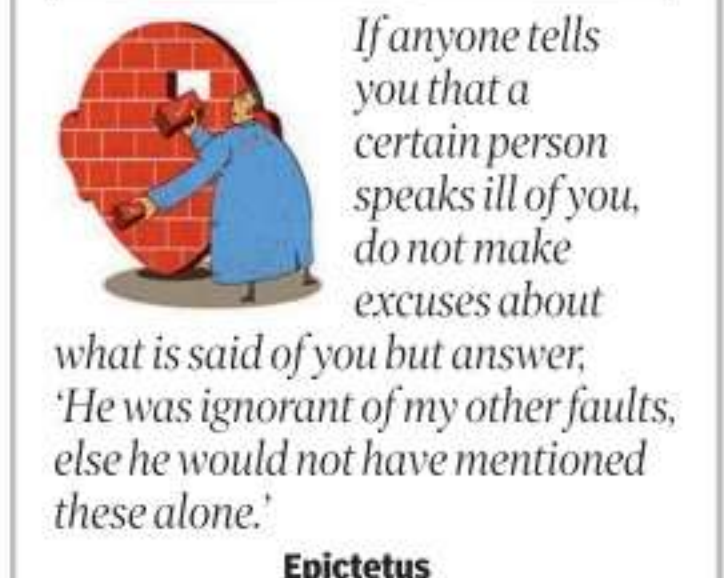
If we do not expect happiness from the objective result of our work, what will be the motivation for work? The motivation for work will be just the objective result of the action, and not gaining happiness from the desired objective result. Without

desire, our mind will be naturally placid and fulfilled. We shall do whatever the circumstances need and what is within our capacity. No more shall we work expecting happiness. We will do whatever is to be done as an expression of joy, and such desireless performance can produce the best objective results.

Several activities are constantly going on in the universe. Earth revolves around the Sun, and the Moon revolves around Earth. Rivers flow. Plants grow. Flowers blossom – each with its own colour and beauty. Nowhere is there desire. When desires are diminished, we blossom like flowers in our natural svabhava, nature, spreading joy.

Swamiji will conduct a retreat from May 3-6 at CIRD, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad. For details, call 9811203815

## Sacredspace



If anyone tells you that a certain person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you but answer, 'He was ignorant of my other faults, else he would not have mentioned these alone.'

Epictetus



## AROUND THE WORLD THIS WEEK

## Ukraine unveils AI govt spokesperson

Ukraine recently introduced a digitally-created spokesperson named Victoria, set to deliver official communications for its foreign ministry. The ministry announced that this digital representative would voice announcements still authored by human beings. Victoria Shi, as she is named,



appeared in a social media video dressed in a dark suit, describing herself as a "digital person." During her presentation, she was seen making hand gestures and moving her

head while speaking. The ministry's press office clarified that while Shi's physical representation is AI-generated, her spoken content would be "written and verified by real individuals." Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said Victoria represented an unprecedented technological advance not yet seen in other diplomatic services. He noted that the primary motivation was to "conserve time and resources" for diplomatic staff. The creative force behind Shi is a group known as The Game Changers, who have previously developed virtual reality projects connected to the conflict in Ukraine. The name "Victoria Shi" draws inspiration from the word "victory" and the Ukrainian phrase for AI, "shtuchnyi intelekt."

## CAREER LADDER FOR WOMEN

## My journey as a civil engr in a male-dominated field

Manisha Dube

My 22-year odyssey as an engineer began first as a dreamer, then as an achiever venturing into uncharted territories, and now leading the civil engineering discipline at AtkinsRealis' global technology centre in India with a team of over 700 water and transportation professionals.

**Plenty of discouragement** | My first encounter with engineering – which also ignited my passion for engineering – was when I saw my brother (a mechanical engineer) repair his bike at home. The hunger to do something in civil engineering and break the status quo dates to 1993 when I decided to pursue my dream career, fighting several notions around "Why engineering?", "Girls don't do civil engineering", "Contractor banna hai kya? (Do you want to become a contractor?)" and many more.

**Power of perseverance** | A career in civil engineering can be very demanding, both physically and mentally. Pursuing one's ambition is all about maintaining the highest standards of work ethics and believing in one's capabilities. An experience that taught me to hold onto my perseverance was during my first job when I was expecting my first child. I was consciously removed from a site visit without my permission. The go-getter in me just couldn't sit back, and the situation couldn't stop me from going on that visit.

**Took up global projects** | Today, I look back at those battles with a sense of pride. Women are often made to give up in the face of adversities and hurdles. But to me, perseverance knows no gender. Back then, with two children and a household to manage, I didn't give up and joined AtkinsRealis in 2007. Since then, I have worked on various mid and mega-projects for the Middle East, US, Canada, UK, and Hong Kong.

**Shattering the glass ceiling** | For a woman, the path to empowerment is full of challenges, setbacks and societal expectations. The pride that I get from collaborating with some of the biggest technical experts in the industry, being involved in decision-making processes and leading a team, is unmatched. I am also a mentor to women colleagues.

To aspiring young women, I encourage you to **embrace your identity** as a woman first. This is what makes us unique, and adds value of diverse opinions and innovative ideas to any organisation. When you **enter a meeting room, speak up as a leader, cultivate mental resilience and self-belief**. Most importantly, **foster a culture of support among women** in your network, as together we learn to empower, uplift and engineer a better and more equitable future for all.

Manisha Dube is associate practice director at the global technology centre of AtkinsRealis in India



Any developer who is motivated enough can contribute to the development of the popular programming language

## Contribute &amp; shape THE FUTURE OF JAVA



Oracle India Java Platform Group

Java was released in 1995 by James Gosling at Sun Microsystems. And in the nearly 30 years since, it has consistently been one of the most popular programming languages in the world. It's also a programming language that is being constantly innovated on by experts and volunteers from around the world, under the stewardship of Oracle, who became the owners of Java after it acquired Sun Microsystems in 2010.

Sharat Chander, senior director of Java SE product management at Oracle, says Java developers of all stripes should participate in the open collaboration process and help shape the future of Java.

"Open JDK is the place where Oracle does all of our development transparently. But we also invite enterprises and individuals to come and participate. Individuals and companies can come and help us shape the future of Java based on the type of role they want to take inside the project."

Sharat says that anyone can sign-up for the mailing list on the Open JDK project and take up an observer role to dip their feet into the shallows where Java is being maintained and worked upon. "As an observer you can see and read, then there's different participation levels, some might require signing a contribution agreement with Oracle. So, for example, companies like Red Hat, Amazon, and IBM have signed a contributor agreement, so they can participate in the evolution of Java. But you don't have to be a company. If you have that much passion and purpose that you want to be an author or a contributor, then you can absolutely read through our Oracle contribution agreement and take part."

Sharat says that the reason Java has become so widely adopted across the world stems from the availability of vibrant collaborative projects and programs that developers are able to tap into.

The Java user group program is one such initiative where developers locally can come together to learn from each other. There are 400 user groups around the world, ten of which are based out of India. "Wherever in the world you go you're bound to find a local user group in any city you visit.

Who would have ever thought that almost 30 years later, Java would still be here, and that it would be such an important dimension of the technology footprint. There are tens of thousands of businesses and over 10 million developers that continue to rely on Java to address their development needs. And that's specifically tied to the fact that since its inception, we've tried to ensure that Java stays innovative with the industry trends that we see. Java 22 (the latest version) is a continuation of that.



Sharat Chander | SENIOR DIRECTOR, JAVA SE PRODUCT MANAGEMENT, ORACLE

There are almost 400 Java user groups around the world. This is the place where developers locally can come together to learn from each other. And I'm happy to say that in India alone there are 10 user groups. The Bangalore Java user group, I think, is probably the most active Java user group in India, although I do know the Delhi Java user group claims to be the most active. So, it's great to see healthy competition between North and South.

Antarctica is the only continent where you won't find a Java user group."

