



# Hindustan Times

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RESULT: JEE ADV. 2024

**HISTORIC  
 HAT-TRICK  
 IN 2024**



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**AIR 6**

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<b>AIR 35</b> Rishit Aggarwal Classroom Course	<b>AIR 36</b> Videep R. Jalapally Classroom Course	<b>AIR 37</b> Anshul Goyal Classroom Course	<b>AIR 38</b> Akshar Zala Classroom Course	<b>AIR 40</b> Arnav Baranwal Classroom Course	<b>AIR 44</b> Aadeshveer Singh Classroom Course	<b>AIR 49</b> Avadh Hindocha Classroom Course	<b>AIR 52</b> Sushant Padha Classroom Course	<b>AIR 57</b> Aaditya Kumar Classroom Course	<b>AIR 58</b> Dakshesh Mishra Classroom Course	<b>AIR 60</b> Saksham Khandelwal Classroom Course
<b>AIR 61</b> Advait Gupta Classroom Course	<b>AIR 65</b> Akash Tiwari Classroom Course	<b>AIR 66</b> Mrigank Goel Classroom Course	<b>AIR 69</b> Avik Das Online Live Classroom	<b>AIR 73</b> Raghav Chandak Classroom Course	<b>AIR 74</b> Himanshu Classroom Course	<b>AIR 75</b> Manya Jain Classroom Course	<b>AIR 77</b> Mohd Emaad Arif Classroom Course	<b>AIR 79</b> Reyansh Shinde Classroom Course	<b>AIR 80</b> Abhinav P J Classroom Course	<b>AIR 81</b> Harshal Kanani Classroom Course
<b>AIR 85</b> Bibaswan Biswas Classroom Course	<b>AIR 86</b> Bhagyansh Sahu Classroom Course	<b>AIR 87</b> Devansh Gattani Classroom Course	<b>AIR 89</b> Jaiveer Singh Classroom Course	<b>AIR 91</b> Amar Sinha Classroom Course	<b>AIR 94</b> Nilkrishna Classroom Course	<b>AIR 96</b> Aniket Kumar Classroom Course	<b>AIR 99</b> Tanay Chetan Kakliya Classroom Course	<p><b>And many more students!</b></p>  <p>Watch inspiring stories of our champions</p>		

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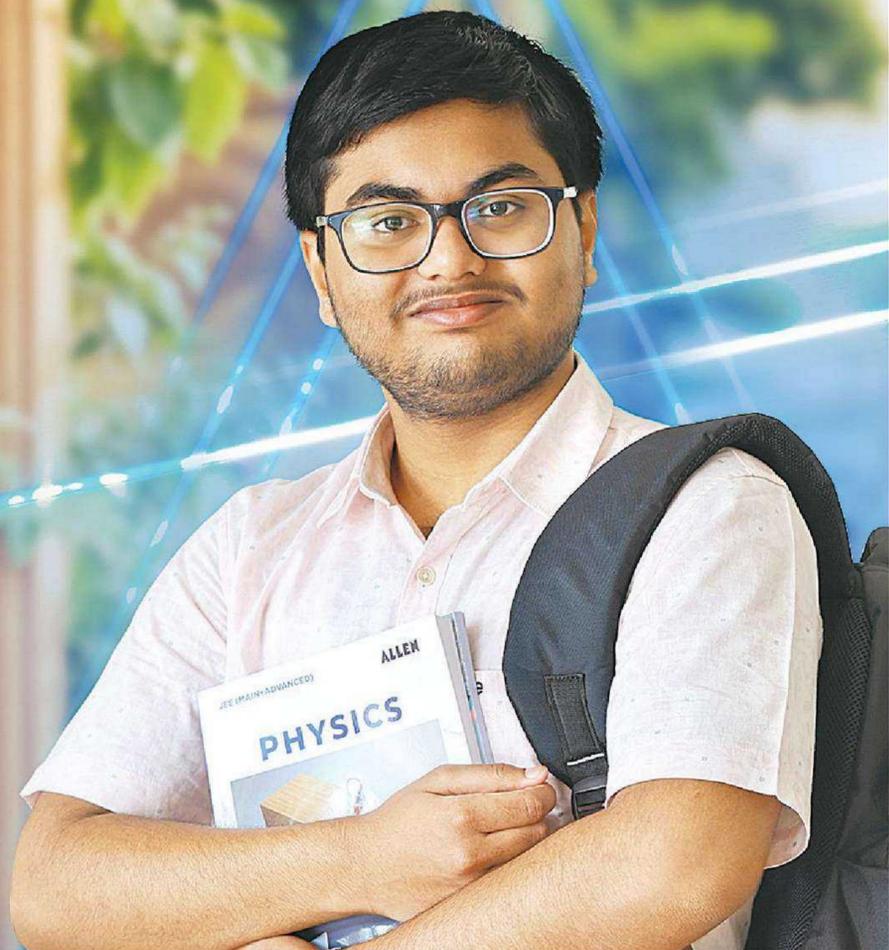
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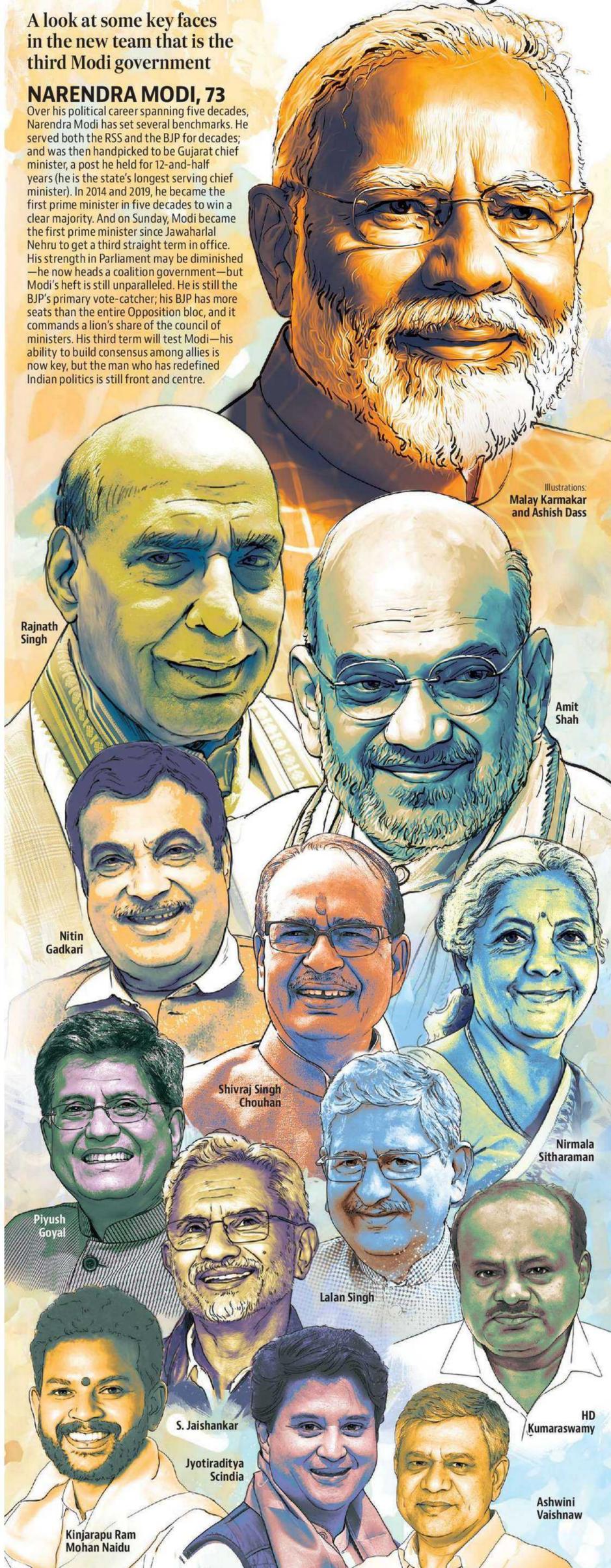
# Hindustan

## Old and new: Faces of the new NDA govt

A look at some key faces in the new team that is the third Modi government

### NARENDRA MODI, 73

Over his political career spanning five decades, Narendra Modi has set several benchmarks. He served both the RSS and the BJP for decades; and was then handpicked to be Gujarat chief minister, a post he held for 12-and-half years (he is the state's longest serving chief minister). In 2014 and 2019, he became the first prime minister in five decades to win a clear majority. And on Sunday, Modi became the first prime minister since Jawaharlal Nehru to get a third straight term in office. His strength in Parliament may be diminished—he now heads a coalition government—but Modi's heft is still unparalleled. He is still the BJP's primary vote-catcher; his BJP has more seats than the entire Opposition bloc, and it commands a lion's share of the council of ministers. His third term will test Modi—his ability to build consensus among allies is now key, but the man who has redefined Indian politics is still front and centre.



Illustrations:  
Malay Karmakar  
and Ashish Dass

Rajnath  
Singh

Amit  
Shah

Nitin  
Gadkari

Shivraj Singh  
Chouhan

Nirmala  
Sitharaman

Piyush  
Goyal

Lalan Singh

S. Jaishankar

Jyotiraditya  
Scindia

HD  
Kumaraswamy

Kinjarapu Ram  
Mohan Naidu

Ashwini  
Vaishnav

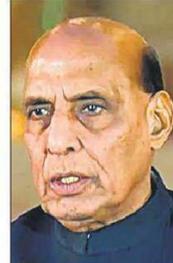
# SPOTLIGHT

## The Prime Minister and his council of ministers



A look at Team Modi 3.0, which includes Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, S Jaishankar, JP Nadda, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, HD Kumaraswamy, Nirmala Sitharaman, Lalan Singh, Ram Mohan Naidu, among others

### CABINET MINISTERS



Rajnath Singh



Amit Shah



Nitin Gadkari



Jagat Prakash Nadda



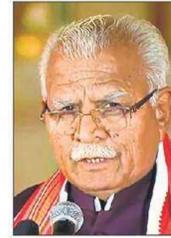
Shivraj Singh Chouhan



Nirmala Sitharaman



S Jaishankar



Manohar Lal Khattar



HD Kumaraswamy



Piyush Goyal



Dharmendra Pradhan



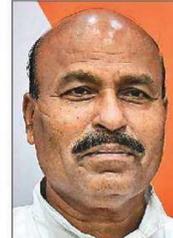
Jitan Ram Manjhi



Lalan Singh



Sarbananda Sonowal



Virendra Kumar



Ram Mohan Naidu



Pralhad Joshi



Jual Oram



Giriraj Singh



Ashwini Vaishnaw



Jyotiraditya Scindia



Bhupender Yadav



Gajendra Singh Shekhawat



Annpurna Devi



Kiren Rijiju



Hardeep Singh Puri



Mansukh Mandaviya



G Kishan Reddy

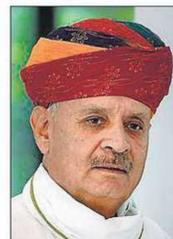


Chirag Paswan



CR Patil

### MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)



Rao Inderjit Singh



Jitendra Singh



Arjun Ram Meghwal



Prataprao Ganpatrao Jadhav



Jayant Chaudhary

### MINISTERS OF STATE

- Jitin Prasada
- Shripad Naik
- Pankaj Rao Choudhary
- Krishan Pal Gurjar
- Ramdas Athawale
- Ramnath Thakur
- Nityanand Rai
- Anupriya Patel
- V Somanna

- Chandra S Pemmasani
- SP Singh Baghel
- Shobha Karandlaje
- Kirti Vardhan Singh
- BL Verma
- Shantanu Thakur
- Suresh Gopi
- L Murugan
- Ajay Tamta

- Bandi Sanjay Kumar
- Kamlesh Paswan
- Bhagirath Choudhary
- Satish Chandra Dubey
- Sanjay Seth
- Ravneet Singh Bittu
- Durgadas Uikey
- Raksha Khadse
- Sukanta Majumdar

- Savitri Thakur
- Tokhan Sahu
- Raj Bhushan Choudhary
- Srinivasa Varna
- Harsh Malhotra
- Nimuben Bambhaniya
- Murlidhar Mohol
- George Kurien
- Pabitra Margherita



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## MODI 3.0: NEW NDA ERA BEGINS

Narendra Modi takes oath as Prime Minister for a historic third consecutive term and inducts ministerial council of 71 in a delicate balancing act of blending the old with the new

Smriti Kak Ramachandran

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Narendra Modi took oath as India's Prime Minister for the third straight time in a glittering ceremony in the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday evening, scripting history as only the second man after Jawaharlal Nehru to achieve the feat.

Dressed in a white kurta and a blue jacket, Modi swore true faith and allegiance to the Constitution as the country's 17th PM and took charge of a coalition government after his party was diminished in numbers following a general elections setback.

The 72-member council (including Modi) of ministers was crafted with a focus on carefully balancing regional and community representation, managing both the demands of allies as well as seniority of leaders. The BJP was successful in deftly managing the demand of allies while retaining top positions and senior portfolios for itself, as well as a majority of ministerial berths.

"I, Narendra Damodardas Modi, do swear in the name of God that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established, that I will uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India..." he said. Honour guards lined the steps of the presidential palace and a military brass band played as he took oath.

Along with Modi, 30 other Cabinet ministers, five ministers of state with independent charge and 36 ministers of state also took oath. Following Modi were Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, JP Nadda, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Nirmala Sitharaman, S Jaishankar, Manohar Lal Khattar, HD Kumaraswamy and Piyush Goyal.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office as the sun set behind the majestic sandstone structure, its ramparts bathed in a golden tint and its dome illuminated in the hues of the Tricolour.

continued on →10



Narendra Modi is sworn in as the Prime Minister of India by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday. AJAY AGGARWAL/HT

Took oath as Prime Minister at the ceremony earlier this evening. I look forward to serving 140 crore Indians and working with the Council of Ministers to take India to new heights of progress.

**NARENDRA MODI**, Prime Minister of India



Profiles of the ministers who make up the council of ministers in the third Narendra Modi govt.

→FULL LIST ON P6-7  
→MORE STORIES, P2

## Core intact, some room for big allies

Smriti Kak Ramachandran

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Of the 15 National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retained 60 ministerial positions in the council of ministers, with 11 given to nine other parties. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Janata Dal (United), or JD(U), got two each.

Of the 11, five are cabinet ministers, fewer than many analysts expected in the run up to government formation. The BJP won 240 seats in the Lok Sabha, although the larger NDA won 293. It was expected that at least eight to nine

cabinet posts would be given to allies, but the BJP managed to convince its partners. Those with a significant presence (such as the TDP and the Janata Dal (United)) were given one cabinet post and one minister of state post; others were given just a minister of state post, although some were given independent charge.

The BJP also seems to have used some measure of seniority. JD(S)'s HD Kumaraswamy, despite being one of only two MPs from his party and Jitan Ram Manjhi of HAM, despite being the only one, were named cabinet ministers; both are former chief ministers.

→P2

## Magnates to musicians part of motley audience

**NEW DELHI:** Arc lights bathed the facade of Rashtrapati Bhavan in a warm, amber glow as the sun set on a hot Delhi evening. At the foot of the Tuscan pillars, on a wide stage, sat President Droupadi Murmu. To her left were dozens of women and men who will govern the country in an array of ministerial roles over the next five years.

Murmurs rippled through the audience. World leaders, veteran

politicians, Supreme Court justices, business magnates, actors, musicians, dignitaries, sanitation staff, construction workers and rat-hole miners made up the 8,000-strong crowd.

The murmurs fell silent around 7.15pm. Narendra Modi, dressed in a white kurta and churidar, with a blue checked jacket, left his seat and walked to the lectern. Rapturous applause followed.

→P2

## Bus falls into gorge in Jammu as terrorists open fire, 9 killed

Ravi Krishnan Khajuria

letters@hindustantimes.com

**JAMMU:** At least nine people were killed and 33 others injured when a bus they were travelling in came under fire from terrorists and fell into a gorge in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday evening, officials said.

The 53-seater bus was carrying pilgrims from Shiv Khori temple in Reasi to Katra, when terrorists opened fire at around 6.10pm in Teryath village of Reasi, a statement issued by the district police said.

"The driver was hit and lost control, resulting in the bus sliding into the nearby gorge," it said.

Calling it a "clear case of terrorist attack", Reasi senior super-



The wreckage of the bus.

PTI

intendent of police Mohita Sharma said. "The area has been sanitised and a search operation has been launched."

While the police were yet to ascertain the identity of the

deceased, officials said a minor was among the dead.

"The identities of dead and injured have not been ascertained yet but they probably belonged to Uttar Pradesh," she

said.

With the help of locals in the area, police officials managed a swift rescue of the passengers, and rushed them to nearby hospitals, the police statement said.

"Eight deaths have been confirmed. The 33 injured have been referred to various hospitals. District headquarter hospital Reasi (13), CHC Treyth (5), GMC in Jammu (15)," the statement said.

"A joint security force temporary operation Hqr by Police, Army and CRPF has been set up at the site and multidimensional operation has been launched to get at the attackers," the police statement said.

Initial reports suggested that there were at least 10 casual-

continued on →10

## BONES SUSPECTED TO BE OF MISSING B'DESH MP FOUND NEAR CANAL IN WB

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

**KOLKATA:** The West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department (CID), probing the murder of Bangladesh lawmaker Md Anwarul Azim Anar, on Sunday recovered human bones near a canal in South 24 Parganas district, a senior officer said.

The bones were recovered on the south-eastern bank of Bagjola canal in Bhangar, around 15km from the New Town apartment where Anar was last spotted on May 13 and where CID sleuths believe he was murdered and his body dismembered.

"We have recovered some bones. Prima facie they appear to be human bones. We are sending them for forensic analysis," inspector general of CID, AK Chaturvedi, said.

## Pandian says quitting politics after twin electoral debacles in Odisha

Debabrata Mohanty

letters@hindustantimes.com

**BHUBANESWAR:** VK Pandian, former bureaucrat and outgoing Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide, on Sunday announced his withdrawal from "active politics", five days after the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) faced a drubbing at the hands of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in both the assembly and Lok Sabha



VK Pandian

PTI

elections. The former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, who

spearheaded the BJD's poll campaign and was often targeted by the BJP over his Tamil origin, also apologised for the party's worst electoral performance in the simultaneous elections.

"I am sorry if I have hurt anyone on this journey. I am sorry if this campaign narrative against me played a part in BJD's loss," Pandian said in a video message posted on his Instagram handle on Sunday.

→P8

## STUDENT FROM DELHI ZONE TOPS JEE-ADVANCED

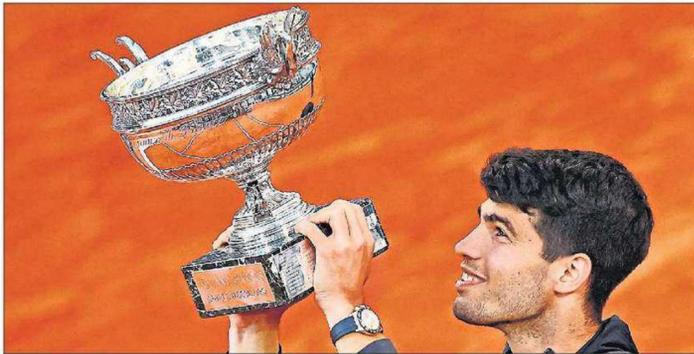
Varun Bhandari

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The JEE-Advanced results were announced on Sunday, with the top two spots being secured by students in the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi zone — Ved Lahoti, who scored 355 out of 360 marks, the highest ever, and Aditya (goes by a single name), a resident of Pitampura in Delhi.

IIT-Madras, which conducted the exam, said 180,200 candidates appeared in both papers 1 and 2 in JEE (Advanced) 2024 held on May 20, of which 48,248 qualified.

## Alcaraz reigns supreme on clay



Carlos Alcaraz came back to defeat Alexander Zverev 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 and win the French Open for his third Grand Slam title on Sunday.

Related story on page 16

REUTERS

## NIA MAKES FIRST ARREST IN JANUARY KILLING OF FOUR MANIPUR CIVILIANS

**NEW DELHI/IMPAL:** The National Investigation Agency has arrested a militant currently lodged in an Assam prison for his alleged involvement in the killing of four civilians in Bishnupur district of ethnic strife-torn Manipur in January this year, the agency said on Sunday.

The accused has been identified as Lunminsei Kipgen, a Manipur resident. He was taken into custody from Central Jail in Guwahati under the provisions of UAPA and the Arms Act.

## PUJA TOMAR FIRST INDIAN TO WIN A MIXED MARTIAL ARTS BOUT AT UFC

**NEW DELHI:** Puja Tomar made history on Sunday, becoming the first fighter from India to win a bout in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), the biggest mixed martial arts promotion in the world. The 28-year-old achieved the feat in the strawweight (52kg) division of UFC Louisville when she beat Brazil's Rayanne Amanda dos Santos with a split 30-27, 27-30, 29-28

verdict.

continued on →10

## { NARROW ESCAPE FOR PASSENGERS }

## Air traffic controller de-rostered after close shave for two aircraft on Mumbai runway



The aircraft landing (left), while another plane takes off (right) from the same tarmac.

Neha LM Tripathi

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has de-rostered an air traffic controller (ATC) after two planes had a close shave as they landed and took off from the same runway within seconds of each other at Mumbai airport, officials said on Sunday.

The incident, which took

place on Saturday, occurred when an IndiGo flight 6E 6053 that arrived from Indore landed and a Trivandrum-bound Air India flight AI 657 took off from the same runway seconds later at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA).

"We are conducting a probe and have already de-rostered the ATC involved in the incident," a DGCA official said on



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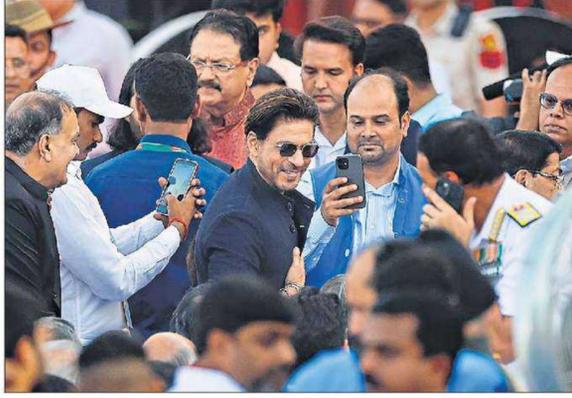
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## SPOTLIGHT | NEW GOVERNMENT

## A peek into the grand celebrations



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accompanied by Union minister Rajnath Singh, arrives to lay a wreath at the National War Memorial (Rashtriya Samar Smarak) ahead of his swearing-in ceremony; and actor Shah Rukh Khan arrives at the Rashtrapati Bhavan to join the event, on Sunday.



HT PHOTO/REUTERS



Narendra Modi taking oath as the prime minister in 2014, 2019 and 2024.

PTI

## BJP keeps lion's share of posts in new govt, allies allocated 11

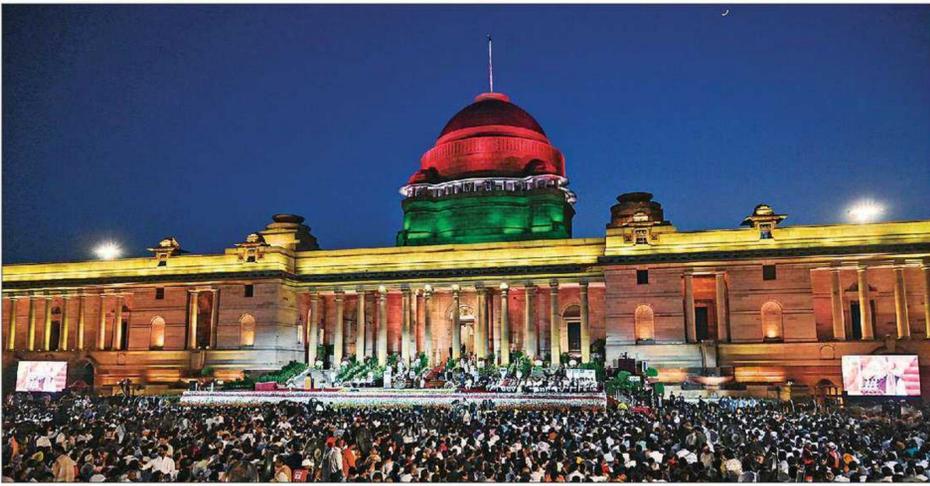
Smriti Kak Ramchandran  
letters@hindustantimes.com

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Of the 11, five are cabinet ministers, fewer than many analysts expected in the run up to government formation. The BJP won 240 seats in the Lok Sabha, although the larger NDA won 293. It was expected that at least eight to nine cabinet posts would be given to allies, but the BJP managed to convince its partners. Those with a significant presence (such as the TDP and the JD(U)) were given one cabinet post and one minister of state post, and others were given just a minister of state post, although some were given independent charge.

The party also seems to have used some measure of seniority. JD(S)'s HD Kumaraswamy, despite being one of only two MPs from his party and Jitan Ram Manjhi of HAM, despite being the only one, were named cabinet ministers; both are former chief ministers. In some cases, people familiar with the matter said, the BJP has promised more representation for its partners in states.

Maharashtra is to go to polls later this year, and Bihar in 2025, and both the Shiv Sena and JD(U) have been told they can contest more seats in the assembly, these



A view of the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday.

AJAY AGGARWAL/HT

people added.

The NCP (Ajit Pawar faction) did not accept the BJP's offer of a single minister of state, striking a discordant note, although leaders from both sides referred to the matter in a measured stance. "Praful Patel has served as a cabinet minister in the central government and we did not feel right in taking Minister of State with independent charge. So we told them (BJP) that we are ready to wait for a few days, but we want a cabinet ministry..." Ajit Pawar said.

A single berth was allocated to Rashtriya Lok Dal, Apna Dal,

HAM, Janata Dal Secular, Lok Jan Shakti Party (Ram Vilas), Shiv Sena (Shinde) and Republican Party of India. The TDP, which has 16 MPs and will be forming the government with the BJP and the Jana Sena in Andhra Pradesh next week, has got two berths. Ram Mohan Naidu, the MP from Sriakulam, is a cabinet minister and Chandrasekhar Pemmasani, a minister of state.

Earlier in the day, on TDP getting a post in the council of ministers, Ram Mohan said, "After a long time, TDP will have a Union Minister. We are very happy..."

