

## CALLS FOR FAIR & IMPARTIAL PROBE

### 'Encounter' that killed Thane accused: Police have to come clean, underlines Bombay HC

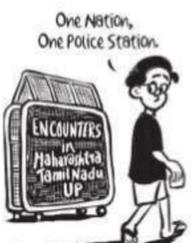
OMKAR GOKHALE  
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25

RAISING SEVERAL questions on the police claim that the accused in the Badlapur sexual assault case was gunned down in "retaliatory firing", the Bombay High Court on Wednesday said "this cannot be termed as an encounter". Saying the incident "could have been avoided", the HC called for a "fair and impartial probe", adding that it would be "constrained to pass orders" otherwise.

Pointing out that "four  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



## CONTOURS OF REDEPLOYMENT POSSIBLE AFTER NEXT ROUND OF MILITARY TALKS

### India and China make 'progress' on pending LAC issues in eastern Ladakh

Both sides explore solution that factors in pre-standoff positions, to address issues in Arunachal

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

INDIA AND China are learnt to have made "significant progress" in narrowing their gap on pending issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. This includes exploring the contours of a possible solution that factors in their respec-

tive pre-April 2020 positions while agreeing to address existing issues in Arunachal Pradesh, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Sources said this might imply that Indian troops, whose access to certain patrolling points along the LAC were blocked either by Chinese troops or due to the implementation of the buffer zones created in the backdrop of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**EXPLAINED**  
At centre of dispute

FRICITION POINTS such as Galwan Valley, north and south banks of Pangong Tso, Gogra-Hot Springs area have seen some resolution with buffer zones. Legacy issues of Depsang Plains and Demchok remain — troops at Depsang Plains were blocked from accessing patrol points.

## Disengagement one part of problem, main issue is patrolling: Jaishankar

YOSHITA SINGH  
NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25

THE INDIA-CHINA relationship would influence the future of the entire world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said while making it clear that peace needed to be restored on the border first

for bilateral ties to move forward.

Addressing an event hosted by the Asia Society and the Asia Society Policy Institute here on Tuesday, Jaishankar noted India's "difficult history" with China and said the "parallel rise" of the two countries presented "a very, very unique problem".

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## Himachal takes UP cue, Cong minister says owners' ID must at eateries

SAURABH PARASHAR  
SHIMLA, SEPTEMBER 25

A DAY after the Uttar Pradesh government made it mandatory for food outlets across the state to display the name and address of operators, proprietors and managers, Himachal Pradesh's Minister for Public Works Department and Urban Development, Vikramaditya Singh, said that the owner's ID card will have to be displayed in every eatery and food stall in the Congress-ruled state.

A day after the decision was taken at a meeting held at his office, he posted on Facebook, "In Himachal Pradesh too, every eatery and fast food cart will have to display the owner's ID so customers don't face any sort of inconvenience. To this effect, an order has been passed in a meeting of the Urban Development and Municipal Corporation, Jai Shri Ram."

Contacted by *The Indian Express*, he said, "I will only like to say that this decision is state-centric, it is for the well-being of people of the state."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Shuaib Masoodi

## J&K PHASE 2 TURNOUT DROPS: 57%

Foreign diplomats witness voting at Bemina polling booth in Srinagar during Phase 2 of J&K Assembly elections, Wednesday. The turnout was 57%, down from 61% in Phase 1.

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## In Jammu, BJP gets its house in order, Congress fumbles its initial advantage

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 25

AT THE start of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly poll campaign, the BJP, that had won 25 of the 37 seats in the Jammu province in 2014, looked on a shaky wicket.

There was strong anti-incum-

bency against the party, over the rise in eviction drives, property tax and toll plazas under the Centre-run J&K administration, as well as deep disappointment that the promised benefits from the Article 370 abrogation, such as more jobs and investments, had not materialised. The BJP fur-



ther bungled its start with confusion over candidate lists, leading to protests by supporters of the big names who were dropped.

However, as the J&K polls hit the mid-way point Wednesday, with the second of three phases voting, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## GOVT & POLITICS



MANIPUR: SECURITY ADVISOR DISPUTES INTEL INPUT, CMO BACKTRACKS PAGE 11

## AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION

### On RG Kar probe radar: Firm handled medical waste for 44 months without plant to treat it

Company got fresh waste-disposal contract despite flouting previous deal's terms

JAY MAZOOMDAAR  
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 25

THE CBI is probing the sale and disposal of biomedical waste as part of its alleged corruption case at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College Hospital, the epicentre of a political firestorm after last month's rape and murder of a medical intern there.

A little-known company, SNG Envirosolutions, could hold one key to this in the manner it grew to handle up to 70% of waste from government hospi-



At a protest against the healthcare 'syndicate' in Kolkata. File

tals across the state, including at RG Kar, without owning a single waste treatment plant, in viola-

tion of its contract's terms, an investigation by *The Indian Express* has revealed.