Sharat says that the first and foremost thing that he would tell any new developer, regardless of the language being learned, is to seek out such user groups. "Almost every technology out there has a collection of user groups. And many of those user groups are imprinted on our Java user group program. And that's why we continue to invest in the Java user group program. That's where you get the immediate learning opportunity from individuals who have expertise. And so I would strongly suggest any new developer, especially coming into the Java ecosystem, to seek out one of those 10 user groups based in India and become a member. Memberships are free."

Oracle University is also important, says Sharat, because this is where the official Java certification program is offered by Oracle to developers worldwide. "Just last year, we completed 1 million Java certifications."

## Learning content

While initiatives and forums for collaboration are important, easily accessible learning content is just as crucial to make sure fresh talent keeps breathing new life into a decades-old programming language like Java. This is where dev.java and inside.java come into the picture.

Dev.java is the official Java portal for learning content and tutorials regardless of your skill level, says Sharat. "So, we have content that's

mapped specifically for beginner, intermediate, and expert level content."

Inside.java was launched a few years ago because the Java user base wanted an easy mechanism to understand all of the publications, video content, and writings that Oracle publishes on Java – in a single destination location. "The content can be found tagged by topic, speaker, date, and concept."

Sharat adds that the official Java YouTube channel is a great learning resource as well.

## AI redundancy fears

With AI systems getting evermore proficient at writing code, should students today even bother studying the nitty-gritties of a programming language like Java? Sharat is unequivocal that such fears are misplaced. He says programming will never go away.

"If you want to develop very robust enterprise level solutions that have performance, stability, and security, you're going to need to know how to program, and especially in Java, because it offers such uniqueness in those three areas. And so, I look at AI generated code as maybe simplifying some of the ceremony. But when you get into complex solutions, I'm not sure any enterprise is going to want to rely on something that's been auto generated from what it's learned. The human experience matters and so I am not worried about AI taking the job away from any developer. In fact, I think it will just enhance the learning experience."

## GLOSSARY OF IN-GROUP TERMS USED ON THIS PAGE

## FACIAL LANDMARK DETECTION

Facial landmark detection is a process in computer vision that involves identifying and locating key points on a face in images or videos. These key points, or landmarks, typically include various positions around the eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, and jawline. The primary objective of facial landmark detection is to capture the structure and geometry of a face by pinpointing these specific areas. Once the landmarks are identified, the detected points allow for the extraction of meaningful facial features which are crucial for further analysis. This can include applications like emotion recognition, facial animation, and more sophisticated forms of identity verification. Each step is seamlessly integrated to ensure accurate and effective mapping of the face, enabling numerous practical applications in various tech-driven fields.

## LARGE VISION MODELS

Large vision models are sophisticated AI systems that interpret visual data from images or videos, similar to how large language models understand text. They're built with complex neural networks, including convolutional neural networks for efficient pixel handling and pattern detection, and more recently, transformer models adapted from natural language processing for enhanced vision tasks. Training these models requires a massive dataset of visual information, enabling them to learn and recognise various patterns and objects within the visual data they process. Essentially, they're like the eyes of AI, giving machines the ability to 'see' and understand the visual world around them.

## An AI system in India finds new use case in Saudi



Camcom team

Sujit.John@timesgroup.com

A few years ago, Saudi Arabia's municipal authority introduced an app that would allow citizens to take pictures of civic issues – things like pavement cracks, missing manhole covers, construction debris lying uncovered – so that the authorities could take action. A contact centre was set up to manage the complaints. Within months, the number of incidents being reported had touched 2.5 million – impossible for the contact centre to handle.

The govt realised it needed automated systems, and last year, it mandated global management consultancy Kearney to find a solution. Kearney ran a search around the world, and one of the firms it came to was Bengaluru-based Camcom. Camcom's co-founder Ajith

## STARTUP STORIES

Nayar was initially hesitant. The venture, founded in 2017, was focused on using computer vision technologies to help automotive companies like Mahindra and TVS to identify defects in components and products on assembly lines, and to help insurance companies like Bajaj Allianz, HDFC Ergo, and SBI General to simplify motor insurance claims by allowing customers involved in minor accidents to take pictures of the vehicle for damage estimation instead of sending assessors to the spot.

"I told Kearney our system was not designed to do what the Saudi govt wanted, that it was designed to find metal, plastic, and glass defects during production, and in damage in the after-market. But they said, try it," Ajith says.

Kearney sent some 700 mobile phone images of things like missing manhole covers and broken lamppost glass, which Camcom ran through its system. "We reported 82.5% accuracy (in identifying defects) with zero training on our models," Ajith recalls. "I couldn't believe it. Then I looked at it more closely, and found that the common thing (in what the Saudis wanted and in the work Camcom was doing) is metal, plastic and glass. 63% of the products in this world are made of metal, plastic and glass," he says. Add concrete, bitumen, and rubber, and this becomes 90%. So, all that Camcom needed to do to improve the system for the Saudis was to

undertake a little more training of the system, including enabling the system to understand the specific scenarios in a civic setting.

The moment the pilot was done, Ajith and team were called to Riyadh to sign the contract. Today 60% of Camcom's revenue comes from Saudi Arabia.

## Meeting UN SDG goal

Ajith, who did a Bachelor's in hotel management and a Master of Science in hospitality information management, started his career with Wipro in its hospitality & leisure business. He founded Camcom together with two engineers – Umesh, with whom he had worked previously in Wipro, and Mahesh Subramanian, a serial entrepreneur. The three realised that defect/damage visual inspections are labour intensive and therefore subjective, slow and prone to error. Their AI-powered visual inspection platform has today carved a significant presence in India's automotive segment, and even has customers in Europe, Mexico and South East Asia. Their system does 3 million inspections every year on automotive damage for insurance companies alone.

We have a data lake that is growing at 580 million images per annum. We are now working to build a large vision model. Our algorithms are able to extract 90% of the metadata in a picture. The system looks at a picture and it's able to understand the scenario in which it is.

Ajith Nayar

CO-FOUNDER, CAMCOM



The Saudi deal has turbocharged the team. Just in the last quarter, the system handled 6.5 million civic incidents, automatically generating tickets into the municipality system, and sending it to the right department.

A press release the Saudi govt issued on the alliance – presented as a global first association by a nation to tackle visual pollution using AI and leading the way to achieving the UN SDG goal of building sustainable cities – caught international attention. "We are now getting enquiries from Abu Dhabi, Harris county in Texas, Mauritius," says Ajith.

## TRANSFORMING DOCTOR CONSULTATION

Dr Gowri Kulkarni |  
HEAD, MEDICAL OPERATIONS, MEDI BUDDY

I always felt that as a doctor my reach was limited by the geography I reside in. When telemedicine came, this completely changed. Given my passion for teaching and spreading knowledge, I knew that my mission to provide digital healthcare could be achieved by creating a league of good empathetic doctors who communicate well and treat optimally based on patient-centric evidence-based practice. This is when I started thinking about our now patented process called QuaFi.

## PATENT PATHFINDERS: TURNING WORK INTO WONDERS

**What it does** | QuaFi uses customised dashboards and metrics to analyse key parameters of teleconsultations such as communication, user experience, and consultation quality. It delivers instant, personalised, and context-specific feedback to doctors, empowering them to enhance their skills seamlessly during consultations. Feedback is around aspects of the consultation process like whether the doctor is building rapport, listening actively, gathering enough data, showing empathy, explaining the diagnosis and treatment plan clearly, eliciting patient concerns. Work is on to also develop



Dr Gowri Kulkarni and her team that worked on the system patented in India

functionalities to provide feedback on prescriptions, including potential drug interactions. The system is a plug-and-play model that can be integrated with any telehealth platform.