From JD(U), which has 12 lawmakers and runs a coalition government with the BJP in Bihar, Lalan Singh and Ram Nath Thakur have been accommodated in the council with the first being named a cabinet minister. HAM's Manjhi and LJP's Chirag Paswan were named cabinet ministers too.

Ahead of the oath-taking ceremony, Lalan Singh stressed that his party has not made any specific demands for the ministry. "We have not made any demands regarding any ministry. It is the PM's special right to appoint persons in specific ministries," he told

news agency ANI.

Kumaraswamy is the lone representative from JD(S) in the council. From Maharashtra, Pratap Rao Jadhav will represent the Sena as minister of state with independent charge. Jayant Choudhary of the RLD, who broke away from the INDIA bloc ahead of general elections, was also named a minister of state with independent charge.

Other allies such as Apna Dal's Anupriya Patel and RPI's Ramdas Athawale have been named ministers of state. Both Patel and Athawale were in the 2014 and 2019 council of ministers as well.

## Leaders who didn't make it to council of ministers

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**NEW DELHI:** At least 34 ministers who were part of the outgoing council of ministers of the second Narendra Modi government did not find space in the council sworn in on Sunday.

That number includes those who lost the election and were dropped, such as Sanjeev Balyan, Rajeev Chandrasekhar and Smriti Irani, others who did not find space despite winning, such as Anurag Thakur and Narayan Rane, and still others who did not contest the 2024 general elections, such as VK Singh.

Balyan, a Jat face of the BJP, was the junior minister of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying. He lost the election from Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.

Chandrasekhar, who lost the election from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, held the portfolios of skill development and entrepreneurship, and electronics and IT.

Irani, who was the women and child development minister, lost the election in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi to Congress's Kishori Lal Sharma by a margin of over a lakh.

Among others who were dropped after losing the election were Arjun Munda, the minister for tribal affairs who lost from Khunti in Jharkhand, Bharati Pawar, who was junior health and family welfare minister and lost from Dindori in Maharashtra, RK Singh, who was minister of power, new and renewable energy and lost from Arah in Bihar and, Mahendra



Clockwise from top left: Anurag Thakur, Smriti Irani, Arjun Munda, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Narayan Rane, Parshottam Rupala, Mahendra Nath Pandey and RK Singh.

Nath Pandey, who was minister of heavy industries and lost from Chandauli in Uttar Pradesh, and V Muraliedharan, who was junior foreign and parliamentary affairs minister, and lost from Attingal in Kerala.

Ajay Mishra Teni, the junior home minister in Modi 2.0, who lost from Lakhimpur in Uttar Pradesh, and whose son was one of the accused in a case on the violence in the district during the farmers' protest that resulted in four deaths, was also dropped.

To be sure, not all ministers who were dropped. For instance, L Murugan, who lost his election, remains a junior minister.

Apart from Thakur and Rane, Parshottam Rupala, the minister of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying and whose comments stoked a fierce protest among the Rajput community ahead of the elections, was dropped too, despite winning

from Rajkot. Former army chief VK Singh, Meenakshi Lekhi and Pratima Bhoumik, who were ministers in the last council but did not contest the polls, do not find space in the council.

The others dropped were: Ashwini Kumar Chaube, Danve Raosaheb, Niranjan Jyoti, Bhanu Pratap Singh, Darshana Jardosh, Som Parkash, Kailash Choudhary, Rameshwar Teli, A Narayan Swamy, Kaushal Kishor, Ajay Kumar, Kapil Patil, Subhas Sarkar, Bhagwat Karad, Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Bishweshwar Tudu, Mahendra Munjapara, John Barla and Nisith Pramanik.



WATCH: Modi takes oath as the PM at Rashtrapati Bhavan

## Nadda's inclusion in NDA 3.0 sets the stage for BJP rejig

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**NEW DELHI:** Jagat Prakash Nadda, the 63-year-old president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, was sworn in as a cabinet minister on Sunday. This is his second stint in the Union Cabinet; he was sworn in as minister in 2014, when the BJP came to power at the Centre and was allocated the portfolio of health and family welfare.

His inclusion in the cabinet has set the stage for an organisational rejig in the party. A new party chief is expected to be elected soon as the party follows the principle of "one man, one post". As per party functionaries, meetings to decide the probable names for a new party boss will be held in the next few days. Among the names that are being speculated for the position are national general secretary Vinod Tawde, Maharashtra deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, former Rajya Sabha MP Om Prakash Mathur and OBC Morcha chief K Laxman.

People familiar with the matter, however, said Nadda may continue to hold charge as party president till an appointment is made for the post.

A party functionary aware of the details said, "With elections coming up in Maharashtra and Haryana, the party is expected to make a few changes in key positions. Many faces that were not accommodated in the government will be given positions in the party, such as (Hamirpur MP) Anurag Singh Thakur and Smriti Irani."



JP Nadda

In 2020, the leader from Himachal Pradesh, who cut his teeth in politics as a member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological fount of the BJP, was moved to the organisation from the government. His appointment came months ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was followed by lockdowns and disruption of everyday life. As political work came to a grinding halt in the wake of protocols that barred gatherings, it fell on Nadda to devise a way of keeping the cadre motivated while adhering to the rules for social distancing and public health safety to cut transmissions.

With the mission of 'Sangathan Hi Seva', Nadda laid down the rules for the cadre and leaders, which included ensuring distribution of food, medicines and other essentials. Virtual meetings were held with state leaders to ensure political work doesn't get derailed, affecting elections that were scheduled in states such as Bihar (2020) and West Bengal (2021). Known to colleagues as a "soft-spoken", "non-controversial" party chief, Nadda burnished his credentials as an organisational man.

## Rumblings in Mahayuti after NCP turns down MoS offer

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**MUMBAI:** The Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), a part of the ruling Mahayuti coalition in Maharashtra, failed to make it to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new council of ministers after senior leader Praful Patel rejected an offer to take oath as minister of state with independent charge, according to people aware of the matter.

Patel, who was minister for 10 years in Manmohan Singh-led UPA government — from May 2004 to January 2011 he was a minister of state (independent charge) handling civil aviation,

and a Cabinet minister from January 2011 to May 2014 handling heavy industries and public enterprises — called the offer of the new post a "demotion".

The party is now hoping to make up the loss by bargaining harder during the expansion of the state Cabinet in Maharashtra, and to somehow have Patel accommodated whenever the Union Cabinet is expanded.

The NCP, which contested four seats and won only one (Raigad constituency), registered the poorest strike rate among the state's ruling alliance of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Shiv Sena and the NCP. The biggest blow to the faction was not being able to win the



Ajit Pawar

Baramati constituency, where Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra lost in a prestige battle to Supriya Sule, who is Sharad Pawar's daughter, representing the Nationalist Congress Party-Sharad Pawar (NCP-SP).

Ajit Pawar walked out of NCP-led by his uncle and party founder

Sharad Pawar in June 2022 and was sworn in the Eknath Shinde-led state government. Later, over 40 of total 54 party MLAs joined him amid a legal battle between the two factions over the real party status. EC later ruled in favour of Ajit Pawar, allotting the faction the party name and symbol. Ajit and Sharad Pawar-led factions fought the general elections against each other in Baramati, Shirur — both of which went to the senior Pawar.

Despite its poor showing, the faction was pushing hard for a Cabinet berth for Patel. "We received a call from BJP offering us the MoS with independent charge. I was a Cabinet minister (in the UPA government) and this

would have been a demotion for me. We have been told by the BJP leadership to wait for a few days until some remedial measures were taken," Patel told reporters.

The decision to walk away from the Union council of ministers has led to some disquiet within the NCP, with some leaders asking why the party did not choose to push Sunil Tatkar, a two-term MP from Raigad, if Patel was not willing to take the offer of MoS.

Some other leaders, however, understood the BJP's rationale.

"We were assured respectable representation in governments at the state and Centre. We were told by the BJP leadership that a Cabinet berth to us would disturb

the formula finalised for the allies for the induction in the Cabinet..." said a leader who asked not to be named.

Shinde's Sena contested 15 LS seats, and won seven. Party's senior-most and four-time MP from Buldhana, Prataprao Jadhav, has been inducted into the council of ministers.

"We offered them a MoS berth, but it would have a demotion for Praful Patel who was a cabinet minister earlier. It would have been difficult for us to change the formula for one alliance partner. NCP will be accommodated during the next expansion of the Cabinet," BJP leader and deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis said.

{ AT RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN } POMP AND SHOW

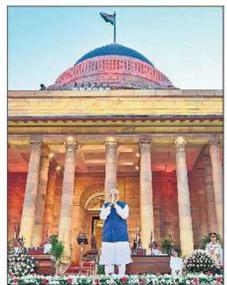
## A spectacular symphony of grandeur, culture

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**NEW DELHI:** Arc lights bathed the facade of Rashtrapati Bhavan in a warm, amber glow as the Sunday sun set on a hot Delhi evening. At the foot of the Tuscan pillars, on a wide stage, sat President Droupadi Murmu. To her left were dozens of women and men who will govern the country in an array of ministerial roles over the next five years.

Murmurs rippled through the audience. World leaders, veteran politicians, Supreme Court justices, business magnates, actors, musicians, dignitaries, sanitation staff, construction workers and rat-hole miners made up the 8,000-strong crowd, sandwiched between the imposing steps and the towering Jaipur column.

The makeshift arena was bordered by manicured trees; the audience included many who flew in from across the expanse of India, and indeed Asia, for the momentous occasion. Sprinkler



PM Modi at the ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

fans whirred on overdrive as the temperature tipped past 40°C again.

The murmurs fell silent around 7:15pm. Narendra Modi, dressed in a white kurta and churidar, with a blue checked jacket, left his seat and made his way to the lectern. Rapturous applause followed. "I, Narendra Damodardas

Modi..." he began, taking an oath of office for a record-equalling third consecutive term as India's Prime Minister, cheered on by the buoyant spectators.

Over the next couple of hours, dozens of ministers followed Modi as the contours of a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government took shape. They swore to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution, to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India, to faithfully discharge their duties and to do right to all manner of people in accordance with the Constitution and the law, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. And as they took oath, they were watched by a galaxy of guests.

This included actors Shahrukh Khan, Rajinikanth, Anil Kapoor, Akshay Kumar, Raveena Tandon, Anupam Kher and Vikrant Massey, filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, industrialists Mukesh Ambani, his sons Anant and Akash as well as his son-in-law Anand Piramal, and Gautam Adani.

Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud attended the programme with his wife. Former presidents Ram Nath Kovind and Pratibha Patil were also present.

Congress president and leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge was the lone Opposition representative, as the rest of the umbrella INDIA bloc were not part of the event.

Transgender people, sanitation workers from Delhi and labourers who helped build the new Parliament building were also invited.

Among them was Angad Kumar Paswan (28), who worked on the Centre's ambitious Central Vista project. "I am still not able to believe that I will be witnessing the grand ceremony," Paswan, from Jharkhand, said, holding his invite up like a trophy.

Around 10pm, as the dias emptied and the crowds thinned out, the warm lights lit up the solitary lectern. It was curtains on the ceremony. The stage had been set for the next five years.

## Leaders of 7 countries attend oath ceremony

Rezaul H Laskar  
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**NEW DELHI:** The presence of leaders from the neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, at the inauguration of Narendra Modi's third term as Prime Minister emphasises the importance attached by New Delhi to these countries.

The ceremony was also attended by Bhutan PM Tshering Tobgay, Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Mauritius PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Seychelles Vice-President Ahmed Afif, and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, whose inclusion as an invitee surprised diplomatic circles in view of the currently strained ties between New Delhi and Male.

After the ceremony, Modi met the visiting leaders in Rashtrapati Bhavan and reaffirmed India's

commitment to its "Neighbourhood First" policy and "SAGAR" vision or Security and Growth for All in the Region. Modi said in his third term, India will continue to work for "peace, progress and prosperity of the region in close partnership with the countries, even as it pursues its goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047".

The leaders of the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation were invited to Modi's swearing-in in 2014, while the leaders of the members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation as well as Mauritius and Kyrgyzstan were the guests at the ceremony in 2019.

Bangladesh has the rare distinction of being invited to all three swearing-in ceremonies, this is the first time Hasina is representing her country. Muizzu is on his first visit to New Delhi since coming to power last year on the back of an "India Out" campaign.

# MY DELHI

## Govt wants LG to step in over looming water crisis

Paras Singh

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**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government on Sunday sought an emergency meeting with lieutenant governor VK Saxena to discuss the prevailing water situation in the Capital, stating that the city will have a "major crisis in next 1-2 days" if Haryana does not release 1,050 cusecs of water to the city. The development came even as the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Saturday treated 993.44 million gallons per day (mgd) of water—below its targeted water production of 1,000mgd, a bulletin released by the water utility revealed.

The Aam Aadmi Party also accused Haryana of not releasing adequate water to Delhi—a claim that the neighbouring state denied.

According to DJB officials, a shortfall of 1mgd affects an estimated 21,500 people in the city. On Saturday, several localities in the Capital, including Ambedkar Colony, Chhatrapur, Mahavir Enclave, Satya Enclave (Prem Nagar), Kirari, Gittorni, Ashok Nagar, and Tilak Nagar, among others, experienced zero or low water supply.

Delhi water minister Atishi, in a post on X, requested Saxena to seek an intervention from the Centre in the matter.

"I have sought time from the LG for an emergency meeting, to apprise him of the inadequate water being released by Haryana from the Munak Canal. Delhi is supposed to receive 1050 cusecs of water from the Munak Canal via the CLC and DSB sub-canal. However, this has reduced to 840 cusecs. Seven water treatment plants are dependent on this water. If the amount of water does not increase today, then the water situation across Delhi will worsen in 1-2 days. LG is the representative of the Central Govt. I will be requesting him to intervene and resolve the



Atishi inspects Munak canal's Bawana entry point on Saturday. HT

situation," she posted.

One cusec is equal to around 1.5mgd.

Responding to the request, Raj Niwas officials said the LG "will meet the minister at 11am on Monday", and that Saxena, in the interim, has directed the officials to "ascertain actual position of water released by Himachal and Haryana, measures to check wastage and leakage of water in Delhi and the status of disilting of Wazirabad reservoir, as directed by SC [Supreme Court]".

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Himachal Pradesh government to release 137 cusecs of surplus water to Delhi by Friday, while also instructing Haryana to facilitate the release through the Wazirabad barrage, ensuring the water reaches the Capital immediately to mitigate the shortage of drinking water.

However, the top court emphasised that there must be no politics over the issue, clarifying that the directive was made not because of the Delhi government's arguments in its petition, but due to the pressing issue of water crisis in the national capital. The court also told the AAP government to take proactive steps to ensure water is not wasted in the national capital and that leakages are detected.

On Friday, Atishi said the Delhi government will approach the apex court on Monday regarding reduced raw water supply via channels. Haryana, meanwhile, maintained that the state has been releasing adequate water as per agreements, adding that Delhi government was "lying" to "hide its failures".

### Haryana not releasing enough water: Delhi

Delhi depends on neighbouring states to meet 86.5% of its drinking water demand—through the Yamuna, the carrier lined channel (CLC) Munak, and the Delhi sub-branch (DSB) canals from Haryana, and through the Upper Ganga Canal via Muradnagar from Uttar Pradesh.

To be sure, even though the city's targeted supply under its summer action plan is 1,000 mgd, the Delhi economic survey says the estimated demand is 1,290mgd. The demand-supply gap further widens and the system gets under stress during peak summer period. Data from DJB's summer bulletins show that the season's water supply level dipped to a low of 966.16mgd on May 27. Last week, the supply levels largely remained above 1,000mgd, but slipped back to 993.44mgd on

Saturday.

Atishi, in a letter to Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini dated Sunday, accused the neighbouring state of not releasing an adequate amount of water to Delhi via the Munak Canal.

In her communication, Atishi said, "Due to the deficit of raw water, our treatment plants are unable to run at their optimum capacity... With the water from Munak Canal reducing to 840 cusecs, Delhi will be unable to produce adequate water from our seven WTPs... Therefore, I humbly request you to ensure that 1,050 cusecs water is released from Munak Canal for Delhi."

"...for the past few days, Haryana has not been releasing adequate amount of water in the Munak Canal. As a result of this, the people...have been suffering unjustifiably," she said.

In response, Saini on Sunday said Haryana is giving Delhi more than its share of water. "If water comes from Himachal Pradesh, it will be given entirely to Delhi, and there will be no problem... There is also an AAP government in Punjab, and they (the Delhi government) should ask Punjab to give SYL (Satluj Yamuna Link canal) more water so that Haryana's water shortage can be fulfilled, and Delhi also gets extra water," he said.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party accused Atishi of concealing data while writing her letter to Saini.

"Atishi, while writing the letter, cleverly concealed the data of water drawn directly from the Yamuna River by the Delhi Jal Board to show a shortage. On June 8, Delhi was supposed to receive 547mgd of water from Haryana but actually received 622mgd. Delhi Jal Board's own data makes it clear that Haryana is consistently supplying the full amount of water to Delhi," Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said.

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# IMD predicts heatwave in Delhi from today, yellow alert issued

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**NEW DELHI:** With the impact of a prevailing western disturbance reducing in northwest India and return of the dry westerly winds, heatwave conditions returned in isolated parts of Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) on Sunday. The region is set to get even warmer in the coming days, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a yellow alert for heatwave conditions in the region till Thursday.

Safdarjung, representative of Delhi's weather, recorded a maximum temperature of 42.5 degrees Celsius on Sunday, which was three degrees above normal. The maximum was 41.4°C a day earlier, with moist easterly winds still at play in the Capital till Saturday. In comparison, Delhi predominantly saw dry northwesterly winds on Sunday. The maximum is predicted to touch 44°C at Safdarjung on Monday and 45°C by Tuesday, and will continue to remain in this range till Thursday, officials said.

IMD added that the yellow alert for heatwave conditions, which is in place till Thursday, may be further extended, depending on long-range forecasts.

"We will now see the return of dry and hot weather, with no rain likely in northwest India in the coming days. Moisture in the air is reducing and we will see clear skies. This, combined



The maximum temperature was 42.5°C on Sunday. SANJEEV VERMA/HT

with dry westerly to northwesterly winds, will raise dust and increase the temperature too," said an IMD official.

IMD classifies it as a heatwave when the maximum is over 40°C in the plains, and also the temperature is 4.5°C or more above normal.

On Sunday, Delhi's hottest location was Narela, with a maximum temperature of 45.7°C, followed by Najafgarh at

45.5°C. Both these stations were six degrees above normal and meeting the criteria for a heatwave. IMD has forecast the maximum to be between 46°C and 48°C at isolated weather stations in Delhi during the next few days now.

No weather station in Delhi recorded heatwave conditions from Thursday until Saturday.

This season, Delhi was first hit by a heatwave spell from May 17 to 20, before most easterly winds were seen in Delhi. The second spell — 12 consecutive heatwave days — were recorded between May 25 and June 5. During this spell, the maximum went as high as 46.8°C at Safdarjung on May 29 — the second-highest maximum for the station in May, behind the all-time high of 47.2°C recorded on May 29, 1944. The highest maximum at any Delhi station this season was 49.9°C, which was recorded at north Delhi's Narela on May 28.

According to IMD's daily weather bulletin, Delhi's heat index (HI) or "real feel" of temperature was 41.5°C. It was 43.5°C on Saturday. The relative humidity, meanwhile, was between 16% and 61% respectively.

Delhi's wet-bulb temperature, another indicator of comfort level outside, was between 22°C and 23.2°C on Sunday. A wet-bulb temperature of 32°C or higher makes it difficult for even fit and acclimatised people to work outdoors for long and at a wet-bulb temperature of 35°C — the maximum threshold — humans can no longer regulate body temperatures, leading to heatstrokes and potential collapse. In Delhi, this tends to be over 30°C, usually in July and early August, when temperatures are high and there is moisture intrusion, due to the southwest monsoon.

Delhi's minimum, meanwhile, dipped marginally in the last 24 hours and was recorded at 27.4°C, which is around normal for this time of the year. It was 30°C on Saturday. Forecasts showed Delhi's minimum could rise to 30°C by Wednesday and 31°C by Thursday, making nights warmer too.

# JEE-Advanced list out, top 2 from Delhi zone

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Ved Lahoti and (right) Aditya.



**NEW DELHI:** The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Advanced results were announced on Sunday, with the top two spots in the country being secured by students in the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi zone — Ved Lahoti, who scored 355 out of 360 marks, the highest ever, and Aditya (goes by a single name), a resident of Pitampura in Delhi.

IIT-Madras, which conducted the exam this time, said that 180,200 candidates appeared in both papers 1 and 2 in JEE (Advanced) 2024 held on May 20, of which 48,248 aspirants qualified.

Lahoti, a resident of Indore in Madhya Pradesh, completed his coaching for the JEE exams from Kota in Rajasthan. He got 119th rank in the JEE mains exam held earlier this year, before scoring AIR (all-India rank)-1 in JEE Advanced.

Speaking to HT, Lahoti said that he is planning to take up computer science at IIT-Bombay. "I would like to explore the computer science field further before opting for higher studies," he said.

Lahoti said that he followed a 14-hour daily schedule to prepare for the JEE Advanced

exams. "My day usually started at 6am. I used to go to the classes, and after coming back I revised the lessons taught in the class," he said.

"After completing my homework, I used to self-study, take an hour-long break and then go to bed by 10pm," he said, adding that he never missed out on his eight-hour sleep.

HT was unable to speak Aditya, who scored AIR 2 in the JEE Advanced exams, as he is currently in Malaysia to represent India at the Asian Physics Olympiad. His father Pawan Kumar told HT that his son completed his schooling from Darbari Lal DAV Model school in Pitampura.

Kumar said that Aditya plans to pursue a computer science course at either IIT-Delhi or IIT-Bombay, which he will decide after he returns to India. He has a key interest in physics, Kumar said.

Asked about his son's future plans, Kumar said, "Aditya aims to go to Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US for research purposes and higher studies after completing his undergraduate course."

Previously, Aditya has also won many medals in various international Olympiads, representing India in Japan, Mongolia and Dubai, Kumar added.

Dwija Dharameshkumar Patel (AIR-7) from the IIT-Bombay zone has topped among the female candidates with a score of 332 marks in JEE Advanced.

Among the other achievers from the National Capital Region include Bhavya Tiwari from Noida and Kanav Choudhary from Ghaziabad. Tiwari secured AIR-19 in the JEE Advanced and obtained 323 out of 360 marks, and after scoring 311. Choudhary got AIR-56.

# Cops crack down on illegal number plates, 16K booked

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**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Traffic Police has cracked down on motorists plying with defective number plates in the Capital, issuing challans to more than 16,000 vehicles in the first five months of 2024, officers aware of the matter said on Sunday, adding that the most offenders were from the Mayur Vihar traffic circle.

The officers said that motorists usually use illegal number plates in order to avoid traffic enforcement cameras, adding that their crackdown is part of a broader effort to enhance road safety and enforce compliance with traffic regulations.

Special commissioner of police (traffic) HGS Dhaliwal said the move has led to a significant increase in number of penalties imposed on vehicle owners. "Defective number plates, including those that are illegible, improperly formatted, or do not conform to the prescribed standards, have been identified as a major issue contributing to traffic violations and security concerns. To address this, we deployed additional personnel to monitor and apprehend violators. Special drives and checkpoints have been established with a focus on high-traffic areas and entry/exit points," he said.

Data shared by traffic police revealed that 16,859 motorists



across Delhi were booked for using defective number plates till May 31. In comparison, only 4,363 motorists were booked for these violations in the corresponding period last year.

In 2024, the maximum number of infringements were from the trans-Yamuna areas of east and northeast Delhi, with five of the top 10 traffic circles with the most number of violations from this part of town — Mayur Vihar (926), Nand Nagri (917), Khajuri Khas (845), Bhajanpura (798), and Gandhi Nagar (699).

Police said they seized the offending vehicles and booked the violators under various sections of the Motor Vehicle Act, and also directed them to fix new number plate.

Meanwhile, residents have welcomed the enforcement measures undertaken by the traffic police. Binod Kumar Sharma, who works in Connaught Place, said, "The crack down is encouraging, but a lot of vehicles across Delhi still have defective number plates, or have dark-tinted windows."

# Narela factory fire: Logging statements of survivors, say cops

**HT Correspondent**  
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**NEW DELHI:** A day after a fire and explosion at a food processing unit at Narela Industrial Area in outer Delhi led to the death of three people, police on Sunday said that they are in the process of recording the statements of the workers who survived the incident, adding that they are also probing the fire-related shortcomings observed at the factory.

According to police, a leak from a gas pipeline on the ground floor of Shayam Kripa Foods Pvt Ltd triggered a fire at around 3.15am.

The blaze quickly engulfed the four-storey building, leading to a blast in a compressor. Of the 23 labourers who were working at the factory at the time, three were killed, with six others grievously hurt.

Officers said that one of the injured is critical as he has received 80% burns on his body.

The owners of the unit, Ankit Gupta and Vinay Gupta, who were arrested on Saturday, were later released on bail as all the Indian Penal Code sections under which the first information report (FIR) was registered were bailable, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

"We have made the owners join our investigation, as several shortcomings were observed inside the factory during its initial inspection and we needed them to explain why the issues were not addressed. The prime among them were unavailability of fire safety arrangements, untrained workers, single entry and exit gate, blocking of the only staircase leading to the upper floors with boxes and other items and leakage in the gas pipeline," the officer said.

Deputy commissioner of police (outer north) Ravi Kumar Singh said that investigators have approached all agencies concerned, including the fire department, Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL), and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), seeking their reports pertaining to the incident.

"We will collect all such reports and include them in our investigation and in the charge sheet. The probe is still on," added DCP Singh.

Meanwhile, the bodies of the deceased — identified as Beerpal Sharma, 42, Shyam Singh, 24, and Ram Singh, 30 — were handed over to their families after autopsy.

The final autopsy reports are still awaited, the officer quoted above said.

# 12 have narrow escape after blaze at escape room in CP

**Karn Pratap Singh**  
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Firefighters try to douse the blaze on Sunday. SANJEEV VERMA/HT PHOTO

**NEW DELHI:** Twelve people had a narrow escape when a fire broke out at an escape room in Connaught Place on Sunday afternoon, fire department officials said, adding that no injuries were reported in the incident.

Fire officials said that 150 small rooms were built with wooden items inside the premises, covering an area of 50x150 square feet. As part of the games, people are locked in the rooms and given puzzles to solve them within a time frame to successfully escape from the room.

The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) received a call at 3.21pm about the fire at Mystery Rooms, which is located on the first floor of M block in the outer circle near Shankar Market. Prima facie, the fire broke out due to a short-circuit in the air-conditioner (AC) in a room near the entry/exit point of the establishment, fire officials said.

"We rushed five fire tenders to the spot. The blaze was doused in a one-and-a-half-hour operation by 5pm. Our firefighters carried out a search operation inside the premises to find out if anyone was trapped inside, but no one was. No injury or casualty was reported," said DFS chief Atul Garg.

"The fire caused damage to only two of the 150 rooms at the establishment. Since the incident occurred on a Sunday, when there was a high footfall in Connaught Place, the quick response by firefighters averted a major incident," a fire official said on condition of anonymity.

According to officials, the fire broke out a couple of minutes before it was reported to DFS.

Fire station officer Prem Lal, who led the firefighting operation, said the 12 employees and customers present inside the

premises rushed out of the building when they saw flames and smoke. The flames billowing out from a window were also visible from the main road.

When HT contacted a customer care agent (executive) of Mystery Rooms, Delhi-NCR, the executive said, "We cannot say anything at this moment," and disconnected the call.

Deputy commissioner of police (New Delhi) Devesh Kumar Mahla said he was collecting information about the fire incident.

# MCOCA invoked against fugitive gangster's outfit

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Himanshu Bhau

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Police crime branch has invoked provisions of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against the gang led by fugitive gangster Himanshu Bhau, senior police officers have said.

The crime branch has invoked MCOCA sections 3 (punishment for organised crime) and 4 (punishment for possessing unaccountable wealth on behalf of a member of organised crime syndicate) against the gang, which will be applicable to all members, officers said.

Additional commissioner of police (crime) Sanjay Bhatia said the provisions have been added in connection with an incident on May 6, in which more than 20 bullets were fired at a car showroom in Tilak Nagar, leaving seven people injured.

"We have booked Himanshu Bhau, his key aide, Sahil Ritoliya (who is suspected to be operating from a foreign country), the two accused arrested in the cars showroom firing case — Mohit Gahlawat, 26, and Ketan Kundu, 21 — and other members of the gang, some of whom have already been arrested. The case has been transferred to the crime branch from the local Tilak Nagar police station," said Bhatia.

Officers said that with police invoking MCOCA in the case, the arrested accused will remain in jail for a longer period, if con-

victed, and may not get bail for at least the first six months. It will also help the investigating team get six months to file the chargesheet in the case, compared to the 60-90 days in cases registered under other IPC sections.

Recently, the Mumbai Police invoked MCOCA against Lawrence Bishnoi gang after its role was established in firing outside the house of actor Salman Khan, said an investigator.

On May 6 at 7pm, two men walked to a guard at the Tilak Nagar showroom, gave him a paper slip on which names of three members of the Bhau gang were scribbled, before opening indiscriminate fire at the showroom. More than 20 rounds were fired at the glass door on the ground floor and the glass panels on the first floor of the three-storey building. The showroom's owner, Manoj Malik, and six others present there were injured after broken pieces of the glass door and panels were shattered by the bullets, and pierced their faces and hands. After the firing, that was captured in CCTV cameras installed at the showroom, the assailants fled on

## 3 held for aiding Bhau, associates

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Police special cell has arrested three men who arranged illicit firearms, money, and other logistics for gangster Himanshu Bhau and his associates, officers said on Sunday.

The accused were identified as Ajit Kalia, 35 — who was caught from Goa — and Rambir Singh, 38, and Rohit Kumar, 25, who were nabbed in Delhi. All three were arrested last week, officers said. Himanshu Bhau — believed to be hiding in Portugal — is suspected to be the mastermind behind extortion threats to several car showrooms in West Delhi last month. HTc

a motorbike, the police said.

"The Bhau gang intended to terrorise people using the shooting incident. A case of attempt to murder and firing was registered at the Tilak Nagar police station. The next day, Malik received a threatening call from an international number. The caller introduced himself as Himanshu Bhau and demanded ₹5 crore. So, section 387 (putting a person in fear of death or hurt to commit extortion) of the IPC was added to the FIR," said Bhatia.

# A very Tihar problem: Old mobile phone jammers unable to block out 5G signals

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Delhi Prisons officials said there will always exist a gap between their equipment and the latest technology. SANCHIT KHANNA/HT

**NEW DELHI:** On May 6, two men fired more than 20 bullets at a car showroom in Tilak Nagar, west Delhi, an incident that left seven people injured. Not long afterwards, the showroom's owner got an extortion letter demanding ₹5 crore, followed by a threatening phone call from a foreign-based number.

Over the next few days, car dealers in Naraina, Rajouri Garden, and Dwarka also reported receiving similar extortion calls or letters.

Delhi Police officers said absconding gangster Himanshu Bhau — believed to be in hiding in Portugal — masterminded the incidents, and according to informants, had roped in gangster Naveen Bali and his brother Rahul alias Kaala to recruit local goons to threaten showrooms.

Initially, investigators were sceptical about Bali and Rahul's role in the extortion bids — both are imprisoned in Tihar, a jail complex that has 15 phone jammers to curb illegal use of cell-phones by its 20,000 inmates. But police made a startling discovery — Rahul, and other Tihar inmates were using 5G-enabled phones to bypass jammers.

The jammers, sourced from BEL, emit radio signals on the same frequency as mobile phones to hinder communication between the mobile device and a cell phone tower. Officials said the current jammers in Tihar only block 2G, 3G and 4G

phone calls — phone jammers. Officers said the Union ministry of home affairs has approved use of these T-HCBS towers to block calls/messages in jails.

The T-HCBS towers and cell phone jammers are ostensibly in place to ensure inmates are not able to use mobiles. But 500 houses and 50 shops of C4 and C5 blocks in Janakpuri are collateral damage — these jammers ensure that communications are crippled in this pocket of Delhi.

Ironically, while Janakpuri residents struggle with non-existent cellular network, Tihar inmates are able to use the latest cellphones to bypass jammers.

The jammers, sourced from BEL, emit radio signals on the same frequency as mobile phones to hinder communication between the mobile device and a cell phone tower. Officials said the current jammers in Tihar only block 2G, 3G and 4G

networks. Since 5G is an upgrade, the jammers don't have capacity to block those signals.

**Phones going undetected**  
The Delhi Police on May 25 caught Rahul, 32 — Bali's brother who is lodged in Tihar's jail no. 3 — with an iPhone, which he used to coordinate with gang members who are not behind bars.

"Despite being lodged in a high-security prison, Rahul was caught with an iPhone enabled with 5G. Sadly, the phone has been in use for a long time — we discovered he had shared clips of gangster Tiltu Tajpuria's murder (in May 2023)," a senior crime branch officer said, on condition of anonymity.

The officer said most gangsters have a "free hand" in jails, and can make calls, internet calls, and send instant messages from jail without being caught.

"Rahul works with jailed gangster Neeraj Bawana and was also involved in the recent firing incidents in west Delhi. We found the numbers of the assailants on his phone," the officer said, adding that an enquiry has been initiated against Rahul and his cellmates.

A senior Delhi Prisons official said that they have complained about the lack of effectiveness of the jammers to director general (prisons) Satish Golcha.

"Gangsters associated with Bali, Himanshu Bhau, Kala Jathedi, Neeraj Bawana, and Lawrence Bishnoi have been caught using phones with 5G networks. To prevent any offence, jammers are there but they don't work on 5G SIMs and network," the official said.

Golcha's office said there will always exist a gap between equipment and the latest technology. "We know gangsters are now using 5G and we have sent a proposal to THCBS to get jammers that can stop 5G network. We have also taken 15 more jammers to prevent further use of phones. The DG Prisons is also in talks to upgrade the towers at Mandoli and Rohini jails. We are also sharing inputs with the Special Cell about these devices and gangsters who are using them," the office said in a statement.

According to investigators, the four assailants — members of Tajpuria's deceased rival Joginder Gogi's gang, who used improvised shanks in the attack — got instructions for the murder over the phone. They used internet calling, said jail officials.

To prevent the further use of phones and weapons inside its jails, the Delhi prisons department constituted a special task force in December 2022 to conduct mass raids and checks. The team consisted of seven assistant superintendents and 13 havaldars, who nabbed 350 phones, internet dongles, and weapons.

But officials told HT that the task force was disbanded earlier this year, and are now dependent on checks by jail wardens every fortnight. "The raids were helpful. Now, we know jail wardens and lower-level staff are not able to cover as many inmates," a Tihar official said, on condition of anonymity. Golcha's office denied that the task force was dismantled. His office shared that since January, they seized over 211 contraband items.

"The recovery is less because of intensified raids. We are not dependent on STE. We are independently conducting raids and also keeping surveillance through CCTVs," said the officer from Golcha's office.

Sunil Gupta, former Tihar jail officer who is currently a lawyer at the Delhi high court, said jammers never work on advanced technology. "Earlier, jammers did not work on the 4G network. Now, they can't stop 5G."

# Gong! Restored Kamala Market clock tower starts ticking again

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**NEW DELHI:** The 72-year-old clock tower located at Kamala Market, near New Delhi Railway Station, has been restored, and the clock has started ticking again after several decades, municipal officials said on Friday.

The tower has been repaired, repainted, flex boards installed on the structure have been removed and its original four clocks have been made functional, the officials said.

The market was set up to provide livelihood to Partition refugees who settled in Delhi, and was inaugurated by former president Dr Rajendra Prasad on November 26, 1951. The same year the clock tower was also installed there. Officials added that the larger project to restore the crumbling structures in the market is still in progress.

Lakhvir Singh, vice president of the Kamala Market traders association, whose family has been running a shop there since 1960, said the clock tower was maintained by the market association till 1995. Then, the mechanic who maintained the clock, died. "It has remained non-functional for almost three decades but its original machine is intact. We are glad the heritage structure has been restored," Singh said.

He added that just like the old days, the clock chimes to mark



Traders said the clock tower was non-functional for nearly three decades.



SANJEEV VERMA, RAJ K RAJ/HT PHOTOS



**MARCH 15:** HT reported the clock tower was to be revamped as part of MCD's plan to beautify the market

every hour. "If it is 6 o'clock, the gong sounds six times. Its like being transported back to the old days. The market revamp is pending but 15 traders are taking the initiative by starting repair of their own shops," he added.

The market has 271 shops and 1,500 workers who operate as craftsmen, porters and mechanics.

An MCD official said lieutenant governor VK Saxena had inspected the market on February 23 directing the agencies to take several remedial measures including the restoration of the clocktower. "The clock tower has been restored in first phase and the larger plan includes repair work in the market," the official added requesting anonymity.

HT had reported on March 15

that the 72-year-old market and the clock tower was lying in poor shape, and that MCD had drawn up a plan to redevelop the market. Kamala Market was developed

in the shape of two concentric horseshoes on the lines of Connaught Place. Traders say that originally, the market had restaurants, grocery shops, and ice cream parlours. However, the market failed to attract shoppers. In 1960s workers from the Shradhanand Market, which is located across the road, moved in, making metal cases, cabinets and metalware. By the 1970s and 80s, the market, named after Kamala Nehru — wife of the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru — became one of the biggest desert air cooler markets in the country.

Delhi has several functional clock towers — at Sabzi Mandi area in north Delhi, Hari Nagar in west Delhi and one inside the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The city's

oldest clock tower, Northbrook Clock Tower, used to be at Chandni Chowk. It was demolished after it partially collapsed in 1950. MCD allocated ₹2 lakh in 1957 to rebuild the structure. But, the tower, a relic from the British Raj, was never rebuilt.

Officials from MCD's architecture department have prepared a plan to beautify the market by building a common facade, along with common patterns of signage for all shops. In March, the corporation invited bids for a ₹25.3 lakh project which involved general repair, the clock tower facelift, repair of boundary walls and grilles and development of a new toilet block. The larger project of uplifting the market is likely to cost ₹1.2 crore.

{ CHINTELS PARADISO }

# Hry govt directs residents of Tower J to vacate their flats

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**GURUGRAM:** The Haryana department of town and country planning (DTCP) has issued directions to people living in Tower J at Chintels Paradiso—a residential tower deemed unsafe for habitation — to vacate their flats at the earliest, officials said on Sunday.

A district committee, headed by the Gurugram divisional commissioner, fixed the rent for homeowners in Towers D, E, F, G and H, who opted for the reconstruction of flats — days after the DC recommended that the rent be fixed at ₹15 per square foot.

Residents, however, expressed their unhappiness over the rate, and said that they will submit a representation to the committee, seeking a hike.

On February 10, 2022, renovations at a sixth-floor flat of Tower D in Chintels Paradiso society in Gurugram Sector 109 led to the ceiling of a bedroom collapsing, causing a cascade effect in which portions of flats caved in all down to the first floor. Following the incident, in which two residents were killed, DTCP ordered a structural audit of the complex, and based on a report prepared by IIT-Delhi, the Gurugram administration deemed five of the nine towers — D, E, F, G, and H — unsafe, and in need of demolition. Later, Tower J was also deemed unsafe.

A DTCP official said that after taking into account the prevailing rent in societies in sectors 108 and 109, the committee held a meeting on May 29 and decided that the rent for alternative accommodation for the residents

be fixed at ₹15 per square foot.

Members of the Chintels Paradiso RWA, however, said the rate was too low. "Rent at comparable properties in the area is ₹18-19 per square foot," said RWA president Rakesh Hooda.

To be sure, on January 4, the Supreme Court issued directions that the developer should pay fair rent to owners who opt for reconstruction.

When asked about the matter, JN Yadav, vice president, Chintels India Ltd, said they would pay the rent fixed by the district administration from the day the construction begins — the condition stipulated by the Supreme Court. "We have been finding it difficult to shift utilities. This has delayed the demolition process. All furniture and fixtures from the five towers have been removed and we will start demolition soon," he said.

# Car rams bench near DU college, 1 dead

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**NEW DELHI:** One person died while another suffered grievous injuries after a speeding car rammed them near the main gate of Ramjas College under the Delhi University in Maurice Nagar in north Delhi on Sunday afternoon. The car also broke a cement bench and an iron pole at the college gate, police officers aware of the matter said.

Police arrested the driver, identified as Virendra Mehta, 56, a resident of Mukherjee Nagar.

A security guard posted at the college gate said that it was for

**THE VICTIM WAS AN E-RICKSHAW DRIVER. THE DRIVER OF THE LUXURY CAR HAS BEEN ARRESTED**

tunate that the accident took place on a Sunday, when the place has a lower footfall or else the death toll could have been way higher.

Deputy commissioner of police (north) Manoj Kumar Meena said that a PCR call regarding the accident was received at Maurice Nagar police station at 1.16pm.

"After reaching the spot, police found that the driver of a white luxury car lost control of the vehicle and hit two people, identified as Govind Sarfar, 45, and Ashok Das, 43, who were sitting on the bench after parking their e-rickshaws on the road. Both the injured people were sent to Hindu Rao Hospital. Doctors said that the condition of Das was stable. However, Sarkar was later referred to Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries," he said.

"Mehta's blood samples have been sent for forensic examination to detect if he was under the influence of alcohol during

the time of the accident. As per preliminary information, the accused is a lawyer by profession. A case is being registered under relevant sections of law," he said.

Meanwhile, the woman security guard at the college gate on condition of anonymity said, "It was a Sunday, otherwise the accident could have turned into a major tragedy as the place is always crowded with college students. The speed of the car went out of control of the driver and the vehicle kept moving forward after ramming both the victims and dragged them for over 10 metres. The car also broke an iron pole."

# COPS BOOK MAN FOR HARASSING GR NOIDA WOMAN

**GREATER NOIDA:** A Hapur-based man has been booked in Greater Noida for allegedly sexually harassing a 20-year-old woman on the pretext of offering prayers to help her give birth to a son, officers said on Sunday.

Based on the woman's complaint, an FIR was registered and a case of sexual harassment was lodged at Dadri police station on Saturday, they said.

# Delhiwale

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# Funeral blues, with rebirths

On the saga of a Walled City landmark

**{ PRIVATE CAPITAL }** Stop all the clocks, silence the street sounds, and bring out the janaza, let the mourners come. We thought that it would last forever, we were wrong.

For a long time, the beautiful clock repair shop stood at the mouth of Old Delhi's Gali Choori Wallan. It has vanished, along with its massive collection of stately old wall clocks. The shop closed some weeks ago.

The passing of the landmark has progressed into new beginnings. The three venerable brothers—who would be seen hard at work at the shop, diligently concentrating on those precious heirlooms—have launched their own clock-and-watch repairing shops.

Riyaz Khan, who specialises in hand-wound wrist watches, has his new establishment in Gali Surkh Poshan. This afternoon, it is shuttered, the shutter newly painted blue. People in the vicinity inform that the shop is still being readied, and is expected to open within days.

Gayaz Khan, who specialises in "quartz wali wristwatches," has his new establishment located further ahead in Gali Choori Wallan, opposite

Metro Hotel. This afternoon, his son is ensconced inside the small shop, while he himself is briefly away on an errand.

Ayaz Khan, who specialises in wall clocks, has his new establishment in Gali Badliyan. His shop is the grandest of the three, and closest to the spirit of the original shop. This afternoon, it is crammed with hundreds of wall clocks. They are nailed on the walls, they are stacked up one upon another on the floor (see photo). The weathered, wooden bodies of many clocks bear the bruises of time.

The three brothers picked up the intricacies of watch and clock repairs from their father, Muhammed Ilyasi, who founded the original shop in 1972. Since he was informally known as Hafiz ji; his shop gradually became popular as Haafiz ji ki Dukaan. The late founder had started his clock-career in a Khan Market watch shop.

Sitting at his Gali Badliyan workshop, Ayaz Khan notes that many of these clocks were made 70-80 years ago in Europe and the US. Some of these have been sent by their owners for repairs, he says. Many others are for sale. He now picks up a clock, and keeps it on his lap, saying that the old Haafiz ji ki Dukaan is to be replaced by a pharmacy.



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# IN NDA 3.0, FAMILIAR

The Prime Minister, along with 30 Cabinet ministers, five ministers of state with independent charge and 36 ministers of state make up the 72-member council of ministers in the new government sworn in on Sunday

**72 members**  
The Modi government 3.0 is only 9 short of the maximum permissible strength of 81 for council of ministers

★ **Prime Minister**

**Cabinet ministers** Total **30**  
5 allies (1 each from JD(S), JD(U), TDP, HAM, LJP(RVP))

**Minister of State (Independent Charge)** Total **5**  
2 allies (1 each from Shiv Sena and RLD)

**Ministers of State** Total **36**  
4 allies (1 each from BPP(K), JD(U), AI(S), and TDP)

**24** states and Union territories are represented in the new council of ministers coming from all corners of India

Leadership from across social groups – 27 OBC, 10 SC, five STs, five minorities – including a record 18 senior ministers heading ministries

**11** ministers from parties allied within the NDA bringing a wealth of expertise and experience

**Wealth of central experience**  
43 ministers serving 3 terms or higher in Parliament  
39 having been ministers in government of India before

**Multiple former chief ministers**  
34 having served in state legislatures  
23 having previously worked as ministers in states

## cabinet ministers

**RAJNATH SINGH, 72**



Despite the winds of change around him, both within his own party and in the country, Singh has used his experience and independent political heft to retain his significance in government. Defence minister in the second Modi gov't, he was also one of the few BJP leaders who can call leaders across parties. He will reprise his role as a key cabinet minister, but even more importantly, his ties across political lines will now be key in the first coalition government.

**NITIN GADKARI, 67**



Even in an age that has been dominated by Modi's popularity, Gadkari has created a cult popularity of his own within the party and government. Close to the RSS, he was the BJP president between 2009 and January 2013, a time when the BJP was rebuilding. During the BJP's decade in power, he has held several portfolios, but has been the minister of road, transport and highways for a decade — with India's expanded network of highways a credit to him.

**SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN, 65**



Chouhan, a four-time MP chief minister, will find himself in a new role. Chouhan, once the BJP's undisputed leader in MP, was replaced by Mohan Yadav after leading the BJP to another victory in December 2023, and then contested the Lok Sabha polls from Vidisha, where he won by an overwhelming margin. In his long tenure, he has built an identity as a mass leader, and is popularly known by the moniker "mama" (uncle).

**S JAISHANKAR, 69**



India's former top diplomat (he was foreign secretary) was surprisingly named to the 2nd Modi council of ministers. As external affairs minister, he has overseen a period when India has become much closer to the West, especially the US, but also managed to maintain ties with its ally, Russia. Foreign affairs is considered to be an area where Modi 2.0 did exceedingly well; much of the credit for that should go to Jaishankar.

**AMIT SHAH, 59**



As PM Modi prepares to begin his 3rd term, by his side — as has been the case for three decades — will be his trusted aide and confidant, Amit Shah. When Modi led Gujarat, Shah was his home minister. When Modi first became PM, Shah took charge of BJP and moulded it into a near hegemonic force. In Modi's 2nd term, Shah took charge of the home ministry, piloting key decisions central to the government's administrative and ideological project.

**JP NADDA, 63**



Jagat Prakash Nadda, who was born in Patna, but rose through the ranks of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Himachal Pradesh, was Union health minister in the first Modi cabinet, then national BJP president since 2020. He returns to the council as one of the party's senior-most faces and is widely known as a key decision maker within the BJP and is a close aide to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, 64**



She was one of the key performers of Modi 2.0, cabinet, helping to navigate the Indian economy through a Covid induced crisis as finance minister, in the process cementing its status as the world's 5th largest economy. Honest and straightforward, she transformed India's banking channels, making them effective delivery mechanisms for welfare programmes. She is one of the most experienced administrators in the government.

**MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR, 70**



The first man to helm a BJP government in Haryana, Khattar will now play a key role in the third NDA government. An RSS man who rose through the ranks, Khattar was a surprise pick for the post of Haryana chief minister, and was re-elected to the post in 2019. He was removed earlier this year and replaced by his once aide Nayab Singh Saini, but contested and won the Lok Sabha election from Karnal.



## ministers of state (independent charge)

**RAO Inderjit Singh, 74**



A six-time MP and four time MLA. Gurugram Lok Sabha representative Rao Inderjit Singh's popularity in Haryana has withstood the winds of change and time. A scion of the Rewari royal family and the son of Rai Birender Singh who was briefly Haryana chief minister in 1967, Singh defeated Raj Babbar of the Congress by 75,079 votes, even as the Congress made inroads into the state elsewhere.

**ARJUN Ram Meghwal, 70**



A key member of Narendra Modi-led Cabinets since 2014, Rajasthan SC face and MP from Bikaner, Arjun Ram Meghwal, who has served as union minister for Law and Justice as well as minister of state for parliamentary affairs, will now serve his third straight term in the union cabinet. He won from Bikaner for the fourth time, and has been at the forefront of handling the BJP's floor management in the Lok Sabha for the BJP. From Kishmidesar village in Bikaner, Meghwal served in the Rajasthan Administrative Service, was promoted to the Indian Administrative Service, and then resigned and contested the 2009 Lok Sabha elections on a BJP ticket. In 2014, when the BJP came to power, his rise was clear, and he was immediately appointed the party's chief whip in the Lok Sabha.

**PRATAPRAO Ganpatrao Jadhav, 63**



A 4-term MP from Buldhana, Jadhav has found place in the council of ministers as the senior-most representative of the Shiv Sena. A powerful leader from western Vidarbha, Jadhav has been minister at the state level on several occasions as a Maratha leader who claims the support of several community organisations. His appointment is likely to help Eknath Shinde mitigate some Maratha anger against the government.

**JITENDRA Singh, 67**



Jitendra Singh, who has been part of the council of ministers for a decade in different capacities and is the party's face in Jammu, was sworn in as minister of state with independent charge. Singh served as MoS in the PMO, MoS for personnel, public grievances and pensions, and MoS for science, tech and earth sciences. In the first elections since the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K, Singh stamped his hold over Udhampur.

**JAYANT Chaudhary, 45**



The RLD broke away from the INDIA alliance hours after the Bharat Ratna was awarded to party founder and former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh. On Sunday, Charan Singh's grandson Jayant was sworn in as a minister of state with independent charge. The RLD, which helped the BJP mitigate damage in western UP, contested two seats and won both. This is the first time that Jayant will helm a ministry.

## ministers of state

**JITIN PRASADA, 50**



Sitting minister in Uttar Pradesh, Prasad spent most of his career in the Congress.

**SHRIPAD NAIK, 71**



He was first elected to Parliament in 1999 and is Goa's longest-serving MP.

**PANKAJ CHOUDHARY, 59**



A seven-term MP from Uttar Pradesh, he served as MoS, finance, between 2021 and 2024.

**KRISHAN P GURJAR, 67**



Gurjar retained his Faridabad constituency in Haryana in the Lok Sabha elections.

**RAMDAS ATHAWALE, 64**



Despite not fighting polls, he was picked considering his clout among Dalit voters.

**RAM NATH THAKUR, 74**



He is the son of former Bihar CM and Bharat Ratna awardee Karpoori Thakur.

**NITYANAND RAI, 58**



Rai is considered close to Union minister Amit Shah; he has held key organisational posts in BJP.

**ANUPRIYA PATEL, 43**



Chief of Apna Dal (S), key NDA ally in UP, she served as MoS for several terms.

**V SOMANNA, 73**



Lingayat leader and former Karnataka minister who won the Tumkur Lok Sabha seat.

**CHANDRA SEKHAR PEMMASANI, 48**



A doctor from Andhra Pradesh, the richest MP in Lok Sabha.

**SP SINGH BAGHEL, 63**



Once part of Mulayam Singh Yadav's security detail, he served as MoS in the previous Modi govt.

**SHOBHA KARANDLAJE, 57**



A close aide of former Karnataka CM BS Yediyurappa, she is again set to be a part of the council.

# FACES, SOME ALLIES

**HD KUMARASWAMY, 64**



The son of former PM HD Deve Gowda, former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy's JD(S) stymied the extent of Congress inroads in the state, and while it won only two seats, its Vokkaliga support base aligned with the BJP's Lingayat core, helped the BJP defend its turf. The JD(S) campaign has however been marred by controversy after his nephew Prajwal Revanna, who lost from Hassan, was arrested for sexual abuse.

**DHARMENDRA PRADHAN, 54**



Pradhan, one of the BJP's most influential leaders in Odisha, will reprise his role as a cabinet minister. In 2014, he was picked to head the crucial ministry of petroleum and natural gas, and oversaw the implementation of the PM Ujjwala Yojana, one of Modi's flagship schemes. Along with leading the BJP's rise in Odisha, Pradhan was the minister for education after 2019, and brought in the National Education Policy in 2020.