**Tech we used** | The biggest challenge was to make it easy to use and to make it a plug-and-play model. Utilising various technological tools including Google ML Kit for video face landmark detection, AWS Transcribe and Whisper for audio transcription, and GPT 3.5 for language analysis and generation, we ensured the production of high-quality outputs. These outputs are seamlessly delivered to end-user

doctors through our dashboards and app interfaces

**All-woman team** | I have been blessed to have an incredible all-woman team of trained medical professionals who help continually upgrade the system, give quality feedback, and monitor progress. Our data science team, led by Krishna Chaitanya, provided comprehensive support for the QuaFi process patent. Many in the team have had their personal struggles – surviving a life-threatening disease, coming from a humble farming background and being the only educated one, those with their first corporate job experience,

and those with struggles with infertility and managing depression. My personal experience has been of a working mother juggling multiple roles and responsibilities both on the personal and professional front. Women in my team with their education and experiences are inherently more empathetic, keen, and perceptive to the nuances of doctor-patient interaction and the provision of person-centred care.

**Our learnings** | Patent filing can seem overwhelming to many but I feel that if someone has created an innovative product it should be patented. Our journey started in 2019. Here are our learnings:

- We need to find the right problem to solve. At MediBuddy, we were trying to solve the problem of learning on the go through our real-time feedback loop using technology to help doctors consistently give good consult experience to our users.
- Find the right patent attorney who can work towards establishing and creating enough discovery on the said topic to help us show the innovation.
- Continue to work on improving the innovation to have an edge over others.

**Doctor acceptance** | Once we had created the QuaFi system, we had the challenge of its acceptance by doctors. With time, doctors saw merit in it and have been able to use the feedback to improve their consultation experience.

## A 16-YEAR CRICKETING TRADITION AT NTT

The NPL – or NTT Premier League – is a cricketing tradition that began in 2008 when a group of enthusiastic NTT Group employees sought to play the game with their work colleagues. What started with four teams has now grown to include 20 men's and four women's teams – across NTT Group companies, almost like IPL.

The annual event has evolved from a single-venue tournament with manual scoring to a multi-venue spectacle with online scorekeeping, and YouTube streaming. The latest champions are Maratha Warriors in men and NTT Global Networks in women.

Shavee Sehajpal, senior director, HR and administration in NTT Data India, says NPL brings people of diverse backgrounds, designations,

departments and NTT companies together. Eesha Desai, product marketing specialist at NTT Data, says participating in NPL has been transformative as it transcends cricket to forge a strong community. "It's about skill enhancement, shared enthusiasm, and a camaraderie that permeates our work. Significantly, the women's competition stands as a proud testament to inclusivity and excellence," she says.





## FIH PRO LEAGUE: SALIMA PICKED AS CAPTAIN IN PLACE OF SAVITA

New Delhi: Mid-fielder Salima Tete on Thursday replaced veteran goalkeeper Savita Punia as captain of the 24-strong Indian women's hockey squad for the Belgium and England legs of the FIH Pro League starting later this month. Navneet Kaur has been named her deputy for the tour.

"It is a big responsibility and I am looking forward to this new role. We have a strong squad and it's a mix of experienced and young players," Salima was quoted as saying in a Hockey India press release.

**SQUAD: Goalkeepers:** Savita, Bichu Devi Kharibam, **Defenders:** Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary, Monika, Jyoti Chhatr, Mahima Chaudhary, **Midfielders:** Salima Tete (c), Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Navneet Kaur (vc), Neha, Jyoti, Baljeet Kaur, Manisha Chauhan, Lalremliami. **Forwards:** Mumtaz Khan, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, Sharmila Devi, Preeti Dubey, Vandana Katariya, Sunelita Toppo, Deepika Soreng. **PTI**

## IGA REACHES MADRID FINAL

Madrid: World No. 1 Iga Swiatek cruised through to a second consecutive Madrid Open final with a 6-1, 6-3 victory over Madison Keys on Thursday. Dominant on clay, Swiatek barely put a foot wrong, making just eight unforced errors in the match to leave the American with virtually no chance.

The top seed started in unforgetting form, breaking to love in the second game and dropping just three of the first 17 points. Keys, seeded 18th, battled back to hold from 0-30 down for a 3-1 deficit, fighting to stay in the set. However last year's Madrid runner-up broke again for a 5-1 lead and served it out to wrap up the first set in 31 minutes. **AGENCIES**



SWIATEK

# PSG come to grief at 'Yellow Wall'



UNLUCKY? PSG's Mbappe reacts after a missed opportunity

## FUELLKRUG'S FINISH SETTLES FIRST LEG FOR DORTMUND AGAINST PROFLIGATE PSG

Dortmund: Niclas Füllkrug scored and Borussia Dortmund earned a 1-0 win over Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal.

Dortmund defender Nico Schlotterbeck sent a long pass over the top for Füllkrug to control brilliantly with his first touch before firing it past PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma with his next in the 36th minute on Wednesday. "It's not the first time that I've tried to stick the ball in at the near post this season. This time it worked out and I'm even happier that it's in such an important game," Füllkrug said.

The win gives Dortmund a narrow advantage before the teams play again in the second leg in Paris next Tuesday, when the French champions will need to overturn the result if they are going to capture Europe's biggest prize before Kylian Mbappe leaves the club.

Dortmund's win ensured they qualified for the tournament next season and it gives the Bundesliga five teams in the expanded tournament. Dortmund are assured of finishing at least fifth.

Roared on by most of the



"It always feels like you go into a game with a 1-0 lead. But we also suffered a lot today. They had phases where they put a lot of pressure on us. That's inevitable against such a top team. Now it's half-time."

— Füllkrug, who scored the winner

| MATCH STATS |              | Dortmund | PSG |
|-------------|--------------|----------|-----|
| 43          | Possession % | 57       |     |
| 13          | Shots        | 14       |     |
| 4           | On Target    | 3        |     |
| 4           | Corners      | 3        |     |
| 11          | Fouls        | 6        |     |

THE HOME TEAM RAN 119.7 KILOMETERS — ALMOST 10 MORE THAN THE VISITORS.

81,365 fans present, including the famed "yellow wall" behind one of the goals, Dortmund made the busier start and maintained their intensity for the whole game.

Defender Lucas Hernandez went off injured after trying to stop Füllkrug from scoring. Hernandez will have surgery after rupturing his left knee ACL, almost certainly ruling him out of playing for France at the European Championship. PSG pushed hardest early in the second half, when Mbappe hit the right post before Achraf Hakimi struck the left post. Gregor Kobel saved Mbappe's next effort and Dortmund survived the pressure.

Füllkrug went on to miss further good chances for the German team, while Marquinhos made a crucial block to deny Julian Brandt late on.

"It would have been nice if we could have made our counterattacks count to get a second goal at the end," Dortmund veteran Mats Hummels said.

The visitors missed chances, too. Ousmane Dembele should have scored on his return to Dortmund when he blazed a shot over late, then Vitinha flashed a shot wide of the left post. **AP**



## BLOW TO BAYERN AS RANGNICK OPTS TO STAY AS AUSTRIA COACH

Munich: Ralf Rangnick said on Thursday he wished to continue as Austria head coach, with Euro 2024 the immediate goal, delivering a fresh blow to Bayern Munich in their search for a replacement for outgoing boss Thomas Tuchel.

The 65-year-old former Manchester United interim manager had been tipped to replace Tuchel, who leaves at the end of the season after just two years in charge, having failed to secure Bayern a 12th successive Bundesliga crown.

"I am the Austrian team boss with all my heart," Rangnick said in a statement released by the Austrian FA (OeFB) on Thursday. "This task gives me incredible joy and I am determined to successfully continue on our chosen path."

## LARGEST EVER REFUGEE TEAM TO COMPETE AT PARIS OLY: IOC

Lausanne: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Thursday unveiled its largest refugee Olympic team to date for the Paris 2024 Games, with 36 athletes from 11 different countries.

The athletes, from countries including Syria, Sudan, Iran and Afghanistan, will compete across 12 sports in Paris, the third time such a team has formed for the Summer Olympics.