**LALAN SINGH, 69**



Former JD(U) president Rajiv Ranjan Singh (aka Lalan Singh) has long been considered one of the men that have the trust of Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, and is now set to be a key Union minister. A 4-time MP, he has established himself as a key strategist and troubleshooter for JD(U), and is now set to be its key man in Delhi and in the cabinet; with the future of the alliance hinging on the JDU-BJP ties at the Centre, his stature will only rise.

**VIRENDRA KUMAR, 70**



A former pro-tem speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha, eight-time member of Parliament from Madhya Pradesh Virendra Kumar is a key SC leader from Bundelkhand, and was first elected as a member of Parliament in 1996. In September 2017, he was appointed as the Union minister of state in Narendra Modi's first ministerial expansion, and then became Cabinet minister for social justice & empowerment in 2019.

**PRALHAD JOSHI, 61**



The five-term member of Parliament from Hubballi-Dharwad in Karnataka, and in charge of parliamentary affairs, coal and mines, in the second Modi government, Joshi is one of Karnataka's tallest leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Beginning his career with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the 61-year-old first became a MLA in 1996, entered the Lok Sabha in 2004, and has since been undefeated.

**GIRIRAJ SINGH, 71**



One of the BJP's most outspoken figures on Hindutva, Singh was elected from Nawada in 2014, and then from Begusarai in 2019, defeating the Kanhaiya Kumar. He fought from Begusarai again in 2024 and emerged victorious. An aggressive voice against the opposition, he was the minister of rural development, panchayati raj, animal husbandry and fisheries in the 2nd NDA government.

**JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA, 53**



Scindia, civil aviation minister in the 2nd Modi govt has vast administrative experience, previously also serving as Union minister of state for telecommunications, commerce and industry under the UPA govt when he was part of Congress, and has been central to BJP's dominance in MP since he moved to the party in 2020, ensuring that the BJP swept all 29 seats in LS.

**GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT, 56**



A third-term MP from Jodhpur, Shekhawat is one of the more experienced faces in the new cabinet. He served as minister of state for agriculture in 2017 and in 2019 was made cabinet minister of the newly formed Jal Shakti Ministry, and charged with spearheading task of bringing drinking water to every home, a key promise of the 2nd Modi govt.

**PIYUSH GOYAL, 59**



Goyal, has, over the past decade, reinforced his credentials as the party's key troubleshooter, a tough trade deal negotiator, and the man who forged key commercial deals. In this time, he has helmed a variety of key positions, from commerce and industry to consumer affairs, food and public distribution, textiles, coal and power. This time, Goyal will take his place in the cabinet as a Lok Sabha member, having won the election from Mumbai North.

**JITAN RAM MANJHI, 79**



For decades, HAM(S) founder Manjhi has been at the heart of Bihar's politics. He was sworn in as Bihar's CM in May 2014 when he was in the JD(U), and served in that post for eight months. He subsequently formed his own party, and with a section of Dalits extremely loyal to him, has never lost relevance. He is the only MP that the HAM(S) has, but will now be a senior minister in the Modi government, his support crucial to the NDA's grip on Bihar.

**SARBANANDA SONOWAL, 61**



A stalwart from Assam, former CM Sarbananda Sonowal has found place in the Modi cabinet again. In the previous cabinet, Sonowal, a RS member since 2021, was in charge of various ministries — from ports to shipping and waterways to AYUSH. Sonowal took over as Assam chief minister in 2016, before being replaced by Himanta Biswa Sarma when the BJP won a second consecutive assembly elections in 2021.

**RAM MOHAN NAIDU, 36**



Suave and articulate, three-term Srikakulam MP, Ram Mohan Naidu is one of the two Telugu Desam Party representatives in the NDA cabinet. The son of former Union minister K Yerran Naidu, Ram Mohan has a bachelor's degree in engineering from Purdue University, and has been an active member of the TDP since 2012 and won from the Srikakulam Lok Sabha constituency in Andhra Pradesh.

**JUAL ORAM, 63**



Jual Oram, who was India's first tribal affairs minister when the ministry was created under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in October 1999, found place in the third Narendra Modi Cabinet on Sunday. A key tribal leader who is a five-time parliamentarian, Oram has been a key part of the BJP's rise in Odisha — one that has come on the back of the party's increasing influence over the tribal parts of the state.

**ASHWINI VAISHNAW, 53**



A 1994 batch IAS officer who retired from the service to work in several multinational engineering companies before making an entry into politics, Vaishnaw is the quintessential technocrat and handled key portfolios such as Railways, Information Technology and Electronics and Communications in Modi 2.0. He helmed the government's flagship Vande Bharat trains programme.

**BHUPENDER YADAV, 54**

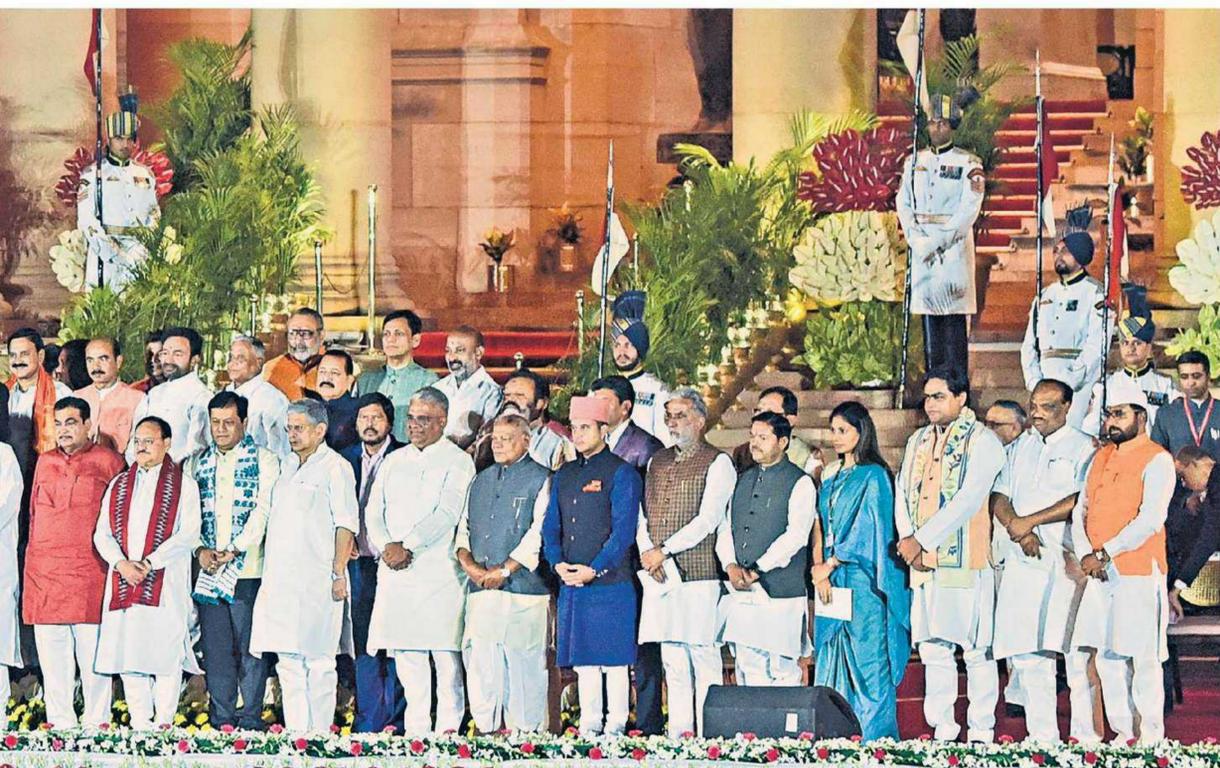


One of the BJP's key strategists, Yadav served as the Union cabinet minister of Labour and Employment, and Environment, Forest and Climate Change between 2019 and 2024. A first-time Lok Sabha MP — he was previously in the Rajya Sabha — Yadav spent years building the party organisation as BJP national general secretary, and is seen as one of the architects of key electoral victories in states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and UP.

**ANNPURNA DEVI, 55**



The Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Koderma in Jharkhand returned to the third Narendra Modi cabinet on Sunday, after serving as the minister of state for education in his second term. She joined the BJP before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections from RJD. In 2019, Devi had made her name when she beat Babulal Marandi, Jharkhand's first chief minister by a margin of 450,000 votes.



**KIREN RIJUJU, 52**



One of the BJP's most recognisable faces from the North-East, Rijiju will return for his 3rd term as a member of Modi's council of ministers. A graduate from DU's Hansraj College and Faculty of Law, the politician from Arunachal Pradesh has served multiple roles — from MoS for home to Cabinet minister for law & justice and earth sciences.

**HARDEEP SINGH PURI, 72**



A former diplomat who served as the India's permanent representative to the UN, Puri returns after serving several roles in the previous regime. He has been MoS for independent charge for civil aviation, minister of state for commerce and industry and petroleum and natural gas minister. Most importantly, he has helmed the ministry for housing and urban affairs.

**MANSUKH MANDAVIYA, 52**



A two-time Rajya Sabha MP, much of his career has been spent in Gujarat where he was an MLA in 2002, and was the BJP's state secretary in 2013. In 2016, he was appointed the MoS for road transport & highways, shipping, and chemicals & fertilisers, but was chosen to lead India's response to Covid-19 as health minister in 2021.

**G KISHAN REDDY, 63**



G Kishan Reddy, one of the BJP's key figures in undivided Andhra Pradesh and then Telangana once the states were split in 2014, is the MP from Secunderabad. Reddy was the Telangana BJP's first president in 2014, and was the minister of tourism, culture and development of the North Eastern Region of India in the second Modi government. Reddy has also served as minister of state for home affairs in the past.

**CHIRAG PASWAN, 41**



The past 5 years have seen much churn in the life of 41-year-old actor turned politician Chirag Paswan. In October 2020, his father Ram Vilas Paswan died, sparking a deadly intra-party battle between Chirag and his uncle for his legacy. Their LJP split, and while Paras continued as Union minister, Chirag's influence became clear when the NDA allotted five seats to the faction led by him.

**CR PATIL, 69**



Patil may be a new face in the government, but the Gujarat BJP chief has helmed a string of key party responsibilities in the PM's home state, priming him for the responsibility. A former police constable, Patil has been with the BJP since 1989, and established a fearsome organisational network in Surat. A three-time MP from Navsari, the BJP won a historic 156 of 182 seats in the 2022 assembly elections under his leadership.

**KIRTI V SINGH, 58**



Gonda MP Kirti Vardhan Singh is popularly known as Raja Bhaiyya among his supporters.

**BL VERMA, 62**



Rajya Sabha member BL Verma is from Uttar Pradesh's Budaun district.

**SHANTANU THAKUR, 41**



He played a key figure in the BJP's outreach to the Matua community in West Bengal.

**SURESH GOPI, 65**



Gopi is the BJP's first ever Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha from Kerala.

**L MURUGAN, 47**



Murugan, a Dalit BJP leader from Tamil Nadu, is known for his organisational skills.

**AJAY TAMTA, 51**



A three-time MP from Almora in Uttarakhand, he earlier served as MoS, textiles.

**BANDI SANJAY KUMAR, 52**



A leader from Telangana, Bandi Sanjay Kumar is the BJP national general secretary.

**KAMLESH PASWAN, 47**



Son of veteran leader Om Prakash Paswan, Kamlesh is a four-time MP from Bangsaon.

**BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY, 70**



Ajmer MP Bhagirath Choudhary is known for his organisational skills.

**SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY, 49**



Dubey is considered a strong Brahmin leader of the BJP in Bihar.

**SANJAY SETH, 64**



A fresh face in the Modi cabinet, he is considered close to former Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das.

**RAVNEET S BITTU, 48**



Grandson of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, he lost the Lok Sabha elections.

**DURGADAS UIKEY, 58**



Two-time MP from Madhya Pradesh, he taught at state tribal welfare department schools.

**RAKSHA KHADSE, 37**



She is the daughter-in-law of senior NCP leader Eknath Khadse, who fought on a BJP ticket.

**SUKANTA MAJUMDAR, 44**



President of the BJP's West Bengal unit, he won the Balurghat seat for a second straight term.

**SAVITRI THAKUR, 46**



Savitri Thakur won from the Dhar (reserved) seat in Madhya Pradesh.

**TOKHAN SAHU, 54**



First time MP from Chhattisgarh and a tall leader of the influential Sahu community.

**RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY, 46**



He won the Lok Sabha polls from Muzaffarpur in Bihar by a margin of 234,927 votes.

**SRINIVASA VARMA, 56**



He is a grassroots BJP leader from Bhimavaram, the rice bowl of Andhra Pradesh.

**HARSH MALHOTRA, 60**



A first time lawmaker, Malhotra has worked in the Delhi unit of the BJP for 34 years.

**NIMUBEN BAMBANIYA, 57**



She is one of the three BJP women candidates who won the polls in Gujarat.

**MURLIDHAR MOHOL, 49**



A first-time MP from Pune, the Maratha leader was earlier the mayor of the city.

**GEORGE KURIEN, 63**



The general secretary of the BJP's Kerala unit also took oath as MoS on Sunday.

**PABITRA MARGHERITA, 49**



The Assam Rajya Sabha MP, who joined politics in 2014, was formerly a magazine editor and then a filmmaker.

# After poll debacle, Pandian says quitting active politics

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**BHUBANESWAR:** VK Pandian, former bureaucrat and outgoing Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide, on Sunday announced his withdrawal from "active politics", five days after the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) faced a drubbing at the hands of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in both the assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

The former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, who spearheaded the BJD's poll campaign and was often targeted by the BJP over his Tamil origin, also apologised for the 26-year-old regional outfit's worst-ever electoral performance in the recently concluded simultaneous polls.

"My intent of joining politics was only... only... to assist Naveen babu, and now consciously I decide to withdraw myself from active politics," Pandian said in a video message posted on his Instagram page. "I am sorry if I have hurt anyone on this journey. I am sorry if this campaign narrative against me played a part in BJD's loss. I apologise to the entire Biju parivar (family), including all the karmis (workers) for this."

The BJD faced its worst defeat in the state polls, losing the power in the state after 24-year rule to the BJP. The Naveen Patnaik-led party managed to win only 51 seats, down from the 113 seats it won in 2019, in the 147-member assembly. The BJP, on the other hand, stormed to power, winning 78



Former IAS officer VK Pandian, who was Naveen Patnaik's private secretary, had joined BJD last November. ANI PHOTO

seats, four more than the majority mark of 74. The BJD also failed to open its account in the Lok Sabha polls in the state, with the BJP winning 20 of the 21 seats and the Congress one.

Pandian, a 2000-batch IAS officer, who had served as the private secretary to Patnaik in the chief minister's office since 2011 and was widely considered as one of the most powerful officers in the state, took voluntary retirement from service in October last year. He joined the BJD on November 27 and soon rose unofficially to the second rank in the party behind only party president Patnaik.

As he took centre stage, driving the BJD's poll campaign, the party's former ally-turned-rival BJP made Pandian's Tamil origin as its central political plank, leveling him as an "outsider". The BJP

also evoked "Odia Asmita" (Odia Pride) focussing on Pandian's non-Odia roots and the wide-spread presumption that he would succeed Patnaik in the party and government. Top BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also accused Pandian of holding Patnaik captive. The missing of Ratna Bhandar (treasury) keys of the Shree Jagannath Temple was also attributed to him.

"I will always keep Odisha in the core of my heart and my Guru Naveen Babu in my breath and pray to Lord Jagannath for their well-being and prosperity," Pandian said.

Pandian also said that he came from a humble family and a small village, and his childhood dream was to join the IAS and serve the people, which Lord Jagannath made possible. Stating that he

came to Odisha because his wife is from Kendrapara, he recalled: "From the day I set foot on the soil of Odisha, I have received immense love and affection from the people... from Dharamgarh to Rourkela to Mayurbhanj to Ganjam. I have tried to work very hard for the people."

Pandian said he had no desire whatsoever for a specific political post or power. "It has been my shortcoming that I could not effectively counter the political narratives," he said.

After the electoral drubbing, the clamour within BJD grew over Pandian's role, as many leaders told Patnaik that it was the former bureaucrat who stood behind the party and the victory. Defending his close confidant, Patnaik on Saturday termed the criticism against Pandian as "unfortunate" and praised the former IAS officer for doing an "excellent job."

During an election rally on May 10, Pandian had vowed to quit politics if Patnaik does not take oath as the CM. He was responding to Modi's comments predicting a BJP government in Odisha.

Taking a dig at Pandian over his announcement to withdraw from politics, senior BJP leader Pitambar Acharya claimed the "arrogance and vehemence" shown by the former bureaucrat during poll campaign in Odisha was unprecedented in politics. In a post on X, Acharya said: "Pandian quitting politics was not enough, the guilty needs to be punished for pushing Odisha down."



Amritpal Singh

## JAILED AMRITPAL TO SEEK RELEASE FOR OATH-TAKING

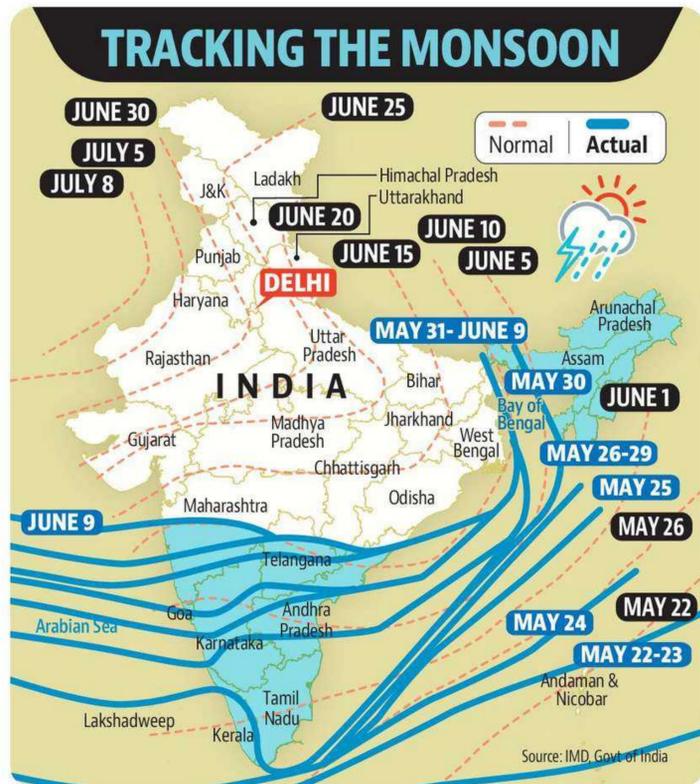
**CHANDIGARH:** Jailed radical Sikh preacher and MP-elect Amritpal Singh will write to the Punjab government, seeking a temporary release from the detention in a jail in Assam to take oath as the member of parliament, his counsel Imaan Singh Khara said on Sunday.

"In a day or so, he will write to seek temporary release under Section 15 of the National Security Act that deals with the temporary release from detention," he said.

Amritpal, the chief of the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, is currently lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail along with nine associates under the NSA.

Having fought the 2024 Lok Sabha election as an Independent, he won from Khador Sahib Lok Sabha seat after he defeated Congress candidate Kulbir Singh Zira. Amritpal won by a margin of 1,97,120 votes. He polled 4,04,430 while Zira got 2,07,310. His parents Tarsem Singh and Balwinder Kaur arrived in Assam on Saturday to meet him.

Amritpal, who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jamail Singh Bhindranwale, was arrested in Moga's Rode village on April 23 last year following an over a month-long manhunt. PTI



# Monsoon hits Mumbai before schedule: IMD

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**NEW DELHI:** The southwest monsoon advanced further over several parts of Maharashtra and reached Mumbai and Pune on Sunday, two days earlier than its normal arrival date of June 11, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The monsoon also advanced further over parts of north Arabian Sea and covered the remaining parts of central Arabian Sea, with the weather body warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall with isolated extremely heavy rain over south Konkan, Goa, south central Maharashtra and coastal and north interior Karnataka on Sunday and Monday.

The northern limit of the monsoon, the IMD said, is now passing through Thane, Ahmednagar, Beed, Nizamabad, Sukma, Malkangiri, Vizianagaram, and Islampur. "The monsoon is active over the west coast. The Arabian Sea branch is giving good rains to coastal Maharashtra, Karnataka, etc. However, the Bay of Bengal branch is not active. It is expected to pick up pace from June 13-14 and cover the rest of West Bengal, east Jharkhand and Bihar. For now, the monsoon is progressing normally," said Mahesh Palawat, vice president, climate and meteorology at Skymet Weather.

Officials said Mumbai and its

**THE NORTHERN LIMIT OF MONSOON IS NOW PASSING THROUGH THANE, AHMEDNAGAR, BEED, NIZAMABAD, SUKMA, MALKANGIRI, VIZIANAGARAM, AND ISLAMPUR, THE IMD SAID**

neighbouring areas received heavy rains in a span of hours ending at 8.30am on Sunday, bringing down the mercury and providing relief to residents from the hot and humid weather.

The Colaba observatory, situated in south Mumbai where most of the state government's administrative offices are located, recorded 67mm rainfall, while the Santacruz observatory, near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, recorded 64mm downpour in the same period.

According to the IMD, isolated extremely heavy rain (over 20cm) is likely over south Konkan and Goa, south central Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka on Sunday and Monday, and north interior Karnataka from Sunday to Tuesday.

It also issued a red category warning for these areas, suggesting that authorities need to act to prevent exigencies due to flash

floods or heavy rain. Meanwhile, the IMD has predicted a fresh spell of heatwave over northwest India from Monday. Such conditions are expected to continue over parts of east India and UP for the next five days, it said.

Heatwave conditions are likely in isolated pockets of Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, Jharkhand and Gangetic West Bengal from June 9 to 13, the weather body said, as it predicted similar conditions for Jammu division, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, west Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh from June 11 to 13 and Odisha on June 11 and 12.

The IMD said that heatwave conditions prevailed in isolated pockets of east Uttar Pradesh and Bihar on Saturday. Maximum temperatures were in the range of 42-45°C in many parts of east Uttar Pradesh; in some parts of north Madhya Pradesh and west Uttar Pradesh; in isolated pockets of Haryana, Delhi, Bihar and Gujarat on Saturday. These were above normal by 2-4°C.

The highest maximum temperature of 45.2°C was reported in Prayagraj (east Uttar Pradesh). Heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy rain at isolated places was recorded over Konkan and Goa; and heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, central Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka on Saturday.

# Militant held over 4 civilians' killing in Manipur

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**NEW DELHI/IMPHAL:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a militant currently lodged in an Assam prison for his alleged involvement in the killing of four civilians in Bishnupur district of ethnic strife-torn Manipur in January this year, the agency said on Sunday.

The accused has been identified as Lunminsei Kipgen, a Manipur resident who also goes by the aliases Langinmang, Mang and Levi. He was taken into custody from Central Jail, Lokhra in Guwahati, under the provisions of the unlawful activities (prevention) act (UAPA) and the arms act.

Kipgen "is the first accused to be arrested for the gruesome killings on January 18, when armed assailants brutally murdered four civilians near the water treatment plant at Bishnupur," an NIA spokesperson said in a statement.

The assailants had opened indiscriminate fire from sophisticated weapons, leading to the



Since May 3 last year, violence in Manipur has claimed at least 225 lives. PTIFILE PHOTO

death of four civilians. The federal anti-terror investigating agency had taken over the probe in the civilians' deaths on February 9.

It was found during the probe that "Lunminsei Kipgen was actively involved in the attack, which was part of the ongoing ethnic unrest and violence in the northeastern state," the NIA said. "Previously a cadre of the Kuki militant outfit KNF(P), he joined another Kuki militant organisation — the United Kuki National Army — during the current spate of violence and partic-

ipated in the killings."

Since May 3 last year, Manipur has witnessed clashes between Meitei and Kuki communities, which has claimed at least 225 lives to date and uprooted around 50,000 people. The violence has reignited in the northeastern state in the last two days after a peaceful couple of months. On June 6, S Saratkumar, a 59-year-old resident of Jiribam district, was found beheaded after he went missing. On the same evening, a mob set ablaze three abandoned Kuki villages near Jiribam.

## Tense calm prevails in violence-hit Jiribam distt

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**IMPHAL:** The situation in Manipur's Jiribam district remained "tense" but "under control" on Sunday, police said, a day after an armed mob went on a rampage and indulged in arson across the district in a fresh round of violence in the north-eastern state, after a 59-year-old man was found beheaded earlier this week.

In a statement, the Manipur Police said: "The situation is tense but under control in the wake of violent disturbances that broke out in Jiribam district in which miscreants torched two police pickets, a forest beat office... and several houses belonging to both Meitei and Kuki communities." A senior police officer, who did not wish to be identified, said police is "actively monitoring social media updates, which may incite

communal feelings amongst the communities and requests the general public to refrain from spreading unfounded/unverified information."

Jiribam is home to Meiteis, Kukis, Bengalis, Nepalis, Nagas, and other communities. Despite the northeastern state being roiled by violence since May last year, the district was largely peaceful, with Meitei and Kuki groups pledging not to indulge in violence during a meeting at the police superintendent's office in June this year.

However, the beheading of 59-year-old S Saratkumar Singh, whose body was found on Thursday, brought the district to the boil and forced many to flee the region. On Saturday, armed mobs torched two police outposts, a forest department office, and close to 70 houses across the district, prompting more people from both Meitei and Kuki communities to flee.

# ED likely to seek fugitive tag for Mahadev app promoters

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**NEW DELHI:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is likely to soon move court with a request to declare Mahadev Online Book app promoters Sourabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal as fugitive economic offenders (FEO) and initiate proceedings to confiscate their properties abroad, officials aware of the details have said.

Both Chandrakar (28) and Uppal (43), accused of setting up the online betting syndicate that generated illegal funds worth ₹6,000 crore since 2019-20, are from Chhattisgarh but based in Dubai, where they are under detention by UAE (United Arab Emirates) authorities since December 2023, amid attempts by various diplomatic channels for their extradition to India.

"Even as extradition proceedings are going on in the UAE, we are going to initiate FEO proceedings against the Mahadev app promoters. We will move court soon in this regard," an ED official said, seeking anonymity.