"With your participation in the Olympic Games, you will demonstrate the human potential of resilience and excellence," IOC president Thomas Bach said during the team's announcement.

"This will send a message of hope to the more than 100 million displaced people around the world."

For the first time, the team will compete under its own emblem. **AGENCIES**

# Indian campaign over

## Thomas, Uber Cups: Men Lose To China, Women Blanked By Japan

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Indian men and women bowed out in the quarter-finals of the Thomas and Uber Cup in Chengdu, China on Thursday. While China dethroned India 3-1 in the Thomas Cup, Japan blanked India 3-0 in Uber Cup.

Only Lakshya Sen secured a point for India, as HS Prannoy, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty and the second doubles team of Dhruv Kapila-Sai Pratheek lost their matches. Lakshya beat Li Shi Feng 13-21, 21-18, 21-14 in the third match to reduce the margin.

World No. 9 Prannoy slumped after winning the first game against world No. 2 Shi Yu Qi 21-15, 21-12, 14-21. Satwik-Chirag failed to get past the world No. 1 pair of Wang Chang and Liang Wei Keng 15-21, 21-11, 12-21. This is their fifth loss in six meetings.

The makeshift pair of Dhruv and Sai had a lot riding on their performance but they were no match for He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu, losing 10-21, 10-21.



The pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty failed to get past the world No. 1 duo of Wang Chang and Liang Wei Keng

Prannoy blamed lack of rest for poor show. "China had an off day yesterday. We had a long day and by the time we returned it was 1.30-2 am. That made some difference," Prannoy said.

Chirag said that they were not at their best. "The rallies were short, whenever we played long rallies we won. When we play opponents like them, we need to be at our best but we weren't," Chirag said.

Earlier, Ashmita Chaliha was the only Indian to take a game off the Japanese. India failed to capitalise on the absence of Japan's best player Akane Yamaguchi. Ashmita lost to Aya Ohori 10-21, 22-20,

15-21. Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra were no match for Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida. Nozomi Okuhara made short work of Isharani Baruah 21-15, 21-12. **RESULTS (QUARTERFINALS)** **Thomas Cup:** Shi Yuqi bt HS Prannoy 15-21, 21-11, 21-14; Liang Keng/Wang Chang bt Satwik-Chirag 21-15, 21-12, 21-12; Li Shi Feng lost to Lakshya Sen 15-21, 21-11, 21-14; He Ji/Ren Xiang bt Dhruv/Sai 21-10, 21-10.

**Uber Cup:** India lost to Japan 0-3 (Ashmita Chaliha lost to Aya Ohori 10-21, 22-20, 15-21; Priya Konjengbam/Shruti Mishra lost to Nami Matsuyama/Chiharu Shida 8-21, 9-21; Isharani Baruah lost to Nozomi Okuhara 15-21, 12-21).

# Sprinters Lalit, Himani get 4-year bans over doping

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New Delhi: Sprinter Lalit Kumar, who gained prominence after running alone in the 100m race at the Delhi state athletics championships here last year following the withdrawal of all other participants due to the presence of dope control officers (DCOs), has been handed a four-year ban by the National Anti-Doping Agency (Nada) for the presence of prohibited substance — drosanolone metabolite — in his urine sample.

Lalit's ban comes into effect from Oct 23, 2023 after Nada's anti-doping disciplinary panel (ADDP) pronounced its decision late last month. Eight runners had qualified for the 100m final at

the Delhi state meet but after learning about the presence of DCOs — who were at the venue to collect the urine samples of the competitors — all except Lalit fled the track.

Another sprinter Himani Chandel, who stood first after securing her personal best timing of 11.69s in the 100m event at the Federation Cup senior athletics meet in Ranchi last year, has been banned for four years by the ADPP after testing positive for the steroid drosanolone.

Himani, who secured multiple podium finishes at different Federation Cup championships last year, will serve her ban effective June 15, 2023. Himani was part of the Indian 4x100m squad for the Asian Championships in Bangkok

last year but was dropped following her doping offence.

Men's 400m runner, Akash Kumar — a bronze medallist at the Asian U20 championships — has been barred from competing for two years effective August 10, 2023 after failing to report his whereabouts. Akash was banned following three whereabouts clause violations including one missed test.

Indian men's basketball team player, Shashank J Rai, has been handed an ineligibility period of four years after his samples returned positive for steroid nandrolone. He had challenged the sanction imposed by the ADPP, but Nada's appeals panel (ADAP) upheld the decision.

## EC: Post-poll benefit offer can generate 'quid pro quo'

► Continued from P1

EC said the act of inviting or calling upon individual electors to register for post-election benefits may create an impression of the requirement of one-to-one transactional relationship between voters and the proposed benefit and has the "potential to generate quid-pro-quo" arrangement for voting in a particular way and thereby leading to inducement.

While acknowledging that generic electoral promises are in the realm of permissibility, EC cited examples of putting advertisements in newspapers to urge voters to register themselves for benefits by giving missed calls on a mobile or calling on a number, which obscure the distinction between authentic surveys and biased attempts to enrol people in programmes for political gain.

It also said distribution of guarantee cards as pamphlets giving details of prospective individual benefits along with an attached form asking for details of voters such as name, age, address, mobile number, booth number and constituency also amounted to violation of model code of conduct.

The poll body directed all district election officers to take appropriate action against any such advertisements as per the election law.

## Pak intruder shot dead along IB in J&K's Samba

Jammu: BSF troops shot a Pakistani intruder near a forward post along the international border in Samba, J&K late on Wednesday, possibly thwarted an infiltration bid, reports Sanjay Khajuria.

The troops noticed suspicious movement close to border. The intruder ignored repeated warnings and continued to sneak into the Indian side, making BSF personnel open fire, neutralising him.

# Wayanad factor may influence Rahul's decision on UP contest

► Continued from P1

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and All India Congress Committee general secretary KC Venugopal are said to have held a discussion on the subject in Shimoga in Karnataka after a public rally Thursday afternoon.

Faced with repeated questions about the candidates, AICC spokespersons urged patience, and said that a decision will be made soon.

Speculations about the twin seats have peaked in the last few days.

Many alliance party functionaries who emerged from a preparatory meeting held by constituency manager KL Sharma on Thursday told reporters that Rahul will file the nomination on Friday morning.

According to a party manager, there has been indecision in Rahul's mind about contesting from Uttar Pradesh because of various reasons, the key being Rahul's concern about vacating Wayanad, which he won in 2019 even as he lost Amethi.

While he expressed confidence about his prospects, in line with the party's positive feedback, Rahul has been worried about the optics of quitting Kerala eventually.

## India mum on joining Swiss meet despite Ukraine push

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Despite pressure from Ukraine for high-level participation from India in the upcoming Switzerland peace summit, govt remains non-committal on the issue.

The Union ministry of external affairs reiterated its position that India is open to all ideas which can lead to early resolution of the Russia-Ukraine or can lead to early attainment of peace, but added no decision has been taken on the issue of participation.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the summit,



Workers standing among debris in a damaged thermal power plant in Ukraine after a Russian attack on Thursday

seeking India's cooperation, and had also sent his foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba to India in March for talks

about the peace summit and also his own 10-point peace plan.

Switzerland officially announced this week it will host the summit on June 15-16, just after the G7 summit, saying it has invited 160 countries for the conference, according to a Bloomberg report.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to participate in the G7 meeting, doubts remain about the level of participation in the peace summit that Russia has described as lacking credibility.

India is also unlikely to confirm the level of participation in any event before the election results are out on June 4.

## Rae Bareilly to bid adieu to 'nakli' Gandhis, lotus to bloom: BJP pick

► Continued from P1

In Rae Bareilly, this is the second time that Dinesh Singh, a former Congressman who used to be a confidant of the Gandhis, will be contesting. In 2019, he contested against Sonia Gandhi but lost by over 1.7 lakh votes.