Once declared as FEO, Chandrakar and Uppal will join the list of such fugitives after Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya, Iqbal Mirchi's wife Hajra Memon and sons Junaid and Asif, Sandesara brothers Nitin and Chetan, latter's wife Dipti and a close associate Hitesh Kumar Patel.

Brought in by the government in 2018 to deter economic offenders from evading the

**ONCE DECLARED FEO, THEY WILL JOIN THE LIST AFTER NIRAV MODI, VIJAY MALLYA, IQBAL MIRCHI'S WIFE HAJRA MEMON AMONG OTHERS**

Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts, the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act empowers authorities for non-conviction-based attachment and confiscation of proceeds of crime and assets, if the amount involved is above ₹100 crore.

So far, FEO proceedings have been initiated against 19 people in various cases, of which 12 have been approved by courts. Properties worth ₹906 crore have been confiscated under the Act.

The ED, which began probing the case pertaining to the Mahadev Online Book app under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in July 2022, alleged the promoters of the app — Chandrakar and Uppal — remotely ran illegal betting operations. The projected proceeds of the crime are about ₹6,000 crore.

The federal agency also alleged that the funds generated by the app were used to pay bribes to politicians and bureaucrats in Chhattisgarh, where the

case had become a major political issue ahead of the assembly elections in November. So far, the agency has arrested 10 people and seized or frozen movable properties worth ₹1,764.5 crore under PMLA.

The financial crimes probe agency has so far filed two charge sheets in the case. The ED alleged that Mahadev Online Book "provides illegal betting facilities in different live games like poker, card games, chance games, betting on cricket, badminton, tennis, football, etc. and also provides facility for playing a number of card games like Teen Patti, Poker, Dragon Tiger, Virtual Cricket games using cards, etc., to even apps allowing placing bets on different elections in India."

The ED said the app began its operations in 2019-20 but its reach among users saw a huge increase during Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and continued to grow since then.

"ED investigation has established that Ravi Uppal and Sourabh Chandrakar and their associates are remotely running this online betting syndicate without the necessity of remaining in India. They have successfully outsourced their entire dirty work of arranging benami shell bank accounts, hiring offices to run panels, advertising, hawala, laundering etc to willing 'panel' partners by promising them a share of profit and blinding with vulgar display of their wealth," the charge sheet said.

# Team probing B'desh MP's murder recovers bones

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**KOLKATA:** The West Bengal police Criminal Investigation Department (CID), probing into the murder of Bangladeshi lawmaker Md Anwarul Azim Anar, on Sunday recovered parts of human bones near a canal in South 24 Parganas district, a senior officer said.

The bones were recovered on the south-eastern bank of Bagjola canal in Bhangar, around 15km from the New Town apartment where Anar was last spotted on May 13 and where CID sleuths believe he was murdered and his body dismembered.

"We have recovered some bones. Prima facie they appear to be human bones. We are sending them for forensic analysis," inspector general of CID, AK Chaturvedi, said.

The development came following the interrogation of accused Siam Hossain, who allegedly played a key role in disposing of the Bangladeshi leader's body parts, by CID sleuths. Hossain was arrested by CID on Friday evening.

"We have been searching in this area for over two weeks based on information provided by another accused Jihad Hawaldar, who was arrested on May 23. Hossain gave the specific location during interrogation," a CID officer said, requesting anonymity.

A medical officer from Jirangacha community block primary health centre and Central Forensic Science Laboratory experts present on the spot confirmed that the bones were

indeed of humans, CID said in statement.

"Since it could not be ascertained whether the bones were from the body of the Bangladeshi MP, a case has been registered at the Bijoynanj Bazar police station," it said.

Prima facie the bones appeared to be parts of ribs and arms. Police were yet to recover the skull. "If the forensic



Anwarul Azim.

analysis to ascertain if they belong to the murdered MP. For that, the court's permission is required. It is a long process," the CID officer added.

Anar, a three-time MP of the ruling Awami League led by prime minister Sheikh Hasina, was last seen on May 13 in Bidhannagar in the northern fringes of Kolkata, a day after he arrived in the eastern state to undergo medical treatment.

Police have claimed that the Bangladeshi leader was first strangled and killed after which his body was chopped into pieces.

Investigation so far has revealed that Hossain and Hawaldar disposed of the MP's body parts as well as murder weapons. It was Hawaldar, a butcher

confirms the bones belong to humans, we will go for DNA analysis to ascertain if they belong to the murdered MP. For that, the court's permission is required. It is a long process," the CID officer added.

Anar, a three-time MP of the ruling Awami League led by prime minister Sheikh Hasina, was last seen on May 13 in Bidhannagar in the northern fringes of Kolkata, a day after he arrived in the eastern state to undergo medical treatment. Police have claimed that the Bangladeshi leader was first strangled and killed after which his body was chopped into pieces.

Investigation so far has revealed that Hossain and Hawaldar disposed of the MP's body parts as well as murder weapons. It was Hawaldar, a butcher

from Mumbai, who deskinning the body, segregated the flesh from the bones and chopped the body parts, police have claimed. Some flesh was recovered from a septic tank in the New Town apartment where the leader was murdered. It has been sent for forensic analysis to ascertain whether it was human flesh.

So far, five people have been arrested in connection with the murder. While three people were arrested by the by the detective branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, West Bengal CID has arrested Hossain and Hawaldar.

The alleged mastermind of the murder, Aktaruzzaman Shahin, a long-term business partner of the Awami League leader, is still absconding. He is believed to have fled to the US.

# SIT formed over Kangana incident, farm outfits back CISF woman



Kangana Ranaut

Nikhil Sharma  
nikhil.sharma@hindustantimes.com

**MOHALI:** The Punjab police have formed a three-member special investigation team (SIT) in connection with a CISF woman constable allegedly slapping Bollywood actor and newly-elected BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, even as several farmer outfits on Sunday took out a march in Mohali in support of the constable.

Ranaut, who won the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls from the Mandi seat in Himachal Pradesh, was allegedly slapped by

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) constable Kulwinder Kaur at Chandigarh airport on June 6.

On Sunday, several farmer outfits, including the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, took out a march from Amb Sahib Gurdwara to the Mohali senior superintendent of police (SSP)'s office in Sector 76. Farmer leaders also handed over a memorandum to Mohali SSP Sandeep Garg, seeking an impartial probe into the incident.

"After listening to the demands of the farmers, an SIT

has been formed under me. There will be an impartial probe into the matter and the report will be submitted to the SSP Mohali at the earliest," Mohali SP Harbir Singh Atwal told reporters. A woman police officer will also be part of the SIT.

Kaur was suspended after the incident and the CISF has also ordered a court of inquiry into the incident. The Mohali police have booked Kaur under IPC sections 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt) and 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint), both bailable offences.

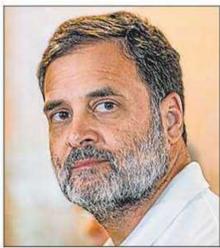
"No one has seen any clip in which Kulwinder Kaur was seen slapping the BJP MP. We have sought a fair and independent probe and have requested SSP to not surrender to any political pressure," Jagjit Singh Dallewal, convener, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Sidhupur), said. "We also want an FIR against Ranaut for making provocative statements after the alleged slap incident."

Farmer leaders demanded completion of probe in a month. Kaur was apparently upset with Ranaut over her stance on the farmers' protests.

# Rahul slams Modi amic NEET row, vows to be students' voice

Press Trust of India  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday over the NEET-UG medical entrance row, saying the alleged "irregularities" in the examination have devastated more than 24 lakh students even before he takes oath for a new term in office.



Rahul Gandhi

Gandhi assured students in the country that he will become their voice in Parliament and strongly raise the issues related to their future.

Amid allegations of inflation of marks in the NEET-UG medical entrance exam, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Saturday that the education ministry has set up a four-member panel to review the grace marks awarded to more than 1.5 lakh candidates.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "Narendra Modi has not even taken oath yet and the irregularities in the NEET exam has devastated more than 24 lakh students and their families."

Six students from a single exam centre topped the exam with maximum marks, while many got such marks which are technically not possible, but the government is continuously denying the possibility of paper leak, the former Congress chief said.

He said the Congress had made a robust plan to deal with this 'paper leak industry' running in connivance with the education mafia and the government machinery.

"We had pledged in our manifesto to give students 'freedom from paper leak' by making a

law," he said.

"Today, I assure all the students of the country that I will become your voice in the Parliament and strongly raise the issues related to your future," Gandhi said.

The youth have expressed faith in the INDIA bloc which will not let their voice be suppressed, he asserted.

The NTA has denied any irregularities and said the changes made in the NCERT textbooks and grace marks for losing time at the examination centres were some of the reasons behind the students scoring higher marks.

The issue has taken a political turn with several parties raising concerns about the authenticity of the national exam for medical courses.

The Congress on Friday demanded a high-level investigation under the Supreme Court's supervision into "irregularities" in NEET for medical courses and accused the BJP of cheating youngsters and playing with their futures.

Earlier on Saturday, Congress general secretary (organisations)

KC Venugopal targeted the BJP for destroying the future of students and urged the Ministry of Education to conduct an exhaustive inquiry into the NEET-UG Exam 2024 irregularities.

In a post on X, KC Venugopal said, "The BJP government has totally botched the NEET examinations and destroyed the future of our medical aspirants."

"First, it persisted with the exam despite huge opposition from many states, especially Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Now, it is clearly unable to administer it effectively and we are now seeing the paper leak at the national level. This, coupled with multiple irregularities raises alarm about how the exam is being conducted," he added.

He further informed that to address the concerns of students and their parents, he has written a letter to K Sanjay Murthy, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, and demanded an impartial inquiry into this issue and sought Murthy's attention regarding the complaints and concerns on the conduct and result of NEET-UG 2024.

## { GREENPICE } UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF GROWING SHRUBS ALONG WITH TREES

Bharati Chaturvedi  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The long summer has turned to a season of deluge across many parts of India, from the Andamans to Maharashtra, Goa to Kerala. In a few weeks, it is highly likely that north and north west India will also enjoy the first showers of the monsoon. This means it's the season to plant once again. Enthusiasts will start looking to plant trees, seeking space, buying saplings and recruiting volunteers. This is good, but we also forget something important — shrubs.

Shrubs are like a step child in our botanical imagination. We are sentimental about trees, but shrubs, the creatures that have neither trunks nor glorious canopies nor a place in literature, are vital too.

They offer several insects and birds home, even nests for birds like Bulbuls. They trap pollution at the ground level, such as from cars, something trees are often too tall to do well. Another advantage of shrubs is they hold the soil instead of letting it fly, when they can act as a cluster. Trees, with canopies, can be limited there. And then they hold water, letting it slowly drip into the ground, so it can be easily absorbed.

This doesn't mean shrubs are better than trees. What it means is that we must plant trees and shrubs too. Create a rich forest, where shrubs and trees are able to host what people call weeds, plus grasses and creepers, so you build an ecology in this climate emergency. Gift yourself and the world an ecological niche that is richer than the sum of your trees.

(The writer is the founder and director of Chintan Environmental Research and Action Groups)

## SHRUBS OFFER SEVERAL INSECTS AND BIRDS HOME, EVEN NESTS FOR BIRDS LIKE BULBULS

## HT

### 24-yr-old UP cop run over with tractor by sand mafia: Police

**FARRUKHABAD:** A 24-year-old constable was run over with a tractor allegedly by the sand mafia in Nawabganj area, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place Saturday night when constable Rohit Kumar, a resident of Bijnor, went to Nagla Chandan on a tip-off about illegal sand mining with Sub Inspector Santosh Kumar and Constable Chaman. When they stopped the tractor-trolley, and other policemen began questioning the mafia, the driver hit Kumar with the tractor and injured him seriously, police said. Kumar was rushed to the Lohia hospital and was later taken to a private hospital. He died during treatment on Sunday.

### Three die after inhaling toxic gas while cleaning well

**AGARTALA:** Three people died in Tripura's Sepahijala district after they inhaled "poisonous gas" that emanated from a well while cleaning it, police said on Sunday. The incident took place on Neoramura J B School premises on Saturday morning, when villagers in Sonamura took a call to clean the well due to water scarcity in the area, they said. "At first, one labourer had gone down to clean the well, but when he did not respond, two others also went inside it. Later, they were found motionless in the well," SDO (Sonamura) Sashi Mohan Debbarma said.

A rescue team rushed to the spot and took the three labourers to hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival.

## { FROM ASSAM COAL MINE }

# Bodies of two labourers recovered after 14 days

Biswa Kalyan Purkayastha  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**SILCHAR:** After an arduous 14-day operation, bodies of two Meghalaya labourers, trapped in a coal mine in Assam's Tinsukia after a landslide, were recovered on Saturday, police said.

Four labourers, three from Meghalaya and one from Nepal, were trapped inside Tiktok colliery in Tinsukia's Patkai hills after a landslide on May 25. One of them who managed to escape informed the owner, following which District Commissioner of Tinsukia, Swapnaneel Paul launched a search operation with the help of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

The body of the Nepal resident, identified as Dawa Sherpa, was recovered after 10 days, officials of disaster management team said. The search operation continued and on Saturday, the bodies of the remaining two labourers were recovered. They have been identified as Phinellin Unbah and John Nongrum, both residents of Meghalaya's Ri Bhoi district.

According to police, the coal mines are illegal and several cases were lodged against the owners in the past. "Police are investigating the matter and several raids have been conducted in the recent past. Around one and half months back, police seized a large amount of cash from the house of an illegal miner," a police officer said.

**Hindustan Times**  
IF I GOT TO KNOW MY FEE IS AFFECTING A FILM, I TOOK A CUT-KARTIK AARYAN  
CHECK OUT TODAY'S EDITION

### भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमंडल, सहरसा

केबल ई-निविदा पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट एवं [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in) पर निविदा प्रक्रिया से संबंधित जानकारी सहायता कक्ष, प्रथम तल प्लॉट नं० -M/ 22 रोड नं०-25 Srikrishna Nagar, Box 06122523006 से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।

ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया से संबंधित जानकारी सहायता कक्ष, प्रथम तल प्लॉट नं० -M/ 22 रोड नं०-25 Srikrishna Nagar, Box 06122523006 से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।

कार्यालयक अभियंता  
भवन प्रमण्डल, सहरसा

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नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

### कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमंडल जमुई।

#### शुद्धि पत्र

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक 468 (अनु०) दिनांक 15.03.2024 द्वारा आमंत्रित ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या- 35/2023-24 जिसका PR No- 020118 (BCD) 2023-24 है, जो विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुआ है, जो पंचायत सरकार भवनों के निर्माण कार्य से संबंधित है को अपरिहार्य कारणवश निम्नवत् संशोधित किया जाता है।

क्र.सं.	विवरण	पूर्व में निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय	संशोधित तिथि एवं समय
3	परिमाण विपत्र डिजी (अनुमोदित) एवं निविदा प्रारंभ (अपलोड करने) की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक- 09.05.2024 से दिनांक- 06.06.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	दिनांक- 15.06.2024 से दिनांक- 08.07.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
4	निविदा (तकनीकी बीड) खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक- 07.06.2024 को 3:30 बजे अपराह्न तक।	दिनांक- 09.07.2024 को 3:30 बजे अपराह्न तक।
5	निविदा वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	तकनीकी बीड निष्पादन के पश्चात्	तकनीकी बीड निष्पादन के पश्चात्
6	प्रिबोर्ड मीटिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान	(i) दिनांक- 14.05.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न को अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल, मुंगेर का कार्यालय। (ii) दिनांक-20.05.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न को मुख्य अभियंता (दो), भवन निर्माण विभाग पटना का कार्यालय।	(i) दिनांक- 21.06.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न को अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल, मुंगेर का कार्यालय। (ii) दिनांक-26.06.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न को मुख्य अभियंता (दो), भवन निर्माण विभाग पटना का कार्यालय।

2. शेष सभी नियम एवं शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। निविदा को इस तद तक संशोधित समाज जाय।  
नोट- अधिक जानकारी के लिए [state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) देखें।

कार्यपालक अभियंता  
भवन प्रमण्डल, जमुई

PR. No.001223 (BCD) 2024-25

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

### PRESS NOTICE

#### OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, TECHNICAL CELL EPC MISSION, NIYOJAN VIBHAG, LUCKNOW

([technicalcell@epcmision@gmail.com](mailto:technicalcell@epcmision@gmail.com))

#### NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Tender No: 2188 /General/Technical Cell/2024 Dated: 07/06/2024

Chief Engineer, Technical Cell, EPC Mission, Niyojan Vibhag, Govt of UP, Lucknow on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites online RFP bids for Authority Engineer for Construction on Design, Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) basis for building works through e-tendering from eligible firms in two bid system for the following work. All tender documents to be available on web portal <https://www.eemdrup.nic.in> and <https://www.upggn.gov.in> as following timetable:

S. No.	Name & Description of work	Estimated cost of work (Without GST)	Estimated amount of fee (0.75% of Estimated cost of work) (Without GST)	Completion period of Work	Last date to fill/upload the bid (including e-tendering)	Cost of Bid Document	Bid/ Tender Fee	EMD/ Bid Security amount
1	Supervision by Authority Engineer for Construction on EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Design) mode of New District Jail (1026 capacity) at District Hattara, U.P.	Rs. 146.00 Crores	Rs. 109.50 Lacs	18 Months plus Defect Liability Period of three years including maintenance to make good all the defects	05.07.2024 Upto 12:30 PM	Rs. 5000 + GST	Rs. 300- GST	Rs. 1.10 Lacs
2	Supervision by Authority Engineer for Construction of Expansion Plan Phase-1 of Lady Loyal Women's Hospital Campus of SN Medical College, Agra at District Agra, U.P.	Rs. 353.00 Crores	Rs. 264.70 Lacs	24 Months plus Defect Liability Period of three years including maintenance to make good all the defects	05.07.2024 Upto 12:30 PM	Rs. 5000 + GST	Rs. 300- GST	Rs. 2.65 Lacs

♦ Period for downloading of RFP document from 12.06.2024 at 11:30 am to 04.07.2024 upto to 12:00 noon.  
♦ Pre bid conference to be held on date 19.06.2024 at 11:30 am in the office of Chief Engineer (Technical Cell), EPC Mission, Planning Department, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Lucknow. The queries can be sent to mail ID: [technicalcell@epcmision@gmail.com](mailto:technicalcell@epcmision@gmail.com).  
♦ Last date of submission of bid document 05.07.2024 upto 12:30 Noon (Online).  
♦ Submission of Technical bid in hard copy dated 05.07.2024 upto 05:00 pm in the Office of Chief Engineer, Technical Cell, EPC Mission, Planning Department, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Lucknow -226001  
♦ Opening of Technical Bid 05.07.2024 at 03:00 PM.  
♦ For other tender details, please refer NIT available on websites e-tender portal <https://www.eemdrup.nic.in>, Corrigendum/Amendments etc., if any will be notified on website only and separate advertisement will not be made for same.  
♦ The price quoted by the authority engineer firm shall excluding GST.  
♦ For submission & other tender details, please refer detailed NIT available on website e-tender portal <https://www.ctenderup.nic.in>, under Tender by Organization in Planning Department, U.P. Other details are available on e-tender portal <https://www.eemdrup.nic.in> and Corrigendum/amendments etc., if any, will be notified on this e-tender portal only and separate advertisement will not be made for the same.  
♦ As per G.O. no. 350/23-2021/अग्र/2020/वि/सं/प्रि/अग्र-4 dated 10.06.2021 "For the work for which a consultant has worked as a DPR, Consultant, it will not be permissible for the Consultant to participate in the RFP as an Authority Engineer for the same work."

Executive Engineer,  
Technical Cell, EPC Mission,  
Planning Department, Lucknow

उपरोक्त सूचना दिनांक: 08.06.2024  
वेबसाइट: [www.upggn.nic.in](http://www.upggn.nic.in)

# Delving into the nitty-gritty of the LS elections' verdict

HT Correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Now that India's massive general elections have come to an end, experts are vigorously debating the factors that contributed to the surprise outcome. Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have returned to power, their failure to secure a single party majority in the Lok Sabha has been widely interpreted as a significant setback.

On last week's episode of Grand Tamasha, a weekly podcast on Indian politics and policy co-produced by HT and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, HT's political editor Sunetra Choudhury and political scientist Rahul Verma of the Centre for Policy Research dug into the nitty-gritty of the election results with host Milan Vaishnav. The three of them discussed the BJP's stumbles, the INDIA bloc's keys to success, and what the election tells us about national issues like the economy and Hindu nationalism.

According to Verma, "what these results tell [us] is that any kind of mobilisational strategy has its limit — not just ideological appeal or Hindutva, but even the over-dependence or over-reliance on Prime Minister Modi's appeal or relying too much on the fact that [the BJP] has a famed organisational machine of panna pramukhs on the ground." To illustrate this point, Verma referenced news dispatches trickling in dur-

## THE LATEST EPISODE DISCUSSES BJP'S STUMBLES AND THE INDIA BLOC'S KEYS TO SUCCESS

ing the campaign from places like eastern Uttar Pradesh, warning of trouble for the ruling party. "So, while all of this combined has worked for the BJP in the past, any kind of mobilisation strategy also has to square off with other kinds of challenges that will come in when you are in power," Verma noted. "When you are in power, there are going to be expectations of performance" as well as an obligation to uphold people's rights and freedoms. "I think inflammatory speeches might have also led to counter-polarisation," he cautioned.

On the INDIA bloc side, Choudhury credited the unanticipated backroom work of Rahul Gandhi. While Sonia Gandhi, the UPA chairperson, has been the key Congress official managing relations with allies, "in this particular [race], we know that even in taking internal decisions, Rahul Gandhi consulted with the allies as to whether to fight in Amethi or not, whether to fight in Rae Bareilly," explained Choudhury. "He picked up the phone and spoke to [Samajwadi Party chief] Akhilesh Yadav several

times. And Akhilesh, in fact, encouraged him even to come back to Amethi."

On its own, Gandhi consulting with Yadav would not be news, Choudhury explained, since the two have been alliance partners before. "What I found really surprising was the equation between Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi chief minister and leader of the Aam Aadmi Party, which was born out of a visceral hatred for the Congress Party," she said. "And yet they successfully established a relationship so much so that I think one of the quotable quotes that came out of this election season was Rahul Gandhi saying, 'I'm going to vote for Arvind Kejriwal and Kejriwal is going to vote for the Congress Party.'"

Choudhury acknowledged that this bonhomie did not really translate in Delhi. But in Punjab, her sources told her that even though the two parties did not have a formal alliance, "in at least two of the state's 13 seats, the Congress and the AAP had an understanding. So even though it came a little late in the day, this alliance did come together and it managed to make a dent in the BJP's overall tally."



## GRAND TAMASHA



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#### REQUEST TO THE SHAREHOLDERS FOR REGISTRATION/ UPDATION OF EMAIL ADDRESSES

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 110 and other applicable provisions, if any, of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rules made thereunder and Regulation 44 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is conducting a Postal Ballot for obtaining the approval of the shareholders for appointment of Directors, disclosure of which has been made to the Stock Exchanges.

Further, pursuant to Regulation 17(1C) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, approval of Shareholders for appointment or re-appointment of a Director on the Board or as a manager is required to be obtained either at the next General Meeting or within a time period of three months from the date of appointment, whichever is earlier, therefore, the approval of shareholders shall be obtained through the said Postal Ballot within statutory time limit.

In view of the above and pursuant to General Circular nos. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021, 20/2021 dated December 8, 2021, 3/2022 dated May 5, 2022, 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022 and 09/2023 dated September 25, 2023, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars"), (including any statutory amendment(s), modification(s) or re-enactment(s) thereof for the time being in force, and as amended from time to time), the company is bound to provide a process of registration of e-mail addresses of members and state so in its public notice.

Accordingly, the Company has provided the facility to its Members for registration/ updation of their email addresses and urge them to register/ update their email addresses in the following manner, so as to timely receive the Notice of Postal Ballot/ Shareholders' Meeting and other related communications:

(a) Members holding shares in dematerialised mode, who have not registered/ updated their email addresses with their Depository Participants, are requested to register/ update their email addresses with the Depository Participants with whom they maintain their demat account. Further, the Company has provided the said facility to the shareholders through the depositories i.e. National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) under which respective depositories shall be sending SMS with a link to the shareholders whose emails are not registered. The link shall ask shareholders to update their email address upon verification of OTP.

(b) Members holding shares in physical mode, who have not registered/ updated their email addresses are requested through this advertisement to register/ update the same by writing to the (i.e. Bigshare Services Private Limited) or the Company with details of folio number, name and attaching a self-attested copy of PAN card at [investor@bigshareonline.com](mailto:investor@bigshareonline.com) or at [investors@petronetng.in](mailto:investors@petronetng.in).

For Petronet LNG Limited  
Sd/-  
Rajan Kapur  
Company Secretary

Place : New Delhi  
Date : 09.06.2024

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Registrar, DSEU



# Delhi drains survey still on, transfer to I&FC post monsoon

**Snehil Sinha**  
snehil.sinha@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A survey of 22 major drains in Delhi that have an outfall in the Yamuna has missed its deadline and is still ongoing, officials aware of the matter said on Sunday. They said that the survey is part of a move to hand over all 22 drains to the irrigation and flood control (I&FC) department to improve their maintenance and solve issues arising from a multiplicity of agencies overseeing them — a process that was set to be completed by May 31.

The transfer is now likely to take place after the monsoons, the officials said. "As of now, all drains are being cleaned and desilted by the respective departments, and we are conducting joint surveys for mapping the dimensions and flow, demarcating boundaries, and checking the gradient and width," said a senior I&FC official.

"After the transfer, the drains will be desilted and maintained by the concerned departments for a year and will be completely taken over by the irrigation department for maintenance from next year," the official added.

A second official said that the entire process may take a couple of months more. "There are legacy issues for which we are conducting the surveys. Once the

survey is done, there will be more clarity regarding the flow of these drains, which will also facilitate future upkeep and maintenance," said the second official.

Delhi suffers from a multiplicity of agencies looking after its drains, with around 10 bodies responsible for 3740.31km of stormwater drains. In some cases, multiple agencies are involved in the maintenance and operations of a single drain.

For example, the management of water regulators to stop backflow in case of a rise in the water level in the Yamuna is managed by the I&FC department, but the pumping of sewage at such times is managed by MCD.

The move to transfer all 22 drains to the I&FC department comes in wake of a Delhi high court order dated April 9 to remove the multiplicity of agencies in handling these drains, with the court calling for a unified management of drains, and the removal of encroachments on the Yamuna floodplains to tackle waterlogging and aid river rejuvenation.