The contest has taken a turn with Sonia opting out of LS polls and taking the Rajya Sabha route to Parliament from Rajasthan. BJP, according to sources, is banking on Dinesh Singh's connect with grassroots functionaries, especially at the village and block level.

## Sakshi: BJP ticket for Karan jolt to women

Sakshi Malik on Thursday lashed out at BJP for choosing former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Shahran Singh's son, Karan, as its candidate for LS polls from Kaiserganj seat in UP, saying the decision has defeated the country's daughters. Top wrestlers, including Sakshi, had accused Brij Bhushan of sexually harassing women wrestlers during his tenure as WFI chief.

"Leave the arrest, today by giving ticket to his son you have broken the morale of crores of daughters of the country. If the ticket goes to only one family, is the country's govt so weak in front of one man?" she said. **PTI**

Sources said he has already hit the ground and has been holding meetings with different sections for the past many days. Even the local BJP organisational cadre had been pressing for his name.

"I assure the country that the farewell of 'nakli' Gandhis from Rae Bareilly is certain. It is certain that BJP's lotus will bloom and Congress will lose. I have fought against four-time MP Sonia Gandhi, so Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Rahul Gandhi are not important to me. Whichever Gandhi comes to Rae Bareilly, they will lose," Dinesh said after his candidature was announced.

# 'Wish to represent India, win medal at Paralympics'

► Continued from P 1

She suffered fractures seven during delivery as doctors didn't know she was already suffering from the disease, Bhaskar, a defence accounts auditor, says as he recalls daughter Vijaya's pre-birth scan that showed feeble bones.

Vijaya suffered most of her fractures while crawling as a toddler. "Her body weight was on her hands. Now, she uses different wheelchairs at home and to play. While changing wheelchairs, she fell a few times and fractured her legs and hands. She slipped many times in the bath and broke her legs," Bhaskar adds.

It was an ordeal for Vijaya to walk till she turned seven and her fractures led to hip and knee surgeries. These affected her movements, requiring her to take help for most day-to-day chores. "We have to take care of her like glass," Bhaskar says.

Unlike other teens, Vijaya can't go to school because of her multiple sur-

geries and risk of further injury. "My parents and brother are very supportive. They teach me at home. I plan to write my Class X exams through open school this year or next," she says.

Mother Aruna recalls that one of Vijaya's fractures occurred when she fell trying to reach an upper berth in a train. They were travelling to one of Vijayette's tennis tournaments. "We carry crepe bandages and painkillers all the time," Aruna says.

While Vijayette hit the courts, Vijaya took to table game. In Indore where she took the second spot, she lost only to Bhavina Patel, the silver medallist at the 2020 Paralympics. Vijaya says she now dreams of representing India and winning a medal at the Paralympics.

Bhaskar outlined the challenges. "She is ranked No. 3 in nationals. To compete in Paralympics, she needs to play in international tournaments. Travelling is costly and we are looking for sponsors to achieve her dream," he says.

## India slams Trudeau's fresh remarks on Nijjar

New Delhi: India on Thursday rejected fresh comments by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau on killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar and said the remarks once again illustrate the political space given to separatism, extremism, and violence in Canada.

Trudeau addressed a Khalsa Day event in Toronto that was attended by some pro-Khalistan people. On sidelines of the event, he said killing of Nijjar in British Columbia in June last year created "problem" and that he cannot ignore it, in an apparent reference to his earlier allegations of invol-

vement of Indian agents in the assassination.

"Trudeau made such remarks earlier as well. His remarks illustrate the political space that has been given in Canada to separatism, extremism, and violence," EAM spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "This not only impacts India-Canada relations but also encourages a climate of violence and criminality in Canada to the detriment of its own citizens," he said when asked about Trudeau's remarks. Trudeau, referring to activities by pro-Khalistan elements, said "our job is not to crack down on political protest". **PTI**



# ROHIT'S 20:20 SPIN VISION

## Skipper Wanted Four Spinners In World Cup Squad Because Of India's Games Starting At 10 AM And Dew Not Playing A Major Role

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Mumbai: Keeping in mind the conditions in the Caribbean, where the wickets are likely to be low, slow and sluggish, the unusually early start timings for India's matches — 10 am local time — and perhaps also the ordinary form of their pacers barring Jasprit Bumrah, India have clearly devised a bowling plan for the upcoming T20 World Cup based around a heavy diet of spin.

While Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel are the left-arm spinning all-rounders in the squad, Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal are the two wrist spinners. On Thursday, captain Rohit Sharma, while trying to avoid giving out too much in terms of team strategy, justified the logic of having picked four spinners and just three pacers in the 15-member squad.

"I don't want to go too much into details. I'm sure opposition captains are listening to this. I wanted four spinners. We've played a lot of cricket there (Caribbean). We know what the conditions are like. With a morning start at 10-10.30am, there's a little bit of technical aspect involved in this," Rohit said.

"The reason for picking four spin-

ners is something I won't reveal now. I wanted four spinners. With two of them being allrounders (Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja) and two attacking options (Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal), it gives you balance. Based on the opposition, we can decide who to play," the captain stressed.

"Maybe when I do the first press conference upon landing, I'll give more details," he added.

**Shivam Dube for middle-order power**

After India's failures in the last two T20 World Cups, it's clear that Rohit and the selectors wanted someone to do the heavy lifting in the middle overs against spinners, where acceleration has been a big problem.

In that aspect, the skipper is banking on Mumbai allrounder Shivam Dube, who has been in sizzling form for the Chennai Super Kings in the last three IPLs now and has shown the ability to tonk the spinners.

In the IPL so far, Dube has smashed 350 runs in 10 matches at a strike rate of 171.56 (average 50.00), in a tally which includes 26 sixes.

In the three-match T20I series against Afghanistan at home in January, he carted 124 runs in three innings at a strike rate of 158.97. "The



STRATEGIC INSIGHT: Captain Rohit Sharma and selection committee chairman Ajit Agarkar address a press conference in Mumbai on Thursday

one thing we really looked at was middle-overs hitting. The top-order hitting has been alright, hasn't been bad, but there are options there as well. In the middle overs, we wanted someone to come and play that role where he can play freely without worrying about who is bowling and who is not. We picked Shivam Dube based on the IPL and a few games before the IPL, as well," Rohit said.

The Indian captain expects Dube to chip in with the ball too, even though he has bowled just one over in this IPL. "I know Shivam has not bowled much, but he's a seasoned cricketer who bowls a lot of overs in red-ball cricket. Honestly, if we need

Shivam to bowl a few overs, he will bowl a few overs. Hardik as well, he has been bowling regularly in the IPL. Whenever it's required, he has come and bowled. Like Ajit (Agarkar) said, he's come and played all the games, fitness wise, there are no issues."

**'In IPL, performances change every day.'**

Rohit revealed that he had "70-80%" of India's World Cup-bound squad in his mind before the IPL. "You make the playing XI in your mind and work around it. The talk of 'what our final 15 started much before the IPL. In the IPL, performances change every day. Anyone will come and score a hundred or take five wickets."

# 'Leaving Rinku out of team was the toughest decision'

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Mumbai: One player whose exclusion from India's 15-man squad evoked public outcry was Rinku Singh. In the 11 innings that he's played for India so far, the left-hander, batting at No. 5 or No. 6, has scored 356 runs at a strike rate of 176.23 and an average of 89. Even though he's in the reserves, Rinku lost out in the race for a T20 World Cup spot to Shivam Dube.

India's chief selector Ajit Agarkar appeared apologetic about that call, admitting that it was the "toughest decision" his committee took. "It was the toughest decision. He has done nothing wrong, nor has Shubman Gill. It's just the combinations. We're not sure of the conditions we'll get (in the USA) and we wanted to have enough (bowling) options."

"We had a couple of wrist-spinners to give Rohit more options, I don't think it's anything to do with Rinku. It's not his fault that he missed out, it's more the 15 we felt we needed, with two keepers who are both terrific batters, we will have an extra batter sitting out."