Officials said that the handover of all drains to a single agency will help prevent a blame game between various bodies — a regular phenomenon. "It will also help in better planning to take measures to reduce pollution in the river," the first official quoted above said.

# Man held with red sandalwood at IGI

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Sunday said it nabbed a foreign national at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in Delhi for trying to smuggle red sandalwood out of the country. Two red sandalwood logs weighing 12kg worth ₹25 lakh were found in the man's luggage, who was set to board VietJet Flight VJ972 to Hanoi, Vietnam at 12.05am on Sunday, officials said.

The export of red sandalwood is restricted, and people exporting the sandalwood need to declare the same with appropriate documentation while exiting the country. CISF said the man did not possess any documents. Officers discovered the crime at 9pm on Saturday when its surveillance team spotted a Vietnamese national, identified as Nguyen Thanh Tung, behaving suspiciously, officials said.

"On suspicion, he was diverted to a checking point so his luggage could be checked thoroughly through an X-BIS machine. The machine showed what appeared to be two logs inside his luggage," said a CISF official.

The suspect was allowed to complete check-in formalities but was closely monitored



The logs were worth ₹25 lakh.

through physical and electronic measures, the official said.

"After clearing the check-in process and immigration formalities, the passenger was intercepted by CISF surveillance and intelligence staff and was brought to the departure customs office. The baggage was opened in the presence of customs officials and two logs were found inside. Upon checking with forest department officials, the logs were confirmed to be of red sandalwood," said the CISF official.

"The logs were between 15 and 17 inches wide and each weighed more than 5kg. The suspect and his baggage have been handed over to the forest department for further action," the official added.

Red Sandalwood is valued highly in the international market owing to its medicinal properties. The wood and its oil are used to make skincare products.

# 2 groups clash at Noida mall after argument on politics

**Arun Singh**  
arun.singh@hindustantimes.com

**NOIDA:** An argument between two groups over the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections turned violent after both sides allegedly assaulted each other at a pub at Gardens Galleria mall in

Noida on Friday night, police said on Sunday.

A case was registered against unidentified suspects at Sector 39 police station.

A 50-second video of the incident went viral on social media on Sunday. It purportedly shows seven to eight people assaulting

each other while the security guards try to deter them.

HT, however, could not independently verify the authenticity of the video clip.

"While drinking, the two groups had a debate and a fight broke out between them," said an officer requesting anonymity.

Jitendra Kumar, station house officer, Sector 39, said, "The suspects are yet to be identified."

Syed Shamim Anwar, associate director (marketing) of Entertainment City, which runs the Gardens Galleria mall, did not respond to HT's calls and messages for comment.

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The Tenders shall be submitted in two parts i.e. (i) Technical Part and (ii) Financial Part. Scope of Work and Terms & Conditions can be downloaded from the Council's website - [www.epch.in/alliedagencies2024](http://www.epch.in/alliedagencies2024)

**Important Dates:**

Publish date on website	10-06-2024
Document download start date	10-06-2024 (5.00 pm onwards)
Tender submission end date	24-06-2024 (upto 4.00 pm)

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL FOR HANDICRAFTS**  
"EPCH House", Pocket 6 & 7, Sector - C, L.S.C., Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110 070.  
Tel: 26135256 (Ext. 110) / ihgf@epch.com

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Shami Kumar Thakur, S/o: Kedarnath Thakur, R/o: O-51, Prem Nagar-II Raj Park Delhi**, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 153/20, U/s 188 IPC, P.S.: Raj Park, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Shoni Kumar Thakur** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Shoni Kumar Thakur** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Shoni Kumar Thakur of FIR No. 153/20, U/s 188 IPC, P.S.: Raj Park, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **18.07.2024**.

By Order  
**Ebbani Aggarwal**  
Metropolitan Magistrate,  
(North West) Room No. 107,  
1st Floor, Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/6910/OD/2024  
(Court Matter)

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**CHANGE OF NAME**

**I, ANKIT Gupta R/o 1/16, Gali No. 5, Vishwas Nagar, Kirti Marg, Shahdara delhi-110032** have changed my minor daughter's name from Jiyanshi to Jiyanshi Gupta for all purposes

**I, KUSUM Lata W/o Service No. JC296399 Rank Subedar Late Arun Kumar Sharma, R/o Gali No. 08, Shyam Singh Vihar, Santpura, Modinagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.,** have declare that in my Late husband's service record, my son's name is wrongly mentioned as Sheshank Sharma. But my son's actual & correct name is Shashank Sharma as per his all documents.

**I, BRAHMEET S/o, Mahender Singh R/o. F-582 Lado Sarai, New Delhi-110030** have changed my name to Brahmjeet Sejwal for all future purposes.

**I, SAKSHI Chandra D/o Sh. Shivani Chandra R/o House No. E2/13, Behind Shopping Mall DLF City Phase-1, Gurugram, Haryana-122002** have change my name to Saakshi Chandra for all legal & future purposes.

**IT IS** for general information that I Meenakshi Kohli, W/o Mr. Parminder Singh, R/o E-81, Chanakya Place Part-1, New Delhi-59, declare that I have changed my surname after marriage from Meenakshi Shiva to Meenakshi Kohli. Now my name Meenakshi Kohli may be amended accordingly.

**I, VIKAS Wadhwa S/o Kewal Krishan, R/o 2nd Floor, Plot no. 9-10, Gali no. 11, Om Vihar Phase I/A, Uttam Nagar New Delhi,** hereby declare that I have changed my name from Vikas to Vikas Wadhwa for all future purposes.

**I, HITHERTO** known as Sangeeta Goel, daughter of Lt. Sh. Uma Kant Goel and wife of Sh. Adesh Jain and R/o House No. 61, Vaisali, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sangeeta Jain for all future purposes

**LOST & FOUND**

**I, SHAKTEE Singh R/O H.No. EWS-57, Barra-3, Kanpur, 208027** have lost my Original Builder Buyer Agreement and allotment letter of H.No TI-605, Global Heights, Sector 33, Sohna, Gurugram, Haryana-122003. Finder may contact : 7541812545

**LOST & FOUND**

**I RAVI Sharma, S/O. Mr. Tribhuvan Shankar Sharma R/O, A-100 1st Floor, Nagal Devat, Vasant Kunj, South West Delhi-110070** have lost my original Property Papers including provisional allotment Letter issued by Jaypee Infratech Limited in respect of Unit bearing No. KBH0040003 (Krescent Homes Tower-04, Ground Floor, 03rd Unit), situated at Jaypee Krescent Homes Wishtown Sector -129 Noida, UP. Founders may contact at A-100 1st Floor, Nagal Devat, Vasant Kunj, South West Delhi-110070.

**I, MANAK Chand Tyagi,** have lost the original sale deed document of my property at Khata no. 137, 109, Gauri no. 175, Gauri Ram Butthi Nagar, Faisal Dabri, Bhangel Begampur, Funder please contact: 9968922299

**TENDER NOTICE**

**Bank of Baroda, Gurgaon Regional Office**  
1st Floor, Tower-1, Plot No.-16, IRCON International Tower, Sector-32, Gurgaon-122001  
Phone Number:- 0124-4096707,  
Email: pe.gurgaon@bankofbaroda.com

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## OPINION

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OUR TAKE

## Compulsions of a coalition council

The BJP will have to be more accommodative towards allies to ensure smooth governance

After a decade of dominance in Parliament and government, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi starts his third consecutive term in office as the head of a coalition government. On late Sunday evening, 72 ministers (including the PM) were sworn in, with most of the heavyweights from the previous government and representatives of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) — barring the NCP (Ajit Pawar) — finding a place in the Modi 3.0 government. The ministry could be expanded later if the PM wishes to address any possible regional or social underrepresentation as well as shortage of expertise. In his second term, PM Modi had inducted specialists — S Jaishankar, for instance — to improve governance. That all of them find space in his third government, and the allies have been given only 11 seats in the council of ministers perhaps suggests that the BJP has had its way; 39 of the council have been Union ministers before; and 43 have served at least three terms in Parliament.

That said, it is important to recognise that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) with 16 MPs and the JD(U) with 12 MPs will be the twin pillars on which the third NDA government will rest. This arrangement, where the BJP with 240 seats is dependent on at least 15 allies to stay in office, may force the party to recalibrate its priorities. The BJP will have to acknowledge that it is an NDA government and recognise that governance needs to be a wider consultative process which may call for both negotiation and accommodation. This could cut both ways — the compulsions of coalition politics can work as a mechanism for checks and balances in government, but it could also skew policies. It is a given that some of the BJP's more contentious agenda will have to wait — the TDP has already expressed its reservations about repealing the Muslim quota in some states, promised by the BJP during the poll campaign, and the Uniform Civil Code — just as some existing policies may now need to be tweaked. The JD(U), for instance, has already expressed concerns about the Agnipath scheme.

The challenge for the PM is to separate genuine policy concerns from pressure tactics and play accordingly. Here, Modi could borrow from the playbook of Atal Bihari Vajpayee who managed the NDA with aplomb between 1999 and 2004. He did that by setting aside controversial agendas and crafting a governance agenda agreeable to allies. It will help if the NDA draws up a common minimum programme and appoints a convenor for floor management within the coalition to avoid friction among allies. Institutionalising the coalition management mechanism can help the government ride the growth momentum, and address crisis points such as unemployment and inflation, which influenced poll outcomes.

## Joy and sadness of being Sunil Chhetri

Last week, on June 6, the 39-year-old Sunil Chhetri played his last match for India. The football icon retired as India's highest goalscorer (94 goals), most capped player (151 caps). For a team that often struggles to score, he was an inspiration, a creator and a finisher, all rolled into one. When he stepped out to play for India one last time, there were tears in many an eye, for his kind of player doesn't come around easily — especially for India. And that, in essence, is why his exit rankles those who care about Indian football. A replacement, of better or even similar quality, is nowhere near ready. Few sportspersons retire at their peak, most are pushed by younger talents. But Chhetri played on because there was no one to push him.

Former India striker IM Vijayan was pushed by Bhairav Chhetri, Bhutia himself was pushed by Chhetri, but the India No 11 stood alone at the top right till the end despite making his debut for the country in 2005. For a while, it had looked like Jeje Lalpekhlua might be the man to take the baton from Chhetri. He scored 23 goals in 56 matches for the country, but his form fell away, and he retired in 2023 at the age of 32.

So, we are once again confronted with the same question: Who after Chhetri? The answer is not clear — and given that India is a country with strong footballing aspirations, this is a travesty. So, while we celebrate Chhetri we must ponder over why India doesn't have someone to step into his boots. It's a situation that does not reflect well on AIFF, and its president Kalyan Chaubey, a former footballer himself, must take steps to address the gap that Chhetri's retirement has exposed.

STRAIGHTFORWARD

Shashi Shekhar



## Balancing the needs of alliance and party

Prime Minister Modi will have to bank on his political experience as an organisation man to navigate the many complexities of running a coalition government with demanding allies

Narendra Modi has taken the oath of office as Prime Minister (PM) of India for the third time. He is only the second PM in the country's history, after Jawaharlal Nehru, to be chosen for a third term. However, unlike in his previous two terms, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) does not hold even a simple majority this time. He heads the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) only because the alliance has secured the most seats in the Lok Sabha. The pressing question now is whether this change will hinder his working style and future plans.

Before answering the question, consider this: While releasing the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) manifesto in Amaravati, the party's leader Chandrababu Naidu said:

"We will preserve the 4% reservations for Muslims and provide ₹5,000 in financial assistance every month for mosque maintenance in the state." Naidu has offered women in Andhra Pradesh a monthly allowance of ₹1,500, free bus travel, and ₹3,000 a month for the unemployed. The Andhra Pradesh government will need a large sum to implement these recommendations, which it cannot raise on its own.

According to the Reserve Bank of India, Andhra Pradesh is one of the most indebted states. Despite this, Naidu intends to radically transform the state's capital, Amaravati. It will require a separate investment of ₹3.5 trillion. During Modi's first term, Naidu had clashed with the Centre over such issues. Today, when the TDP is NDA's largest partner with 16 seats, we should remember that Naidu is renowned for his bargaining skills.

The NDA's second-largest partner is the Janata Dal (U). Nitish Kumar has defied the NDA twice over the last 10 years. In 2013, he openly opposed Modi's candidature for prime ministership. Like Naidu, he, too, seeks special status for his state.

Besides, his views on matters such as the Uniform Civil Code and

the Agniveer scheme diverge from the BJP's declared stand.

There is one other thing: Almost all the current allies of the BJP, including the TDP, were part of the United Progressive Alliance (now the INDIA bloc) one way or the other. Also, Kumar has been described as an ideal candidate for prime ministership from time to time by his party.

Is this a good or bad omen?

The Oppositions in states continue to remind these regional leaders of their pledges. In Bihar, in response to Nitish Kumar's decision to go with NDA, Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav said: "Chacha is in the role of kingmaker, so now he should get special status for the state and be able to get a caste census conducted across the country."

Be it Naidu or Nitish, Chirag Paswan or Ajit Pawar, Eknath Shinde or Jayant Chaudhary, everyone has regional demands. Modi cannot ignore these. Power in politics entails obligations. Every political leader must balance the interests of her/his constituents with the benefits of power. For this, all constituent parties will strive to secure the highest number of posts and key departments in the council of ministers.

## Adding arrows to new regime's policy quiver

With the electoral process now behind us, the focus has shifted to the government formation and markets are speculating on the possible policy directions of a coalition government after 10 years. To start with, the general domestic macro backdrop is quite favourable for the new government. FY24 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at above 8% is encouraging and the momentum seems to be continuing even in FY25. India is probably the only large country demonstrating above-average growth that is also accelerating further. Macro stability parameters of inflation, current account and fiscal deficit are within the broad comfort zone.

This probably suggests that there is no immediate need to change the overall policy thrust of the government which has been a two-pronged approach. One, emphasis on the supply side through infrastructure, manufacturing, digital, technology, etc, and two, focus on macro and financial stability to provide a long runway to growth.

Based on a closer scrutiny of the election results, the government will have to decide what needs to be added to the objective function. In particular, there could be two directions in which new ideas and policy actions might be spread. First, if voting data provides some support to the hypothesis that there is considerable distress among the rural/poor/youth, then the government might contemplate some demand boosting/redistribution strategies. Second, if there is an aspiration to push India's potential growth even higher, then further productivity-boosting reforms will have to be considered to attract capital along with better deployment of human resources through large-scale job creation.

Let us delve into the specific policies if these are the broad objectives that the government would want to push. On the supply side, the earlier government has already laid out a comprehensive plan with a combination of infra build-up to reduce logistics costs, trade policies to protect competitiveness and industrial and fiscal policies to enhance profitability. It will be important for the government to continue with these and hence not take the foot off the pedal on infra capex. Depending on the success of the PLI schemes, they can be extended to other sectors. Digital India is on auto pilot now and would not need much government handholding. It will be interesting to see how the new government ramps up the proposed R&D fund to usher in advanced technologies.

Over the last 10 years, the government has steadfastly improved the macro and financial stability parameters to shed the "Fragile Five" tag. Progress on this front has been quite remarkable, though in an uncertain global environment, there is no scope for compla-

IF THE ASSESSMENT IS THAT LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES WAS A DECIDING FACTOR IN THE POLLS, THEN EMPLOYMENT CREATION COULD MOVE UP ON THE AGENDA OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

ency. We would expect the upcoming budget to respect the 5.1% of GDP FY25 fiscal deficit target announced in the interim budget as a red line to keep the country on track with debt reduction. The rating agencies are warming up to the idea of considering an upgrade and foreign bond investors are increasing their allocation towards India on the back of index inclusion. Adhering to macro stability would be integral to progress on these fronts and the budget document needs to reconfirm the government's commitment to the fiscal glide path.

The new government will have to find a balance between the macro stability objective and the need for a demand nudge if a requirement of that is felt. We think that given the higher RBI dividend and lower fiscal deficit for FY24 (5.6% of GDP vs 5.8 earlier), there is ~0.4% of GDP additional fiscal space available to the government for FY25 even if it wants to meet the exact interim budget target of 5.1% of GDP. Targeting this additional expenditure would obviously involve not just economic but also political considerations. In this economic cycle, the demand side has been lagging the supply side in our view and hence, a calibrated demand nudge should not be immediately inflationary but one needs to be also mindful that the fiscal bonanza from the RBI dividend might not be available every year to run large populist schemes.

The contentious structural reforms (land, labour, legal, agriculture, privatisation) to improve productivity of businesses might have to wait for the coalition government to become more cohesive and credible. We do acknowledge that a lot of economic policy agenda can be pushed through executive action rather than requiring legislative approval and surely does not need any super majority in Parliament. It is important for the government to keep business optimism high to take advantage of the favourable tailwinds, like the drifting of global capital towards India. Also, we think that domestic private investment is already in a nascent recovery stage and would benefit from constructive support from government policies. Even if the structural macro reforms are delayed, there could be several micro-level reforms to unclog regulatory bottlenecks, provide predictability to the policy environment and improve the ease of doing business.

If the assessment is that lack of job opportunities was a deciding factor in the election, then employment creation could move up on the economic agenda of the new government. India's labour market is multi-layered, and the employment strategy would have to be more nuanced too. At one end of the spectrum, manufacturing and high-end services would fulfil the needs of the skilled workforce. However, at the other end, a renewed focus on skill development or channelling more credit to foster self-employment is essential for the 250 million people who have been brought out of poverty in the last 10 years.

An economy which is performing several steps ahead of its peers, does not need an overhauling of the policy framework. Judicious additions to the bouquet would prepare it for higher growth with better distribution.

Samiran Chakraborty is managing director and chief economist India, and Baqar Zaidi is economist, Citigroup. The views expressed are personal



People who understand politics know the basic distinction between government and organisation. Modi has juggled both really well ANI

How will Modi and his associates handle this?

The answer is not particularly difficult. Take a look at Modi's career. He rose to his current heights through hard work. Before he became chief minister (CM) of Gujarat in 2001, Modi had worked for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and then BJP in various capacities. He played a significant role in establishing the BJP in Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

People who understand politics know the basic distinction between government and organisation. When someone is in government, the baton of power is in their hands. In organisation, it is important to keep everyone united without the power of government. Modi has done both really well. This time, his party has clearly stumbled, but it would be premature to attribute this to the PM's personal failure.

Another attribute that distinguishes Modi from his predecessors is his extensive experience as CM. The BJP had stints in office and in the Opposition (at the Centre) when Modi was Gujarat CM. Regardless of the political landscape, Modi consistently delivered exceptional results for Gujarat. His ability to navigate these complexities demonstrates his adeptness at walking a tightrope in the political arena.

In keeping with the Indian tradition of wishing everyone good luck in their new endeavours, let us extend our congratulations to the entire cabinet of Modi's third government and believe they will meet the expectations of the voters. The NDA will, hopefully, work responsibly over the next five years. History is watching them.

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, Hindustan. The views expressed are personal

JOE BIDEN PRESIDENT OF THE US

Democracy is never guaranteed. Every generation must preserve it, defend it and fight for it.



## INDIA bloc needs to stay together, build on gains

Uttar Pradesh (UP) was pivotal in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s tally falling. Till recently, UP was "blessed" with a narrative of good governance backed by the so-called two-engine perception. The bulldozer and encounter politics, odious to some but applauded by others, never got traction as an election issue. The "five nyay, 25 guarantees" of the Congress manifesto was backed by the Pichde, Dalit, Alpsankhyak (backward classes, Dalits, and minorities), or PDA, the outreach of the Samajwadi Party (SP), carefully crafting a non-Yadav backward profile. The results have certainly come as a shot in the arm for the two major alliance partners, but require some analysis to uncover the truth under the surface.

The apparent outcome of the alliance does not reflect any real-time performance of the parties that have dominated UP politics. The SP had contested 63 seats while the Congress was given 17. The final tally was 38 and 7, respectively. The Congress had initiated negotiations with a wishlist of 24 (mostly the surviving winners of 2009), but the SP prematurely announced a list of candidates in constituencies on our wishlist. At that stage, we were not unduly confident, there were clear signals that Muslims had turned to us in large numbers, while, in the 2019 assembly polls, 99% had voted for the SP. In the worst-case scenario, they could desert the SP completely. But we were firm that the need of the hour called for an honest alliance. We made efforts to negotiate better allocation but finally settled for what we were offered, to quickly clinch the date for a road show in Agra. Many of our leaders thought we deserved 25 seats but a sacrifice had to be made to oust the BJP. At that stage, we had one seat in UP (Rae Bareilly) and the SP had five (in their alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party). Some people kept up the refrain of a tie-up with the BSP, but that was stillborn. There was no enthusiasm for the BSP among the SP negotiators although the SP's standing at the time was a contribution of their previous election tie-up with the BSP.

The feel of the election turned increasingly positive with each passing phase. It must be said that, with a few exceptions, the workers of our two parties coordinated honestly despite different political cultures. The result is there for all to see.

It is very early to look at the path ahead, given the INDIA bloc does not look like form-

ing a government in the near future. Working cohesively as the parliamentary Opposition can make a great difference, but will have to wait till the MPs settle down. Perhaps more important is the road ahead at the ground level in UP. We have often been at loggerheads in routine, daily politics, all of which was put on hold during the campaign. But we will have to learn to live together without obliterating our respective identities. Fortunately, we belong to the same side of the ideological divide in politics with minor differences in emphasis and, perhaps, style. It would be useful if we were quickly able to define our respective understanding of socialism and secularism. There may not be much difference beyond the words that are employed. But there may be some difficulty in matching our respective assessment of the voter segment that was drawn to us although there would have been aggregation amongst voters because of the alliance.

One nationwide indicator of this election is the mass movement of Muslims to the Congress with UP being an exemplar. We need to be clear that there are expectations that we must address if we want to revive a long-term relationship.

This is also true about Dalits and some segments of the general castes. This has a lot to do with self-generated hopes and expectations amongst minorities as indeed with our conscious endeavour to overcome their hesitations caused by history. Similarly, Dalits and OBCs have looked at the Congress as the outspoken saviour of the Constitution. Of course, Akhilesh Yadav has consolidated the Yadav vote that the BJP was constantly trying to wean away.

Sitting down to draw up lists for electoral contests is tough enough but sharing the ground after election results is far more difficult. It would not be fair to the INDIA partners if we restrict each other's freedom to grow and reward our committed supporters even as we share the advantages of having fought this historic election together. There will be elections again in the future and the lessons learnt in 2024 may well show us how to deal with the road ahead. Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, even UP, have shown that political dominance cannot be taken for granted.

Salman Khurshid is a Congress leader and former minister of external affairs. The views expressed are personal

# Millions vote as Europe seals its mandate

Polls opened in 20 EU countries early on Sunday for the June 6-9 elections for a new European Parliament

Associated Press  
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**MADRID:** Voters across the European Union went to the polls on the final day of voting for the European parliamentary elections to choose their representatives for the next five-year term.

Polls opened in 20 EU countries early on Sunday for the June 6-9 elections for a new European Parliament, the legislative branch of the 27-member bloc.

Millions of Europeans have been casting their ballots this week in one of the world's biggest democratic elections. Far-right parties are looking to gain more power amid a rise in the cost of living and farmers' discontent, while the wars in Gaza and Ukraine are also key topics weighing on the minds of voters.

The economy, jobs, poverty and social exclusion, public health, climate change and the future of Europe are also prominent issues.

First national estimates from five European Union countries provided by the European Parliament suggest mainstream and pro-European parties should retain their majority in next legislature despite gains by the far-right.

The estimates aggregated by the EU parliament were based on exit polls or other survey data. They came from Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands.

The Socialists, Liberals, Greens and Conservatives put on a strong showing even though they are expected to lose seats to far-right parties like those led by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands



(Left) Supporters of Peter Magyar, former government insider and leader of the Respect and Freedom (TISZA) Party take part in a rally ahead of the European Parliament elections, in Budapest, Hungary, on Saturday; (Right) A protester holds up a poster reading "Hate is not an opinion" as she takes part in a demonstration to defend democracy against the far-right on Saturday, in Berlin.



(Right) A protester holds up a poster reading "Hate is not an opinion" as she takes part in a demonstration to defend democracy against the far-right on Saturday, in Berlin.

and Marine Le Pen in France.

**Germany**  
European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen congratulated her German party, the Christian Democratic Union, on its result in the election after exit polls showed that it was the biggest vote-getter.

"You know that we in Europe still have to wait several hours, but what you have already set as a trend is all the better — strong force, stable, in difficult times and by a distance," she told supporters by video link from Brussels. "Now we have to replicate this in Europe, but I am confident that we will succeed this evening," she said.

Exit polls pointed to very weak results for Germany's governing parties and gains for the far-right Alternative for Germany in Sunday's vote for the

European Parliament, while the mainstream conservative opposition was set to remain the country's strongest political force in the legislature.

The polls for ARD and ZDF public television showed support for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's center-left Social Democrats at 14%, below the 15.8% they managed in 2019 and far below their showing in Germany's last national election in 2021.

**Belgium**  
Belgian voters were electing a new federal parliament but also regional parliaments and members of the European Parliament. Teenagers aged 16 and 17 were allowed to vote in the European elections, but Belgian citizens must be at least 18 to vote in the other elections.

Following reports in local media on Sunday that people

under 18 voted in all three elections, Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden told regional broadcaster VRT that "the errors appeared to have been limited" and that any complaints will be investigated. "For the time being I presume that the impact has been limited. We will continue with these elections," she said.

**Spain**  
Maria Del Mar Mira, a civil servant and historian in the central Letras neighbourhood of Madrid, expressed disappointment at not seeing the queues that normally form for national elections at her polling station in central Madrid. She believed voters don't understand the importance of decisions taken in the European Parliament.

"We should take this more seriously, because there are a lot of important things coming from

there and the truth is it that we are taking a direction that reminds me of past and undesirable times," Mira said.

**France**  
Migration has been one of the most important issues to French voters, and the party of far-right leader Marine Le Pen is hoping for a strong showing against the centrist party of President Emmanuel Macron.

Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé and the current president of the far-right National Rally, gave strong performances in debates ahead of this weekend's election, something that could help Le Pen as she is expected to run for the French presidency in 2027.

Bardella has fiercely opposed the EU Asylum and Migration Pact, a plan backed by Macron that seeks to harmonise the

management of irregular migrant arrivals among EU nations. French voters are also focused on the war in Ukraine and Gaza.