"But he's still one of the traveling substitutes. That's how close he was, but we can only take 15," Agarkar said.

Despite calls for introducing fresh blood in India's T20 team, the selectors chose to go with experience yet again. Barring Yashasvi Jaiswal replacing KL Rahul in the opening slot and the inclusion of Shivam Dube, the top six in the batting order is the same as that of the last T20 World Cup in 2022, in which India exited after a 10-wicket drubbing at the hands of England in the semifinal.

On Thursday at the BCCI HQ, chief selector

Ajit Agarkar explained why he and his committee pitched for experience at the cost of youth.

"These guys have been around because they've been good enough to be around. That's the reason they have played in multiple World Cups. We've tried to get in players who are going to bat a certain way in the middle of the innings, where a lot of teams will use spin sometimes. That has been an issue. We have tried to address that. We have tried to get in some left-handers as well through the middle of that innings. Suryakumar is the No. 1 T20 player. I don't think he's too bad through the middle either," Agarkar said.

Agarkar said there has been no discussion among the selectors over Virat Kohli's strike rate, something that has often been pointed out as a drawback in the former skipper's T20 game. "We have not been discussing it. He has been in great form, no concerns there at all. You are still going to a World Cup, there is still a gap there. That's where experience matters a lot. If the tournament turns out like the IPL, if it's a 220 pitch, we have the skills. When you turn up for a World Cup, the pressure is different," Agarkar said.

**'No replacement for Pandya'**

Defending Hardik Pandya's inclusion as Rohits deputy, Agarkar said, "Nothing was discussed with regard to vice-captaincy. About form, he has come after a longish year off. The good part that we have looked at is he has got through all the games so far for MI. We have got another month and a little bit till the first game. If he stays fit, we know what he brings, how much balance he gives the team."

## Sunrisers Hold Nerve At The Death As Royals Fall One Run Short

# A GAME OF FINE MARGINS

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Hyderabad: Bhuvneshwar Kumar drew on all his experience to defend 13 runs in the final over as Sunrisers Hyderabad held their nerve to topple table-toppers Rajasthan Royals by one run on Thursday.

Sunrisers posted a challenging 201/3, thanks to half-centuries from Nitish Kumar Reddy (76\*; 42b, 3x4, 8x6) and Travis Head (58; 48b, 6x4, 3x6). However, Yashasvi Jaiswal (67; 40b, 7x4, 2x6) and Riyan Parag (77; 49b, 8x4, 4x6), rising on a couple of dropped chances, almost came to haunt the hosts as the duo added



RISING STAR: Nitish Reddy belted an unbeaten 42-ball 76 against Rajasthan in Hyderabad on Thursday

8 sixes hit by Nitish Reddy, making him the fifth Sunrisers' batter to achieve the feat in an IPL innings, joining David Warner, Manish Pandey, Heinrich Klaasen and Travis Head.

Suman.Reddy D

| TEAM | M  | W | L | NRR    | PTS |
|------|----|---|---|--------|-----|
| RR   | 10 | 8 | 2 | 0.622  | 16  |
| KKR  | 9  | 6 | 3 | 1.096  | 12  |
| LSG  | 10 | 6 | 4 | 0.094  | 12  |
| SRH  | 10 | 6 | 4 | 0.072  | 12  |
| CSK  | 10 | 5 | 5 | 0.627  | 10  |
| DC   | 11 | 5 | 6 | -0.442 | 10  |
| PBKS | 10 | 4 | 6 | -0.062 | 8   |
| GT   | 10 | 4 | 6 | -1.113 | 8   |
| MI   | 10 | 3 | 7 | -0.272 | 6   |
| RCB  | 10 | 3 | 7 | -0.415 | 6   |

### SCOREBOARD

SRH: T Head b Avesh 58, A Sharma c Jurel b Bhuvneshwar 12, A Singh c Jaiswal b Sandeep 5, N K Reddy not out 76, H Klaasen not out 42, Extras (w8): 8; Total (20 Ov; RR: 10.05): 201/3; FoW: 1-25, 2-35, 3-131; Bowling: Boult 4-0-33-0, R Ashwin 4-0-36-0, Avesh 4-0-39-2, Sandeep 4-0-31-1, Y Chahal 4-0-62-0

RR: Y Jaiswal b Natarajan 67, J Buttler c Jansen b Bhuvneshwar 0, S Samson b Bhuvneshwar 0, R Parag c Jansen b Cummins 77, S Hetmyer c Jansen b Natarajan 13, R Powell lbw b Bhuvneshwar 27, D Jurel c Abhishek b Cummins 1, R Ashwin not out 2; Extras (nb2, w11): 13; Total (20 ov; RR: 10.00): 200/7; FoW: 1-1, 2-1, 3-135, 4-159, 5-181, 6-182, 7-200; Bowling: Bhuvneshwar 4-0-41-3, Jansen 4-0-44-0, Cummins 4-0-34-2, Natarajan 4-0-35-2, Unadkat 2-0-23-0, Reddy 1-0-12-0, Shahbaz 1-0-11-0

Result: SRH won by 1 run

## Knight Riders look to set Wankhede record straight

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Mumbai: Kolkata Knight Riders have a dismal record against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. Of the 10 clashes between them, they have lost nine and their only win came way back in 2012.

The visitors, however, will enter Friday's contest at the venue high on confidence against the home side who will be fighting for survival. KKR's positive attitude stems from the fact that they have stood their ground against the five-time champions in recent clashes where they have won three of the last five and are currently sitting second in the standings, with 12 points after nine matches. For MI, who are currently second-last in the standings with six points, will need to win their remaining four matches and then hope that other results go their way which can boost their slim qualification hopes.

One thing that has worked in KKR's favour this edition is how their opening partnership of Sunil Narine and Phil Salt have outmuscled the opponents. Same can't be said about MI's opening act of skipper Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan, who have gone off the boil of late. The KKR duo has recorded five 50-plus partnerships four of which have come in the last seven matches including the highest of 138.

Rohit and Ishan have four stands of 50-plus between them, two of which, including the highest of 101, came in back-to-back wins against Delhi Capitals and RCB. A 70-run stand in a losing cause against CSK followed, but since then they have struggled.

Before Thursday's match, Salt and Narine were fourth and fifth in the list of top-scoring openers in this season. Salt, who came in as a replacement for English compatriot Jason Roy, has scored 392 runs in nine matches at a strike rate of 180.64 while Narine's 372 have come at a strike rate of 182.35.

MI's combo of Rohit and Ishan have scored 315 and 244 runs at a strike rate of 158.29 and 148.78 respectively.



TALKING POINT: Rinku Singh, left out of India's T20 WC squad, with Rohit Sharma at the Wankhede

9 matches won by Mumbai Indians, including 7 in succession between 2013 and 2023, out of 10 matches played against Kolkata Knight Riders at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai. KKR's only win against MI came by 32 runs on May 16, 2012.

11 ducks by MI batters in 10 matches, the most this season. Just three KKR batters have ducks to their name.

9.51 Hardik Pandya's economy rate at the Wankhede Stadium while picking 26 wickets in 39 games. Among bowlers with 25-plus scalps at Wankhede, it's the worst economy rate.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

## At crunch time, bowling woes for Super Kings

### MUSTAFIZUR LEAVES, CHAHAR'S INJURY A BIG WORRY FOR CSK

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Chennai: In a matter of a few IPL matches, Chennai Super Kings have gone from having a problem of plenty to suffering from plenty of problems.

For the majority of the first half of the season, CSK had the

luxury of picking bowlers from a big pool stacked with quality. But during Wednesday's seven-wicket defeat to Punjab Kings here, Super Kings were forced to operate on thin bowling resources.

Matheesha Pathirana sat out the match with a nigggle, Tushar Deshpande missed the game with illness and the injury-prone Deepak Chahal limped off the field just two balls into his first over. With the tournament heading towards its business end, CSK, involved in



MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN

a tricky top-four battle, are sweating over the availability of some of their frontline bowlers.

The challenge will only get tougher as Super Kings will be handicapped by the absence of left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who has left the CSK camp for international duty. Chennai head coach Stephen Fleming acknowledged that the team is fac-

ing a testing situation.

"There are a lot of ins and outs. Chahar's injury does not look good. The initial feeling was not great, so I am hoping for a positive report when the physio and doctor have a look."

The Sri Lankan boys (Pathirana and Maheesh Theekshana) are off to get their visas, so I am hoping that the process is smooth and we get them back for the next game up north (against PBKS in Dharamshala on Sunday)," said Fleming.

"Richard Gleeson (debutant) was good, it was a positive. Losing Mustafizur, there is a lot happening. Tushar has a flu, we lost him and had to make a few changes, which is unusual. But it is part of the game. We have the resources, but it is just that they have not got enough game time to become comfortable with their roles," added Fleming.

Because of the paucity of bowling options against Punjab, captain Ruturaj Gaikwad was compelled to bring Shivam Dube into the attack for the first time this season. Dube had played as a pure batter in the nine matches prior to that game.

## 'Gukesh my frenemy but his win inspires me' Praggnanandhaa Feels Fifth Was A Bad Result For Him In Candidates

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Chennai: When the Candidates began, R Praggnanandhaa was given the top billing among the five Indians, but things didn't exactly go to plan for the 18-year-old from Chennai. He went through a seven-game winless run and finished a "disappointing" fifth, as D Gukesh ran away with the crown. Pragg, who is supported by the Adani group, spoke about the Candidates roller-coaster during a chat with TOI on Thursday. Excerpts:

**What were your expectations from Candidates and do you think you met those?**

No, not at all. I was hoping to win after having worked so hard and felt I was also playing good quality chess. I feel the way I played, fifth (position) is a very bad result. I was in second position almost throughout the event.

So, I could have at least finished third or fourth. But fifth is... but it's okay; it happens. I was trying to give my best during the games, which I think I did most of the time. Some games didn't go my way, but it's part of the game.

**You were seen as India's biggest hope going into the tournament. Did the pressure get to you?**

I wanted to finish first but that doesn't mean I put myself under pressure. For the first time, I was playing in such a tournament and there were big guys like Hikaru (Nakamura) and Fabi (Fabiano Caruana), Ian (Nepomniachtch). So, I was not the favourite to win the event.

**What do you think didn't work for you?**

I missed a few chances. Apart from that, I think some small critical moments didn't go my way. One of the critical games was the one with Ian where I



SOUL-SEARCHING: Pragg

got a very big advantage out of the opening which I failed to convert. Then in some games, I wasn't very practical. I wasn't playing poor chess, wasn't getting bad positions every single game, but somehow, I was in minus score.

**How did you feel when Gukesh won the title?**

It's a proud feeling. I mean, he played amazing chess. I think he was certainly playing at the highest quality. He was also leading the tournament for most parts. So, it's

an impressive result and it inspires me to work harder and play better.

**Being a contemporary, how is your equation with Gukesh? Are you guys 'frenemies'?**

Yeah, that's usually the case with all chess players. You are friends off the board, but you have to fight on the board. But we all usually have fun on the last day after the tournament ends. And that's where we get together and know each other. But during the tournament, we don't usually meet or even talk to each other.

**In the two times that you faced Gukesh in the Candidates, you lost the first one and then drew. What did you make of the games against him?**

When I played him, I was trying to be very ambitious. I made a very risky choice (in the first game). In hindsight, it was not great, but you don't

know before playing it and it might give you a bit of an advantage too. So, I tried it. I was well prepared, but I mixed up something. He played well. I found some good sequences, but I messed it up at the end.

**Any message for Gukesh before he faces Ding Liren?**

He's already doing well, so he just has to keep doing what he's doing and just be mentally and physically ready for it. If he asks (for inputs), yeah (I'll give), why not?

**What did you think of your sister Vaishali's performance?**

It's impressive that she won five games in a row. It's good for her confidence that she can bounce back from defeats. And to be very honest, I didn't expect her to score five wins. I'm pretty sure she didn't expect it either. But I could see that she was playing at a much better level in the last four games.

## India take 3-0 lead

Sylhet: A dominant India grabbed an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match women's T20I series as they pumelled Bangladesh by seven wickets in the third match here on Thursday.

After their skipper Harmanpreet Kaur opted to field first looking at the cloud cover and a mild breeze, India's bowlers dished out another disciplined performance to restrict Bangladesh to 117/8, which the visitors overhauled with nine balls to spare.

When they came to bat, openers Smriti Mandhana and

Shafali Verma put on 91 runs in just 12.1 overs to take India closer to a series win.

Shafali got out after a 38-ball 51, hitting eight fours, while Mandhana found form as she struck 47 off 42 balls with the help of five boundaries and a six.

Ritu Moni took a blinder off her bowling to dismiss Shafali while Nahida Akter accounted for Mandhana. But the damage was done.

**Brief scores:** India 118 for 3 (Shafali 51, Mandhana 47) beat Bangladesh 117 for 8 (Akther 39, Radha 2-22) by 7 wickets. 7/11

## WI's Thomas gets 5-yr ban

London: West Indies batsman Devon Thomas has been banned from cricket for five years after admitting seven breaches of anti-corruption regulations, the International Cricket Council announced Thursday. The ICC said the final 18 months of the ban had been suspended, with the punishment backdated by a year. Thomas, capped 34 times

across all three international formats from 2009 to 2022, committed offences in three separate tournaments — the Caribbean Premier League, the Lanka Premier League and the Abu Dhabi T10. The most serious of those charges saw the 34-year-old accept he was guilty of conspiring to be party to match-fixing attempts in the Sri Lanka. AFP

### GALLERY

#### Worcestershire cricketer Baker dies aged 20

**Worcestershire:** Worcestershire Cricket Club on Thursday announced the death of spin bowler Josh Baker at the age of 20. However, the club didn't mention the reason of the death. The left-arm spinner made his first-class debut for the club in 2021 and only played two County matches this season, last playing against Durham at Kidderminster in April. IANS

### ACTION TODAY

**BADMINTON:** Thomas & Uber Cup, 7 am & 2.30 pm (Jiocinema); **CRICKET:** 7.30 pm (Star Sports, Jiocinema); B'desh vs Zim, 1st T20I, 5.30 pm (Fancode); Pak Women vs WI, 5th T20I, 8 pm (Fancode) **FOOTBALL:** EPL, Luton Town vs Everton, 12.30 am (Star Sports)



‘Biased’: MEA on US body’s report on religious freedom in India

New Delhi: India slammed the latest US Commission on International Religious Freedom report, which again called upon the US govt to designate India a ‘Country of Particular Concern’, saying USCIRF is known as a biased organisation with a political agenda. Masquerading as part of an annual report, they continue to publish their propaganda on India, said MEA. “We really have no expectation that USCIRF will even seek to understand India’s diverse, pluralistic and democratic ethos. Their efforts to interfere in the largest electoral exercise of the world will never succeed,” the ministry said.

In its latest report, USCIRF has criticised India for alleged violations of religious freedom and several other issues. It called for designating 17 countries, including India, as ‘Countries of Particular Concern’ for “engaging in or tolerating particularly severe violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief”. **TNN**

At UN debate, India backs full membership of Palestinian state

New Delhi: After the US last month vetoed in the Security Council a resolution seeking full membership of the UN for Palestine, India on Wednesday backed Palestine’s bid, expressing hope that the endeavour will soon get endorsed, reports **Sachin Parashar**. Palestine is currently a “permanent observer state” at the UN with no power to vote on resolutions and decisions. A full membership will allow the global body to recognise a Palestinian state.