**Hungary**  
Many Hungarians view the election as a referendum on the popularity of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, whose illiberal policies and his support for Russia have pushed him to the margins of the European Union.

While Fidesz has dominated Hungarian politics since 2010, many Hungarians are deeply dissatisfied with the direction the country is going, and hope to deal a blow to Orbán by supporting one of the most formidable challengers he's ever faced.

**Poland**  
Poles voted at a time of great insecurity for the nation, which

is located along the eastern flank of both the European Union and NATO. The war just across the border in Ukraine has created fears that if Russia were to prevail, Poland and neighbouring nations that were once under Moscow's control could be targeted next.

A migration crisis is unfolding along the eastern border with Belarus.

Poland accuses Belarus and Russia of luring migrants to create instability.

The crisis has been deadly, with a migrant recently stabbing a Polish soldier and dozens of migrants dying in the swampy forest area since 2021.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk has stressed national security, promising to strengthen border controls as he seeks a good showing for his centrist, pro-EU party.

## EU LEADERS WHO VOTED ON SUNDAY



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen



Polish Prime Minister and leader of Civic Platform party Donald Tusk



Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen with his wife Doris Schmidauer



Italy's deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini casts his vote



## Body of missing Brit TV presenter Mosley found in Greece

**ATHENS:** The body of missing British TV presenter and author Dr. Michael Mosley was found on a Greek island on Sunday morning after a days-long search, his family said. Mosley, who went missing on the island of Symi on Wednesday afternoon, was spotted among rocks on a rugged stretch of coast by a party on a boat that included the local mayor and journalists. Mosley's wife said her husband took the wrong route on a hike and collapsed just short of reaching a marina in a place where his body couldn't easily be seen.

## Haiti PM hospitalised after asthma attack, stable now

**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** Haiti's new prime minister, Garry Conille, was rushed to hospital on Saturday following "a slight illness" but was in a stable condition, a government statement said. "His condition is currently stable," the statement by the prime minister's press office said. A government source told AFP the prime minister suffered an "asthma attack" and may be transported abroad for treatment. Conille, 58, was appointed to the premiership by Haiti's Presidential Transitional Council on May 29 and was sworn in on Monday.

## Seven Pakistan soldiers killed in bombing: Army

**ISLAMABAD:** Seven Pakistani soldiers were killed on Sunday when their vehicle was bombed in a northwest region bordering Afghanistan, according to the military. The six enlisted men and one officer were killed by an "improvised explosive device" in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said in a statement. A senior police officer stationed in Lakki Marwat told AFP that "the explosion completely destroyed the vehicle." "We have received information that the vehicle came under fire after the blast," he added.

## { PRESIDENTIAL POLLS }

# Iran okays six candidates but blocks Ahmadinejad

**Agencies**  
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**DUBAI:** Iran's Guardian Council on Sunday approved the country's hard-line parliament speaker and five others to run in the country's June 28 presidential election following a helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others.

The council again barred former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a firebrand populist known for the crackdown that followed his disputed 2009 re-election, from running.

The council's decision represents the starting gun for a short-lived, two-week campaign to replace Raisi, a hard-line protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei once floated as a possible successor for the 85-year-old cleric.

Among the others approved are the conservative speaker of parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and the ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, who is known for his inflexible negotiating stance.

Just one reformist candidate, Massoud Pezeshkian, who is a lawmaker representing Tabriz in Iran's parliament, has been approved.

The Guardian Council, overseen by Khamenei, aims to streamline candidate selection amid low turnout and tensions over Iran's nuclear programme and the Israel-Hamas conflict.

So far, none of them has offered any specifics, though all have promised a better economic situation for the country as it suffers from sanctions by the US and other Western nations over its nuclear programme, which now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Such matters of state remain the final decision of Khamenei, but presidents in the past have leaned either toward engagement or confrontation with the West over it.

The most prominent candidate remains Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, 62, a former Tehran mayor with close ties to the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

However, many remember that Qalibaf, as a former Guard general, was part of a violent crackdown on Iranian university students in 1999. He also reportedly ordered live gunfire to be used against students in 2003 while serving as the country's police chief.



Relatives and supporters of Israelis taken hostage by Palestinian militants in Gaza on October 7, protest calling for their release in the central city of Tel Aviv on Saturday.

# Outcry over attack in Gaza amid Israeli hostage rescue

**Agencies**  
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**TEL AVIV:** A wave of international outrage has surged following a deadly incident in Gaza, as Israeli forces conducted a rescue operation to free four hostages, resulting in significant civilian casualties.

On Saturday, Israeli military strikes pounded the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, claiming the lives of scores of Palestinians, many of whom were civilians, according to Gaza's health ministry.

The assault left at least 274 dead and 698 wounded, with the Israeli military citing heavy fire encountered during the special forces mission.

European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, condemned the event as a "massacre," echoing sentiments expressed by the UN's aid chief, Martin Griffiths, who vividly described scenes of carnage.

Griffiths called for an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages.

Reports from the ground painted a grim picture. Khalil Degran, a spokesperson for al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital, revealed that the bodies of 109 Palestinians, including 23 children and 11 women, were

brought to the facility. Additionally, over 100 wounded people were treated there, while another hospital, al-Awda, received more than 100 casualties.

Israeli military spokesperson R Adm Daniel Hagari confirmed the deaths of dozens of Palestinians, though precise figures on civilian casualties remained uncertain.

The rescue operation, Israel's largest of its kind during the ongoing conflict, successfully liberated four hostages: Noa Argamani, Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov, and Shlomi Ziv.

Amid celebrations in Israel over their return, Palestinian families in Gaza mourned the loss of their loved ones.

## Protests in Tel Aviv

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of demonstrators took their usual places outside the defence ministry in Tel Aviv on Saturday night, and while there have been competing messages at recent rallies — anti-government versus pro-hostage — this week's slogans converged around one theme: get a deal and bring them home.

"Victory will only be felt by the Israeli people when the remaining hostages are returned," said Avi Melamed, a

former Israeli intelligence officer. "It levies pressure on Israel's government to make a deal happen to bring those remaining captives home, the living to their families, and the deceased back to Israel for a proper burial."

Top US officials are due in the region this week to push both Israel and Hamas to agree to a deal. Backed by President Joe Biden, the three-phase agreement would start with a six-week pause in fighting along with exchanges of hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

Talks have been stymied by disagreement over whether that phase could occur while negotiations over a permanent ceasefire take place — Israel's desire — or, as Hamas wants, only if an end to the war is baked into the deal.

Although the rescue on Saturday reminded Israelis of a famous operation in Entebbe, Uganda, in 1976 to save a hijacked airliner in which Netanyahu's brother died, it's unlikely to change the hard calculus of the current war.

Israel's campaign to eliminate Hamas has killed more than 36,000 Palestinians, according to the group, which doesn't distinguish fighters from civilians.

# Kyiv says it hit Russia's top warplane

**Associated Press**  
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**KYIV:** Ukraine on Sunday said its forces hit an ultra-modern Russian warplane stationed on an air base nearly 600 kilometres from the front lines.

The strike came shortly after its Western allies allowed Kyiv to use their weapons for limited strikes inside Russia. But it wasn't immediately clear what

hit the airfield allegedly housing the twin-engine Su-57 stealth jet, lauded as Moscow's most advanced fighter plane.

Its distance from Ukraine suggests it was most likely hit by drones. If confirmed, it would mark Ukraine's first known successful strike on a Su-57.

According to the Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, the strike took place on Saturday at the

Akhtubinsk base in southern Russia, some 589 kilometres from the front line.

The Ukrainian agency said that the plane, which is capable of carrying stealth missiles across hundreds of kilometres, was among "a countable few" of its type in Moscow's arsenal.

Russian reports state Moscow's air force received over 10 new Su-57s last year and ordered 76 to be delivered by 2028.

## { AFTER TRASH BALLOONS } THE MOVE IS CERTAIN TO ANGER PYONGYANG AND COULD TRIGGER RETALIATORY MILITARY STEPS

# South Korea resumes anti-North Korea loudspeaker broadcasts

**Reuters**  
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**SEOUL:** South Korea resumed loudspeaker broadcasts directed at North Korea on Sunday, its military said, following through on a warning demanding Pyongyang stop sending balloons carrying trash into the South.

The decision to resume the broadcasts, as a form of psychological warfare, was made after North Korea began launching on Saturday about 330 balloons with trash attached, with about 80 of them dropping over the border, South Korea's military said.

The loudspeaker broadcasts, a tactic which dates back to the 1950-1953 Korean War, infuriate Pyongyang, which previously threatened artillery strikes against the loudspeaker units unless they were switched off.

South Korea had warned the North it would take retaliatory measures which could include propaganda broadcasts from huge loudspeakers set up at the border.

The broadcasts were made on Sunday afternoon and whether more will follow depends on how North Korea responds, South Korea's military said.

The South Korean military said later on Sunday that more balloons had been launched by the North and could fly into the South, warning residents to not touch any objects they find attached to balloons. It gave no other details.

Pyongyang started sending balloons carrying trash and manure across the border in May and has said the move was in retaliation for anti-North leaflets flown by South Korea activists as part of a propaganda cam-

paign. On June 2, it said it would temporarily halt sending the balloons because 15 tons of trash it sent was probably enough to get the message across. However, it vowed to resume if leaflets are again flown from the South by sending a hundred times the amount.

A group of South Korean activists defied the warning and have since flown more balloons to the North with leaflets criticising its leader Kim Jong Un together with USB sticks containing K-pop videos and dramas, and US dollar notes.

South Korea halted broadcasts per a 2018 agreement with North Korea's leaders, but tensions rose as Pyongyang continued weapons development.

South Korea broadcasts global news, democratic ideals, and K-pop music, reaching over 20 kilometres into North Korea.



South Korean soldiers set up a propaganda loudspeaker during a military drill, in Paju, South Korea, on Sunday.

# NTPC looks beyond power in capex play over 10 years

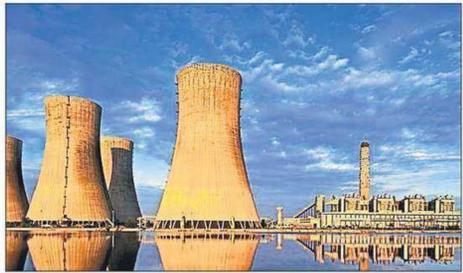
The firm plans to foray into production of various clean fuels, increasing its power generation capacity

**Rituraj Baruah**  
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**NEW DELHI:** State-run NTPC Ltd is planning capital expenditure of \$50 billion (₹4.17 trillion) over the next 10 years to become a true energy company from just a generator of power, according to two people aware of the company's plans.

The people said that India's biggest power generation company will spend \$5 billion each year over 10 years to foray into production of various clean fuels and also towards increasing its power generation capacity.

"The company is looking at a diversified role where NTPC may (metaphorically) stand for 'national transport, power and chemicals,'" the first person



NTPC will undertake the diversification activities itself with no plans for a subsidiary currently.

cited above said on condition of anonymity. "There are major plans for methanol, ethanol, green hydrogen for transportation and also sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), for which it is already in talks with some airlines."

NTPC will undertake these activities itself with no plans for a subsidiary currently, although green hydrogen would be produced through its existing subsidiary NTPC Green Energy Ltd. Queries sent to NTPC

remained unanswered till press time.

Sustainable aviation fuel has been a focus area for energy companies with the government announcing an indicative target of 1% SAF blending in jet fuel by 2027, which may gradually be increased to 2% by 2028 for international flights.

Already, oil refining and marketing companies such as Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) have

forayed into the space with research underway for various modes of SAF production.

For the production and adoption of methanol as a clean fuel, NTPC is in talks with several shipping lines, the people cited above said.

Its first methanol plant is being constructed at the Vinhyachal Thermal Power Plant in Madhya Pradesh, by Jaskon Green, which deals in engineering, procurement and construction (EPC), and operations and management of new energy assets including solar, utility-scale, energy projects, among other green energy projects.

The plant, with a capacity of 100 tonnes per day, is likely to be completed by July, according to the second person cited above.

Thereafter, NTPC plans to set up another methanol plant with a capacity of 100,000 tonnes per year or nearly 274 tonnes per day. "NTPC is planning to set up another methanol plant with a capex of about ₹5,000-6,000 crore. The capacity will be 1 lakh tonnes per year," the second person said.

# Leela eyes \$2.5 bn value in bankruptcy rebound

**Anirudh Laskar, Dipti Sharma & Ranjani Raghavan**  
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**MUMBAI:** The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts will seek a valuation of at least \$2.5 billion (approximately ₹21,000 crore) in a public listing likely in nine months, two people familiar with its plans said, in a remarkable turnaround for the luxury chain that changed hands under crushing debt and defaults five years ago.

Promoter Brookfield has tapped JM Financial and Bank of America to be investment bankers, the people said on condition of anonymity, adding the Canadian investor plans to sell 15% to the public initially, and another 10% over the next three years. The IPO may be worth around ₹3,150 crore, making it the biggest in India's hospitality space.

"The Leela has not only emerged stronger than ever from its old worrisome debt issues but is also seeing a steady year-on-year rise in valuations on the back of higher margins. From a bankruptcy situation a few years ago, today, The Leela is commanding a \$2.5-billion valuation," said the first person, adding the IPO is planned within



Brookfield had acquired four assets of The Leela from JM ARC for ₹3,950 crore in 2019.

nine months. While listed rivals Indian Hotels Co. Ltd and East India Hotels Ltd are worth ₹83,228 crore and ₹27,384 crore, respectively, ITC Hotels has been estimated at ₹10,000 crore. IHCL and EIH operate the Taj and Oberoi brands, respectively.

A Bank of America spokesperson declined to comment, while emails sent to JM Financial, The Leela and Brookfield Asset management remained unanswered. "While the hospitality business is generally buoyant currently, international demand for

the Leela Palaces in India is particularly doing better than others. Occupancy rates and tariffs are both increasing for India's hotels and hospitality services, especially in those properties which offer appropriate wellness services. And The Leela Palaces particularly has an edge over others in that space," the person cited above said.

Brookfield had acquired four assets of The Leela from JM Financial Asset Reconstruction Co. (JM ARC) for ₹3,950 crore in 2019. To be sure, the IPO excludes The Leela Mumbai, the first Leela founded by Capt. C.P. Krishnan Nair, which is promoted by HLV Ltd and is already listed.

"It will be the largest issue in the hotel space," said the second person. "It is in the discussion stage. They might have to restructure some holdings and all those things before the IPO."

The founder transferred the erstwhile Hotel Leela ventures Ltd to his sons Vivek Nair and Dinesh Nair in 2013, and passed away soon after. Unlike rivals Marriott, Intercontinental and Hyatt, The Leela had raised debt to build new properties rather than running hotels through management contracts.

# SAVVY SMALL INVESTORS SCORE QUIET ELECTION WIN

**Ram Sahgal**  
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**MUMBAI:** Retail investors, who buy and sell shares directly, are getting smarter. In a rare instance, they outsmarted domestic and foreign investors in trading strategy in the run-up to and on election results day on 4 June. Retail investors include individuals, Hindu undivided family, NRIs, proprietorship and partnership firms, and limited liability partnership firms.

When the exit polls on Saturday, 1 June predicted a landslide victory for the BJP-led NDA, the markets closed higher by 3.25% on Monday 3 June, fuelled by foreign portfolio investor or FPI inflows of ₹6,617.32 crore and mutual fund purchases of ₹3,072.85 crore, NSE data reveals. However, retail investors net sold shares worth ₹8,587.5 crore on 3 June instead of their usual practice of buying on the rise. The next day, when the actual counting showed the BJP unable to secure a simple majority, the market tanked almost 6% to 21,884.50, and FPIs and MFs net sold shares worth a combined ₹18,760 crore.

Again, retail net purchased shares worth ₹21,178.94 crore, the data shows, staying true to the adage of buying on a low.

"Direct retail tends to enter last and exit first, so this is a sea change to see them execute a smart strategy, outplaying MFs and FPIs," said S.K. Joshi, executive director of Khambatta Securities. Agreed Alok Churiwala, managing director, Churiwala Securities, who said that retail investors now included "a smarter and younger lot who are more adept at investing than the typical retail investor of the previous decade and earlier".

On smaller rival BSE, too, direct retail purchased a net ₹1,656.53 crore on Tuesday and sold ₹2,245 crore over the next three days. It is well known that markets recovered from Wednesday as it became clear that Narendra Modi would lead the national democratic alliance (NDA), which had won 290 seats, to form the new coalition government at the centre.

# Share sale by large investors in three companies before RBI rap

**Varun Sood**  
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**BENGALURU:** Three large investors sold big chunks of Edelweiss Financial Services Ltd, IIFL Finance Ltd and Paytm weeks before regulatory action slammed their stocks, exchange data showed.

Between January and May, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) slapped business curbs on the three financial companies after spotting various malpractices, including evergreening of loans, inadequate KYC checks and governance issues. Ahead of the regulatory action, Mohish Pabrai, Prem Watsa and Softbank sold a significant percentage of shares

in Edelweiss, IIFL and Paytm respectively.

While there is no clear link between the regulatory action and the share sales, one proxy advisor termed it as "odd", and another said the market regulator should find out why they sold their shares.

Pabrai, a seasoned India-born American investor, owned 7.08% stake in Edelweiss at the end of December 2023. Between 8 February and 3 April, he sold 3.83% at an average price of ₹72.03 a share for ₹261 crore, according to a Mint analysis.

Less than seven weeks after Pabrai cut his Edelweiss holding by half, RBI on 29 May restricted businesses of its lending and

asset reconstruction arms, citing concerns about its lending and accounting practices.

Edelweiss shares plunged 11.8% to close at ₹68.35 on 30 May, a day after the regulatory action. The shares are down 10.34% as of 7 June.

Pabrai, who now owns 3.24% of Edelweiss, said he was unaware of any regulatory action before undertaking the transaction. "We were not aware of the RBI action until we read it in the media, and we have no further comment," said a spokesperson for Pabrai, when asked if he anticipated any regulatory challenges. The sale of IIFL shares by Prem Watsa, founder of Fairfax Financial Holdings, the Toronto-



RBI had slapped business curbs on three financial companies after spotting various malpractices.

based financial services firm, and whose net worth is pegged at \$1.9 billion by Forbes, also coincided with the regulatory action.

Fairfax India Holding's wholly

owned subsidiary FIH Mauritius Investment owned 20.18% of IIFL Finance until 21 December 2023.

On 22 December, FIH Mauritius sold 5.66% shares at an average price of ₹54.6 a share, translating to about ₹1,200 crore, according to an analysis by Mint. On 4 March, RBI barred IIFL Finance from sanctioning and disbursing gold loans, after its audit found material concerns in the non-banking finance firm's gold lending business. The next day, shares of IIFL Finance tumbled 20%. From the end of trading on 4 March and 7 June, IIFL shares are down 18.5%.

An email sent to Watsa, who owns 15.12% in IIFL Finance, went unanswered.

To be sure, immediately after the RBI action, Watsa had announced that he would invest up to \$200 million in the company, as the largest investor tried to assuage investor concerns on

liquidity concerns.

In addition to IIFL and Edelweiss, One97 Communications Ltd, which runs Paytm, and JM Financial Ltd have faced RBI's ire in 2024.

On 31 January, RBI directed Paytm Payments Bank, the wholly-owned subsidiary of One97 Communications, to stop all forms of banking services within a month.

Between 19 December and 20 January, Softbank, the third-largest investor in One97, sold 2% of its holding, at an average price of ₹680.38, with the Japanese tech investor earning ₹865 crore. Softbank sold another 2.17% worth ₹1085 crore between 23 January and 26 February.

## The right way to value furniture and fixtures

In a property sale, household items that qualify as 'personal effects', like furniture, electrical appliances, etc., can be classified separately as furniture and fixtures on which capital gains tax and stamp duty are not charged

Compiled by Shipra Singh  
sashindnj@livemint.com

Indexed purchase cost of property  
**₹80 lakh**  
Current value  
**₹1.05 crore**  
Assuming 5% stamp duty

**Scenario 1**  
Entire value declared as sale amount

Sale amount  
**₹1.05 crore**  
Capital gains  
**₹25 lakh**  
Tax (@20%)  
**₹5 lakh**

**Scenario 2**  
₹5 lakh classified as furniture and fixtures

Sale amount  
**₹1.05 crore**  
Furniture and fixtures  
**₹5 lakh**  
Capital gains  
**₹20 lakh**  
Tax (@20%)  
**₹4 lakh**  
Buyer pays  
**₹5.25 lakh** stamp duty

**Consequences**  
Inflating value of furniture and fixtures without supporting documents can land the seller in trouble with the tax department.



**Documents needed**

- ▶ Separate agreement for furniture and fixtures
- ▶ Invoices of original purchase by property seller
- ▶ If invoices are missing, bank transfer proof
- ▶ Invoices of sale to new buyer

Preserving these documents is a must for the seller.

Buyer pays ₹5.25 lakh stamp duty

**Seller has to pay...**

CAPITAL gains tax on the remaining amount

1% monthly interest on due tax

**PENALTY** of either  
▶ 200% of due tax for misreporting or  
▶ 50% of due tax for underreporting

Graphic: Pranay Bhardwaj/Mint

## COMMERCE MINISTRY MAY SEEK MORE FUNDS FOR STARTUPS

**Press Trust of India**  
feedback@livemint.com

**NEW DELHI:** The commerce and industry ministry may seek more funds for startups in the forthcoming Budget, to be announced by the new government, to promote innovation in the country, an official has said.

The new government may announce the Budget for 2024-25 in July. The seed fund scheme, announced in April 2021 with a corpus of ₹945 crore, will end in 2025, and the ministry may consider proposing a new scheme on similar lines.

The seed fund scheme was aimed at providing financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market-entry, and commercialisation. The fund was divided into four years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through incubators across India.

Easy availability of capital is essential for entrepreneurs at the early stages of growth of an enterprise, and the capital required at this stage often presents a make-or-break situation for startups with good business ideas, another official said.

## { THE CROSSWORDS }

### CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- 1 Is one thrown in unsettled car dispute? (7,3)
  - 8 We hear expressions of disapproval for alcohol (5)
  - 9 Outspoken article written by G B Shaw (7)
  - 10 Be prominent in crime? (5,2)
  - 11 Take only what is right? (5)
  - 12 Pass over a region in chaos (6)
  - 14 Main way to fasten sheets together (6)
  - 17 Furnaces where links are forged (5)
  - 19 Become habit-free? (7)
  - 21 Get hint about contract (7)
  - 22 Swears and raves about (5)
  - 23 Nominally it forms a loose attachment (3-2-5)

### DOWN

- 2 I put on a perfectly good disguise (7)
- 3 Twitch and begin to wake perhaps (5)
- 4 Instructions provided for crepe one cooked (6)
- 5 Caustic word-play by a chap (7)
- 6 Heather is part American (5)
- 7 They take orders from anybody (10)
- 8 Bills of fare (3,7)
- 13 A political favour? (7)
- 15 Have everybody behind you (7)
- 16 Hand over and retire (4,2)
- 18 Portable lamp (5)
- 20 Play involving a doctor and a mother? (5)

### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (16881)

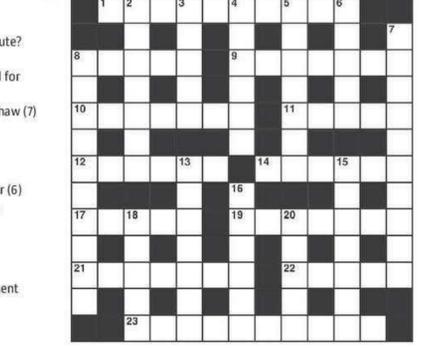
**CRYPTIC**

C	R	O	W	D	S	P	E	N	C	I	L
E	T	E	D	L	L	A					
M	E	L	A	N	I	E	F	E	I	N	T
E	E	M	M	I	M	E					
N	O	R	M	A	O	M	N	I	B	U	S
T	H	R	S	E	T						
P	O	C	K	E	T	G	U	I	D	E	
D	P	H	T	E	A	S					
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M	E	X	I	N	E						
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L	L	A	M	A	S	S	L	E	E	V	E

### QUICK

**ACCESS** TEMPER  
L A O C A R R E  
L A N G U O R G U E S S  
U A B E A E V I  
D E L V E C U R L I N G  
E L Z K R I T I V O E N  
C O M E T F L O W S  
N N F A  
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O E C N C A H  
W A R M T H H E Y D A Y

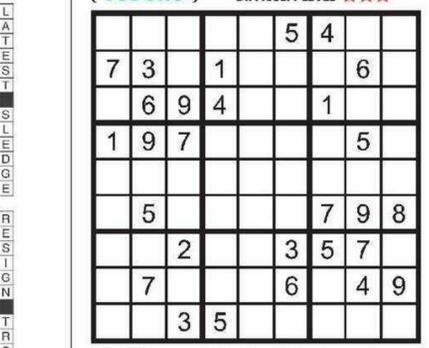
## PUZZLE 16882 © Gemini Crosswords 2018 All rights reserved



### QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- 1 Close by (4,2,4)
  - 8 Give as prize (5)
  - 9 General feeling of unease (7)
  - 10 Triple-banked rowed galley (7)
  - 11 Wash out in clean water (5)
  - 6 Think fit (5)
  - 12 Instrumentality (6)
  - 14 Magician supporting King Arthur (6)
  - 17 Test the flavour of (5)
  - 19 Decline to vote (7)
  - 21 Follow winding course (7)
  - 22 Resume after interruption (5)
  - 23 Over a large area (3,3,4)
- DOWN**
- 2 Avoiding the issue (7)
  - 3 Long narrow hilltop (5)
  - 4 Interfere (6)
  - 5 In a random way (2,5)
  - 6 Think fit (5)
  - 7 At this very moment (4,3,3)
  - 8 Then (2,4,4)
  - 13 An English cheese (7)
  - 15 Scholarly (7)
  - 16 Regular customer (6)
  - 18 Muffler (5)
  - 20 Scatter (5)

## { SUDOKU } DIFFICULTY LEVEL ★★★



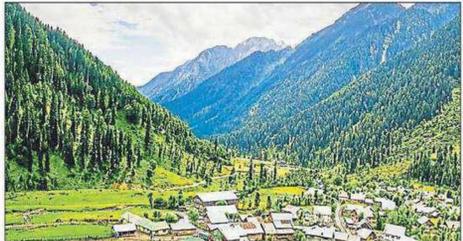
Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

# Hospitality firms in hills see a boom as mercury soars

**Varuni Khosla**  
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**NEW DELHI:** As the sweltering summer heat intensifies, hotels in the hills are experiencing a boom, with several companies reporting a 30% increase in occupancy and soaring revenues.

Many five-star hotels are fully booked, as summer vacations commence across the country. For the entire month of June, the uber-luxury Oberoi-run Wildflower Hall in Shimla is charging ₹41,000-45,000 per night for a regular room, roughly 50-60% higher than the usual rates in June, with at least three nights already sold out. The top suite at the same hotel is priced at



Popular destinations include Kashmir, Leh-Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal, Coorg, Munnar, Coonoor, and Wayanad.

approximately ₹1.9 lakh per night. Similarly, the Six Senses Vana in Dehradun is retailing for ₹95,000 per night, including taxes. Popular destinations include

Kashmir, Leh-Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, the northeast, Coorg, Munnar, Coonoor, and Wayanad. This surge in demand is also driving up airfares, even though many travel-

lers prefer driving. For instance, Delhi outbound airfares to destinations like Darjeeling have increased by 7-25% compared to June 2023. Bagdogra fares have risen by 25%, Dharamshala, Shimla, Manali, and Srinagar by 16-17%, and Coonoor, Coorg, and Munnar via Coimbatore by about 8%, data from Thomas Cook India showed, while online travel agency Yatra Online Ltd. has seen an uptick of 10-15% in airfares to nearby airports serving hill stations like Shimla, Manali, Coorg, Munnar and others.

Daniel D'Souza, president and country head for holidays at SOTC Travel, said, "Our online searches for hill station hotels have jumped by over 50% compared to last year for locations

such as Shimla, Manali, Coorg, Darjeeling, and Gangtok. This travel demand has significantly increased hotel occupancy by approximately 30%, with room tariffs rising 8-15%."

The company noted that hotel prices have increased in areas such as Darjeeling (10-14%), Coonoor, Coorg, and Munnar (5-14%), and Dharamshala, Shimla, and Manali (8-12%). Srinagar also saw a similar 12% increase for both 4 and 5-star properties. There is strong demand from young professionals, with a surge in last-minute and impulse bookings, and a high interest in outdoor-adventure experiences among couples, DINKs (double income, no kids couples), groups of friends, millennials, and Gen Zs.

## { WEATHER }

TEMPERATURE • HIGH • LOW

**MONDAY** Heatwave  
44°C | 30°C

**TUESDAY** Heatwave  
45°C | 31°C

**WEDNESDAY** Heatwave  
45°C | 31°C

## ALMANAC

Today is 10th June 2024  
• 3 Dni Hjhjh, Shuka  
• 19 Jyeshtha, Shuka  
Paksha 4  
• Samvat 2081  
Sunset: Monday at 07:18 p.m.  
Sunrise: Tuesday at 08:40 a.m.  
Moonset: Monday at 10:53 p.m.

## TEMPERATURE IN FOUR METROS

**Delhi** 44°C | 30°C  
**Mumbai** 33°C | 27°C  
**Kolkata** 37°C | 30°C  
**Chennai** 35°C | 25°C

SPORT

India vs Pakistan: The highs and lows



**OPENERS DEPART EARLY, WICKETS FALL IN A HEAP**  
Put into bat in the match interrupted by rain, India lost the openers Virat Kohli (4) and skipper Rohit Sharma (13) early and were 19/2 in the third over. No.3 Rishabh Pant had decent partnerships with Axar Patel and Suryakumar Yadav and after 10 overs, they were 81/3. But the runs started to dry up after that and India lost their last seven wickets for just 30 runs.



**NASEEM SPEARHEADS PAKISTAN'S BOWLING**  
After a tough day against United States, the young pace bowler came to the fore with a three-wicket haul against India. He claimed the wickets of Virat Kohli, Axar Patel and Shivam Dube while conceding just 21 runs in his four overs. Rated extremely highly by experts in Pakistan, the 21-year-old is part of a four-pronged pace attack at this World Cup that includes Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Amir and Haris Rauf.



**BUMRAH'S OPENING BREAKTHROUGH**  
With India defending a paltry total of 119, Jasprit Bumrah needed to deliver with the new ball. As expected, he didn't disappoint. Brought into the attack by Rohit Sharma in the third over of Pakistan's innings, Bumrah got the big wicket of Babar Azam with a delivery that moved a fraction away and induced the batter's outside edge. Bumrah was unlucky to not get more wickets in that first spell.



**GAYLE STEALS THE SHOW BEFORE THE MATCH**  
A packed Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York, saw former cricket stars turn up in numbers. Sachin Tendulkar, Yuvraj Singh, Shahid Afridi and Chris Gayle were all there. Gayle wore a unique blazer with one sleeve featuring the tri-colour and another green. He also went on to meet the players of both teams and got autographs on his blazer from Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Pakistan skipper Babar Azam.

Indian bowlers defend lowest ever total in WC

Vivek Krishnan  
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**NEW DELHI:** Sunday morning at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Long Island, New York began frustratingly for everyone present, anxiously watching the dark clouds play hide and seek and waiting for the action between India and Pakistan to unfold.

Once the long pause gave way to a contest between bat and ball, there was enough intrigue on a slow and tricky surface to keep everyone hooked even though the result was familiarly in favour of India. Rishabh Pant top-scored with 42 off 31 balls as India were

innings moving, stitching together a 39-run partnership for the third wicket off 30 balls. Axar played and missed quite a bit, but there was also a ramp over slip for six when Afridi pitched the ball short. When Pakistan tried to squeeze in a quiet over with Iftikhar Ahmed, Axar showed his nimble footwork and hit the part-time spinner for a four down the ground. Dancing down the track didn't work against Shah though, swishing at a good-length delivery only to see the stumps pegged back.

Pant, meanwhile, was typically frenetic early on, moving all around the crease and trying to create different angles to find vacant spaces on the outfield. He didn't connect sweetly in the initial

few deliveries, but a 13-run 10th over, bowled by Rauf, helped Pant release the handbrake.

India were 81/3 halfway into their innings, which was the ideal foundation to build on at the back end. Within the next five overs, however, things unraveled spectacularly for India as Pakistan claimed four wickets for just seven runs. While Rauf accounted for Suryakumar Yadav, Shah put an end to Dube's visible struggle by getting him caught and bowled.

With the ball holding up on the drop-in pitch, Amir then removed Pant and Ravindra Jadeja off successive deliveries in the 15th over. The dismissals of Dube and Jadeja had to do with the batters being a bit early into their shots.

When it was India's turn to bowl, they had to be spot on with their lengths and mount early pressure on Pakistan. Arshdeep Singh didn't quite do that, conceding nine in the opening over. Rohit turned to Bumrah in the third over for a breakthrough. The pace spearhead delivered his skipper's wish in the fifth, catching Babar Azam in two minds and inducing an edge to Suryakumar at first slip. Mohammed Siraj was also probing in his first spell of 3-0-10-0.

With Axar and Hardik Pandya removing Usman Khan and Fakhar Zaman respectively, the game hung in the balance with six overs left — Pakistan needed 40 runs with seven wickets in hand. That was when Bumrah delivered another decisive blow, getting the ball to beat Mohammad Rizwan's heave and crash into the stumps.

The challenging surface meant that Pakistan's late flourish never arrived. Only 14 runs were conceded in the 17th and 18th overs, leaving Pakistan with 21 to get in the last two overs. That was beyond their reach as Bumrah and Arshdeep closed out.



JUNE 2 TO JUNE 29

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Rishabh at No. 3: Living a charmed life and loving it

Somshuvra Laha  
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**KOLKATA:** The ball often doesn't go where Rishabh Pant wants to. Make peace with it and you might begin to wrap your head around how Pant really goes about batting.

Pakistan bowlers surely didn't get that memo, or else the field wouldn't have been so straight at the start. Conventional isn't Pant's style anyway. And on a devious New York pitch where sooner or later a ball will get you, holding back makes even less sense. Pant understood that, threw caution to the wind and walked out of a batting wreck with an innings-topping 42 to once again show why he is such a good fit at No.3 in T20s.

It was an approach fraught with confusing consequences though, and a fair share of heart-in-the-mouth moments for Indian fans. Mohammad Amir was getting the ball to seam, luring Pant into a drive that caught a healthy edge but probably too healthy to fly wide of Iftikhar Ahmed's outstretched hand at first slip on the first ball of the sixth over. Next ball, and this time Pant hedged his bets on a whip off his legs but the ball caught the leading edge and speared over covers, prompting Usman Khan to valiantly scam back and attempt the catch peering over his shoulder. He couldn't but Pant still wasn't done giving the shudders.

First ball of the ninth over, Imad Wasim went full and wide to Pant, prompting a slog sweep that again caught a top edge but fell just short of Khan running in from deep square leg. That Pant wasn't dissuaded by any of these was evident by the way he kept trying to reverse Wasim. Or keeling over, paddling a full, angling ball from Haris Rauf to the left of the fielder at short fine-leg for a boundary. Shots like these tend to have a longer lasting effect than the more traditional boundaries — first over mid-off, next picked off his legs and eased to fine-leg — book-ending it.

But that's what Pant is about.



Rishabh Pant. REUTERS

Not much of a presence by way of stance or backlift, with that still head giving away very little of what goes inside it, Pant has a way of hoodwinking bowlers into believing he is walking into their trap.

Amir clearly had the upper hand in each of the seven deliveries bowled to Pant, but he still scored 14 runs off him before holing out to Babar Azam. That's a strike rate of 200 in an innings that finished at six runs per over, where no other batter had crossed 20. More impressive is that overall strike rate of 135 on a day when Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Shivam Dube, Hardik Pandya and Ravindra Jadeja didn't get starts.

Unlike Pant, all of them tend to bat straighter. That would have been ideal on any other track but not on that New York pitch, and definitely not when the ball is seaming. Luck played a role, but crucial was the way Pant let the ball come on to him till the last second. Playing behind the wicket is an effective way to offset the perils of trying to present the full face of the bat. The channel outside off-stump remains his weakness, but Pant's brilliance lies in batting around it. He cuts and drives with pomp, but also slogs, reverse sweeps and ramps. Six fours, half of them streaky but effective, underline what Pant brings to the table even on a lean day like this.

SCORECARD		7-0, Imad 3-0-17-0, Rauf 3-0-21-3.	
<b>India</b>		<b>Pakistan</b>	
R Sharma c Rauf b Afridi	13 (12)	M Rizwan b Bumrah	31 (44)
V Kohli c Usman b Naseem	4 (3)	B Azam c Yadav b Bumrah	13 (10)
R Pant c Azam b Amir	42 (31)	U Khan lbw Patel	13 (15)
A Patel b Naseem	20 (18)	F Zaman c Pant b Pandya	13 (8)
S Yadav c Amir b Rauf	7 (8)	I Wasim c Pant b Arshdeep	15 (23)
S Dube c & b Naseem	3 (9)	S Khan c Pant b Pandya	4 (7)
H Pandya c Iftikhar b Rauf	7 (12)	I Ahmed c Arshdeep b Bumrah	5 (9)
R Jadeja c Imad b Amir	0 (1)	S Afridi not out	0 (1)
A Singh not out	9 (13)	N Shah not out	10 (4)
J Bumrah c Imad b Rauf	0 (1)		
M Siraj not out	8 (7)	<b>Extras</b> (lb 4, nb 1, w 4)	<b>9</b>
<b>Extras</b> (lb 1, nb 1, w 5)	<b>7</b>	<b>Total</b> (for 7 wickets)	<b>113</b>
<b>Total</b> (all out, 19 ovs)	<b>120</b>	<b>FOW</b> 1-26, 2-57, 3-73, 4-80, 5-88, 6-102, 7-102.	
<b>FOW</b> 1-12, 2-19, 3-58, 4-89, 5-95, 6-96, 7-96, 8-112, 9-112		<b>Bowling</b> Arshdeep 4-0-31-1, Siraj 4-0-19-0, Bumrah 4-0-14-3, Pandya 4-0-24-2, Jadeja 2-0-10-0, Patel 2-0-11-1.	
<b>Bowling</b> Afridi 4-0-30-1, Naseem 4-0-21-3, Amir 4-0-23-2, Iftikhar 1-0-			

**TODAY'S MATCH** Group D: Bangladesh vs South Africa  
Time: 8PM (IST) Venue: New York

Comfortable wins for Australia, West Indies

Aditya Chaturvedi  
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**MUMBAI:** With the margins so fine in T20 cricket, all it takes is one mistake for the momentum to shift decidedly. It could be a set batter throwing away the wicket, a dropped catch, or even something as simple as a throw to the wrong end. For England, in their Group B match against Australia at the Kensington Oval, Barbados on Saturday, it was an incorrect "gut call" by skipper Jos Buttler that sent the defending champions hurtling to a 36-run defeat.

With England winning the previous edition of the T20 World Cup and Australia the one before that, the arch-rivals were expected to light up a tournament that's been hampered by a string of low-scoring, one-sided contests.

And they did that, for the most part. Australia posted 201/7 — the first 200-plus total of this edition — and England began the chase strongly, only to lose steam in a curious fashion to finish on 165/6. The blunder, though, happened early in the clash as Buttler won

the toss and decided to give the second over to Will Jacks. The off-spinner and top-order batter, who had bowled just nine overs in eight games at an economy-rate of 11.11 for RCB in IPL 2024, was up against two of the most devastating openers in David Warner and Travis Head.

Jacks was taken for 22 runs by the two left-handers and wasn't called to bowl a second over. On a pitch that offered considerable variable bounce as the match progressed, this push at the start set Australia on their way. They got to 74/2 — their highest-ever power-play total in T20 World Cups — and set England a daunting target.

After Warner (39 off 16) and Head's (34 off 18) assault initially, skipper Mitchell Marsh (35 off 25) and Glenn Maxwell (28 off 25) weren't at their fluent best. But the in-form Marcus Stoinis (30 off 17) and Matthew Wade (17\* off 10) brought the scoring rate back up.

"It was a gut call to go with Jacks," said Buttler after the game. "Hindsight's very easy, to make different decisions. We talked a lot in the build-up about



West Indies' Akeal Hosein (L) celebrates the 134-run victory over Uganda.

potentially bowling two overs of spin straightaway against the two left-handers. He's a very good option with his off-spin. He's done that role well in IPL and I made a gut call today, having seen Moeen Ali's first over (that went for three runs). But they hit some good shots. It was a call that probably didn't come off today."

England, too, were off to a bright start with the bat. With Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc being a bit erratic with the new ball, Buttler (42 off 28) and Phil Salt (37 off 23) played some attractive strokes to take the defending champions to 73/0 in seven overs. But that's when Adam Zampa joined the attack and the Aussies

began to pull things back. The leg-spinner, who won the Player-of-the-Match award for his spell of 2/28, cleaned up Salt off his first delivery with a superb slider. From there, despite having a solid platform to build on, England put together an incredibly timid chase. From the eighth over to the 17th, England had just one over

with more than 10 runs scored. Jacks (10 off 10) and Jonny Bairstow (7 off 13), in at No.3 and No.4 respectively, could never get going as England kept falling behind.

**Hosein shines for WI PROVIDENCE:** Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein's career-best figures of 5/11 decimated an inept Ugandan batting line-up as the West Indies romped to a 134-run victory in a Group C match at the Guyana National Stadium.

Set a daunting target of 174, the World Cup debutants looked completely out of their depth in being routed for 39 off 12 overs.

The score equalled the record of the Netherlands against Sri Lanka at the 2014 tournament for the lowest innings total in the T20 World Cup.

**Brief scores:** Australia 201/7 (Warner 39, Marsh 35, Head 34, Stoinis 30), England 165/6 (Buttler 42, Cummins 2/23, Zampa 2/28). **Aus won by 36 runs.** WI 173/5 (Charles 44, Russell 30\*, Masaba 2/31), Uganda 39 in 12 ovs (Hosein 5/11, Joseph 2/6). **WI won by 134 runs.**

HT

**Russell on pole after dead heat**

**MONTREAL:** George Russell beat Max Verstappen to pole for the Canadian GP when the pair shared a best lap time of one minute and 12.000 seconds. The Briton took the prime starting spot because he set his lap time earlier in the session. "Amazing, amazing!" said a delighted Russell on Mercedes team radio. "Right, now we've got a race to win!"

**BFI brings back Flemming as coach**

**CHENNAI:** The Basketball Federation of India brought back Scott Flemming as the head coach of the men's national team. Flemming, also the head coach of the Indian team between 2012-15, had formerly served as the Senior Director of Basketball Operations of NBA India.

**Sanjivani bags top spot in 10,000m**

**PORTLAND:** Asian Championships bronze medalist Sanjivani Jadhav won the women's 10,000m at the Portland Track Festival High-Performance Meet clocking a personal best of 32:22.77 seconds. Avinash Sable clocked 8:21.85 seconds in men's 3000m steeplechase to finish second.

**Nagal to rise to 77 with Challenger win**

**MUMBAI:** Sumit Nagal inched closer to a singles spot at the Paris Olympics by winning the ATP Heilbronn Challenger on Sunday. The 95th-ranked Indian's 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-3 win over Swiss Alexander Ritschard in the final is set to take him to a new career-high 77 on Monday, which is also the cut-off date for Paris qualification. With 56 direct berth from the rankings but with a limit of four per nation, Nagal might sneak through. This was his second Challenger title of the year after also winning in Chennai.

**India lose to Great Britain in Pro League**

**LONDON:** PR Sreejesh's stunning save from the spot was not enough as India, who conceded just 38 seconds into the match, lost 2-3 to Great Britain in the men's FIH Pro League match on Sunday.

# Alcaraz rules Roland Garros, rekindles a Spanish tradition

Becomes youngest male player to win his first three Slams, making it 3-out-3 in finals by downing Germany's Alexander Zverev in five sets

**Rutvik Mehta**

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**MUMBAI:** The Coupe des Mousquetaires does land in the hands of a Spaniard, after all. Just not the one we've been too used to seeing bully opponents in Paris over the last decade-and-a-half, but the one with a child-like smile we're increasingly growing into. Carlos Alcaraz, the heir apparent to Rafael Nadal, is fast spreading his command. And has now taken over an empire his idol built and bossed 14 years over, for which the wide-eyed kid would rush home from school to catch a glimpse on TV or sit on the outer lawns of Roland Garros staring at the big screen.

There he was on Sunday, right in the heart of its most prestigious court of Philippe-Chatrier, slumping to the red dirt, living his childhood spectacle for real.

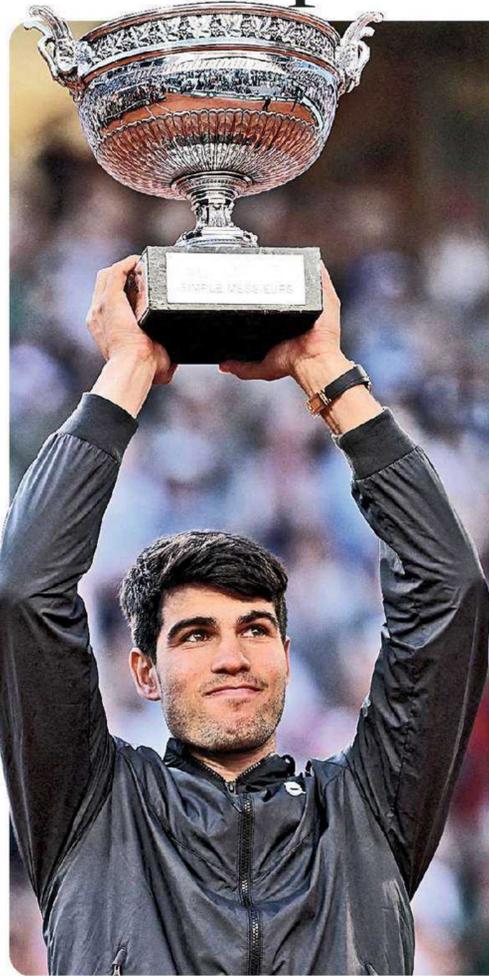
He'd just battled over four hours and beaten Alexander Zverev 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 in the final for his first French Open title and third Grand Slam. He'd just joined a rich Spanish heritage of champions at Roland Garros — from Nadal to Sergi Bruguera to Nadal's coach Carlos Moya to his own coach Juan Carlos Ferrero.

No one in the history of the game has won Slams across hard, grass and clay courts at a younger age than Alcaraz, 21. 2022 US Open was a breakthrough, 2023 Wimbledon his dream, yet 2024 French Open, dare we say, more impressive.

Simply given the backdrop of mental and physical doubts, Alcaraz endured a difficult back end of 2023 and beginning of 2024, not winning a title from July until March (Zverev, incidentally, beat him in the Australian Open quarter-final). Then came the right forearm injury that sucked the meat out of his ferocious forehands and sidelined him from the lead-up event in Rome ahead of the French Open.

"The last month we were struggling a lot... a lot of doubts coming here," Alcaraz said on court.

He remained far from his best even across the last couple of weeks but, in echoing the words



of his idol, Alcaraz found joy in "suffering". Be it in a five-set scrap against Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals, or the five-set dogfight with Zverev — the German has now lost his second major final — on Sunday.

**A nervy affair**

Alcaraz was the younger of the two even though more experienced on the Slam final stage. Yet both showed equal nerves. Zverev began with two double faults to be broken right away and so was Alcaraz after a double fault of his own.

Alcaraz gradually brought his dictating baseline game and damaging forehand to the fore, extracting a couple of errors from either wing of Zverev to break again to love. For the German, a lot hinged on his big first strike but with the first serve win

percentage down to 48% for the set and Alcaraz turning up with his bagful of tricks — groundstrokes, drops, volleys, slices — the opening set lay emphatically in the Spaniard's bag.

From 40-love and out of nowhere, Alcaraz had to clean up a hold fending off three break chances. Like in the momentum-shifting semis with Sinner, Alcaraz's stroke efficiency and direction went awry. A missed overhead smash, a couple of unforced errors and a shanked forehand saw Zverev break for 3-2.

Zverev's own strengths were picking up — his first serve win percentage jumped to 80% — and he was now coming on top of the funky stuff too. Like responding to an excellent Alcaraz pick-up volley with an exquisitely angled backhand cross-

## Prince of Clay

Carlos Alcaraz extends a regal tradition of Spanish domination at the Roland Garros, beating Germany's Alexander Zverev in the final.

**DURATION: 4 HOURS, 19 MINUTES**



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<b>1</b> <b>BORG</b> 20 years @ 1976 Wimbledon	<b>2</b> <b>ALCARAZ</b> 21 years, 1 month @ 2024 French Open	<b>3</b> <b>CONNORS</b> 22 years @ 1974 US Open
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- Emulated Roger Federer, Stan Wawrinka, Gustavo Kuerten, Stefan Edberg, Bjorn Borg and Jimmy Connors by winning his first 3 majors from the first 3 finals.
- Only Wawrinka and Connors have done that in different slams.
- Alcaraz now has more majors than any male player born in the 1990s — only Dominic Thiem and Daniil Medvedev have won Slam (1 each) among their peers born in that decade.

court volley. Striking more winners off the forehand than Alcaraz (7 to 6) to complement his backhand solidity (1 unforced error to Alcaraz's 8), Zverev waltzed through the set winning five straight games.

Through the end of that set and start of the third, Zverev fired three love holds. Alcaraz changed things by returning a lot closer to the baseline than by the advertising board. The aggressive intent paid off as he denied Zverev's serve to love in the sixth game after the latter slipped on the first point.

What then slipped, again, was Alcaraz's level. An error-strewn couple of service games, including for the set, brought his opponent right back. It was all Zverev sought to zoom past, winning four straight games.

An unhappy Alcaraz shook

his head, yet shook things up in no time to win four straight games of his own. The sting went out of Zverev's serves — the first serve win percentage was down in the forties again — and so did his fight in the fourth set.

Alcaraz held the edge and experience in one-set shootouts in a Slam final; he'd won his lone fifth-setter for the Wimbledon title and Zverev had lost his to surrender the 2020 US Open title. And that showed. Zverev fluffed two putaways at the net and littered a double fault to be broken in the third game. Alcaraz fended off four break chances the next game — an out call on second serve at 15-40 was overruled by the chair umpire — to hold on.

To the game, set, match, championship and the Spanish legacy in Paris.

Mamta jaisi shuddh.  
Maa jaisi mamta.



## Tomar becomes first Indian to win a UFC bout

**HT Correspondent**

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**NEW DELHI:** Puja Tomar created history on Sunday by becoming the first fighter from India to win a bout in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), the biggest mixed martial arts promotion in the world. The 28-year-old achieved the feat in the straw-weight (52kg) division of UFC Louisville when she beat Brazil's Rayanne Amanda dos Santos with a split decision verdict 30-27, 27-30, 29-28 on Saturday night.

Tomar's bout was the first on the card and went the distance — three rounds of five minutes each. Coming from a family of jiu-jitsu black belts, Rayanne went on the offensive early but Tomar used the kicks to secure vital points.

Hailing from Budhana village in western UP's Muzaffarnagar, Tomar made waves last year when she became the first Indian woman fighter to secure a contract with UFC. Before Tomar, Anshul Jubli and Bharat Kandare represented India in UFC, as did Canada-based Arjan Singh Bhullar. A former national champion in Wushu, Tomar has also competed in other prize fighting competitions such as Matrix Fight Night (MFN) and One Championship.

Her career in One Championship didn't go beyond four bouts, all of which she lost. She then moved to MFN in 2021 and stayed there for four seasons. Her crowning glory there was in MFN 10



Puja Tomar. **INSTAGRAM**

when she knocked out the Vietnam-origin fighter Bi Dieu Nguyen in November 2022 to take the strawweight title. Tomar defended her title in 2023, beating Anastasia Feofanova of Russia. Currently based at Sama Fight Club in Bali, Indonesia, the 5 feet 1 inch fighter is nicknamed "The Cyclone" for her powerful and imposing style.

Delighted with her debut win, Tomar told Sony Sports Network: "This win is not my win. This win is for all Indian fans and all Indian fighters. Before, everyone thought that Indian fighters did not stand anywhere. I only thought I have to win and show the world that Indian fighters are not losers."

"Walking out with our Indian song and the Indian flag gave me goosebumps and made me feel proud," she said. Tomar's current professional win-loss record stands at 9-3, six of her wins coming via knock-outs. Tomar lost her father at the age of 12 and began training in combat skills "to protect her family", as per an interview to UFC.com.

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