Participating in a debate on the use of veto, Indian ambassador Ruchira Kamboj noted that Palestine’s application was not approved because of the US veto. “In keeping with India’s long-standing position, we hope this would be reconsidered in due course, and Palestine’s endeavour to become a member will get endorsed,” said Kamboj.

Cops: NewsClick stand on Covid vax ‘terror act’

Chargesheet Claims Baseless, Says NewsClick

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Delhi Police chargesheet filed against NewsClick and its founder, Prabir Purkayastha, has accused him of actively seeking to “undermine the Indian govt’s efforts to develop a vaccine to combat Covid-19”. It claims “the actions were nothing but an act of terror as they aimed at public health, which is one of the touchstones of national security”. Purkayastha has been booked under anti-terror law UAPA.

“Evidence gathered during the investigation paints a clear picture of a coordinated campaign to undermine India’s response to Covid-19, driven by a biased agenda and potentially influenced by external entities. Their malicious acts not only endangered the lives of individuals who chose



NewsClick founder Purkayastha (L) has been booked under UAPA

not to get vaccinated due to the misinformation peddled by the accused, but it also threatened the overall public health and safety of the population,” it claims.

In a statement, NewsClick said the allegations were completely baseless. “NewsClick and Prabir have not been involved in any terrorist act. Nor is there any evidence for the same. Prabir does not have links to any terrorist group. The timing of these reports makes it clear that they aim to prejudice public opinion and pending judicial proceedings. The chargesheet is nothing but a set of opinions

of the investigating officer parading as ‘allegations’. These allegations will be firmly contested,” it said.

The chargesheet has a reference to World War III and philosopher Marshall McLuhan, besides claims of a deeper plot to propagate “information warfare” as part of a transnational conspiracy. “The investigation has brought to life McLuhan’s saying that ‘World War III is a guerrilla information war with no division between military and civilian participation,’” the police said while elaborating on Purkayastha’s association with China-based millionaire and CCP functionary Neville Roy Singham.

According to the chargesheet, the probe revealed a conspiracy aimed at a deliberate creation of a false narrative against Citizen Amendment Act. “The end result of this deliberate misinformation campaign was seen from the beginning of Dec, 2019 and ran up to Feb 2020 in the physical manifestation of the deadly Delhi riots,” it alleges.

Bengal trying to paint CBI probes as Centre-state row: Govt in SC

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New Delhi: Stating that it has no administrative and supervisory control over CBI, which is an independent agency, Centre told Supreme Court that West Bengal’s original suit under Article 131 of the Constitution against it to not allow probe by the agency in the state was not maintainable and is an abuse of legal process.

Arguing on maintainability of West Bengal’s petition, solicitor general Tushar Mehta told a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta that the state was attempting to give Centre-state dispute colour to CBI investigations in cases in the state, many of which have been ordered by Calcutta high court. He said Article 131 could be invoked only in case of inter-govt disputes and the grievance of the

state in this case was against CBI and not the Union.

“Suit is inherently not maintainable at all. The Union and DoPT have nothing to do with registration of cases by CBI, probe and prosecution of a case. We do not have administrative and supervisory power over CBI. I cannot supervise and tell the agency on registration of cases or how to investigate or

ARTICLE 131 CASE

whether to file closure reports or chargesheet. It is a separate statutory entity, supervised by another statutory body CVC,” Mehta submitted, adding that CBI is not an arm of the govt.

Mehta said West Bengal govt had already approached SC challenging HC’s order directing CBI probe in various cases and it should not be allowed to file suit also for re-

dressal of the same grievances, and accused the state for suppressing the fact.

Taking note of SG’s submission, the bench asked senior advocate Kapil Sibal on how the state can file suit after it filed appeal against HC order. Sibal said the appeal was filed in individual cases and not on broader jurisdiction issues. Countering Mehta’s contention, Sibal said CVC has supervisory control over CBI only in corruption cases but it is Centre which controls the agency in the rest of the cases. He submitted that ED always followed CBI if it is allowed to probe in the state and it had huge implications on federal structure. He said that law regulating CBI is unique where consent of state was needed which was not the case in case of ED and NIA.

The hearing remained inconclusive and would resume next week.



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Chief selector Ajit Agarkar says Rinku Singh's exclusion from India's squad for T20 World Cup was the 'toughest' decision', **P21**

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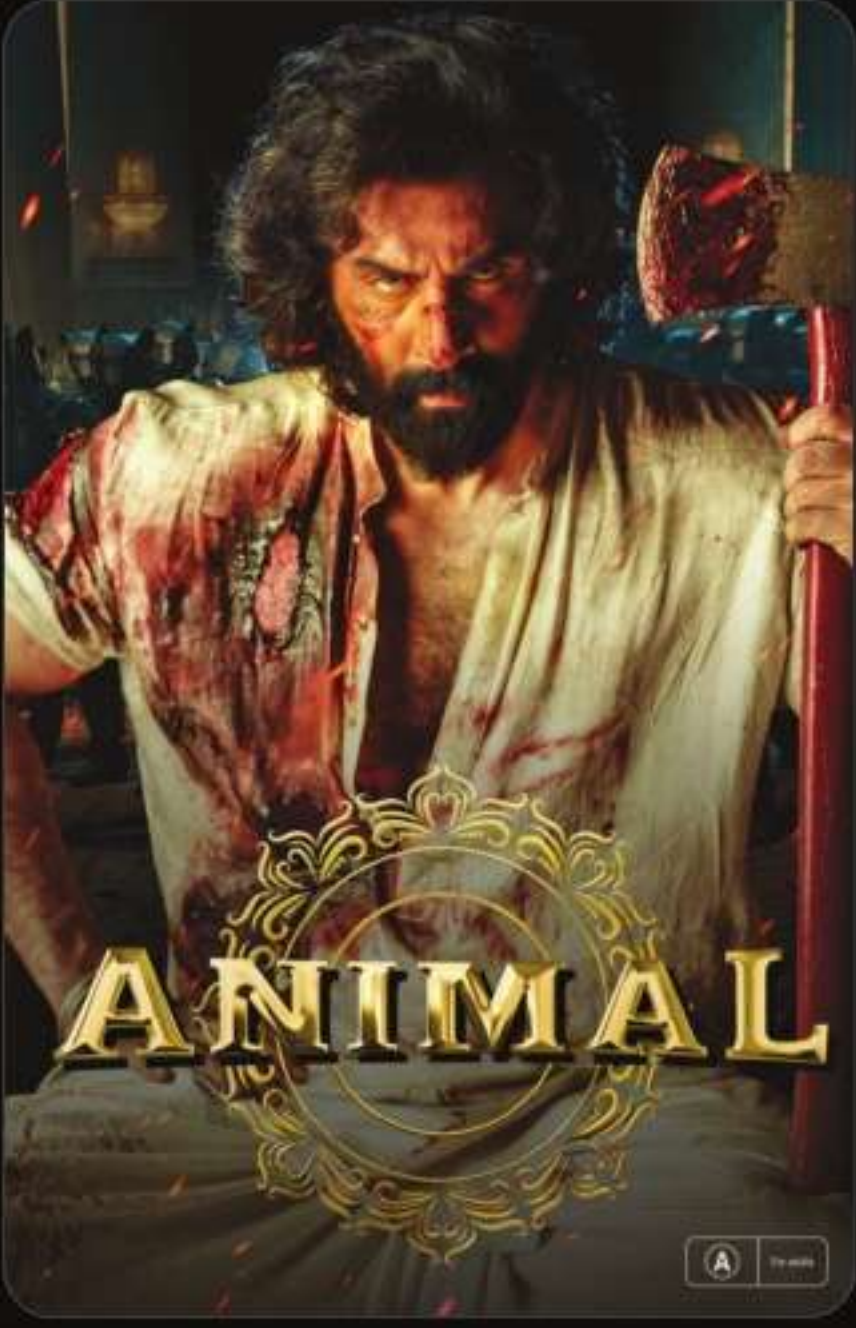
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