Records show that in 2019, the company, owned by Kolkata businessman S P Singh, won the contract by tying up with a Delhi firm that owned a treatment plant in UP.

At a daily rate of Rs 8-9 per bed — there are an estimated 80,000 government hospital beds across the state — SNG collected tonnes of hospital waste daily for 44 months relying on a sub-contract with its rival. All this while, SNG operated from a "table" in the premises of one of its key investors, a business family of Kolkata.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## EXPLAINED



POLITICS  
CLAUSE 6 OF ASSAM ACCORD PAGE 15

## DELHI RIOTS CASES

### Judges' new postings mean bail pleas to be heard afresh, third time

SOHINI GHOSH  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE DELHI High Court is set to hear afresh the bail pleas of four accused in the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots for the third time in just over two years.

Filed separately beginning March 2022, the bail pleas of Abdul Khalid Saifi, Gulfisha Fatima, Md Saleem Khan and Shifa Ur Rehman have been argued fully by their lawyers twice before two different benches. With both the benches, the presiding Judge was appointed as Chief Justice of another HC, and no verdict was delivered.

With Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, who headed the bench that last heard the case, taking oath as Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh HC on Wednesday, the case will have to be heard *de novo* (from the beginning) before a new bench.

In April 2022, a bench comprising Justices Siddharth Mridul and Rajnish Bhatnagar began hearing the bail pleas. The bench reserved its order in all four cases — for Saifi on January 5, 2023; for Fatima on February 13, 2023; and for Khan and Rehman on March 6, 2023. The bail pleas of two other accused, Athar Khan and Shadab Ahmad, were also heard at length. While both sides completed their arguments, the accused were to submit a rejoinder to rebut the prosecution's arguments.

On July 5, 2023, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended Justice Mridul for appointment as Chief Justice of Manipur HC.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

India and China make 'progress' on pending LAC issues

disengagement at specific friction points, might be close to accessing them again.

Top officials have confirmed that the development took place during the latest diplomatic and political level talks between both sides. The delegation for the 31st Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) talks held on August 29 in Beijing, also had representatives from the Indian military.

The 22nd round of military talks between India and China at the Corps Commanders' level is now expected to be held shortly to chalk out the modalities — including the time frame — of the deployment of troops from either side based on the mutual agreement reached.

At present, troops deployed along the LAC continue to be in a state of alert, an official said, adding that they, however, are avoiding any confrontation which may create a trust deficit and delay redeployment plans.

As a confidence-building measure, local commanders of both sides on the ground have also been meeting to avoid clashes.

The winter stocking for the 50,000-60,000 additional troops deployed in eastern Ladakh, which is under way this year, will continue and while there may be redeployment of troops on the

LAC, de-induction and de-escalation is likely to be a protracted affair.

Officials aware of the latest developments said that plans to raise an additional division for Ladakh is already on with at least a brigade partially moving to the location.

There are plans to raise this division — most likely the 72 division — by mid next year with the aim of freeing the Uniform Force of Rashtriya Rifles to go back to its original location in 16 Corps.

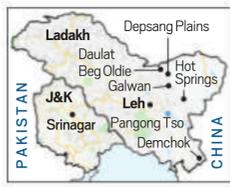
The Indian Express had first reported this year that the Army is considering raising the 72 Division — which was to originally function under the 17 Mountain Strike Corps (MSC) based in Panagarh (West Bengal) — for possible deployment in eastern Ladakh under the Northern Command.

Irrespective of any deployment change that may be in the offing, officials said the border infrastructure development along the entire LAC will continue as per plans to be better prepared for any contingency.

Until the exact redeployment plans — still taking shape — are implemented, the existing deployment of troops and patrolling will continue.

The Army did not respond to queries on the matter.

Statements issued after meetings at the diplomatic and political levels last month and earlier this



month had indicated some progress towards resolution.

At the WMCC held last month, a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said the two sides had a frank, constructive and forward-looking exchange of views on the situation along the LAC to narrow down the differences and find early resolution of the outstanding issues, indicating a progress in the negotiations.

On September 12, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had said that about 75 per cent of the "disengagement problems" with China have been "sorted out" but the "bigger issue" has been the increasing militarisation of the border. Subsequently, the Chinese Foreign ministry said that the troops have been disengaged at four places in Eastern Ladakh, including Galwan Valley and the situation along the borders is stable.

Also on September 12, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had held talks on the sidelines of a meeting of

BRICS NSAs in St Petersburg in Russia where they discussed the progress made in the recent consultations on border issues.

A statement issued by the MEA stated that Doval-Wang meeting gave the two sides an opportunity to review the recent efforts towards finding an "early resolution" of the remaining issues along the LAC, which will create conditions to stabilize and rebuild bilateral relations.

It said that both sides agreed to "work with urgency and redouble their efforts to realize complete disengagement in the remaining areas."

The last formal disengagement along the LAC took place in September 2022, when both sides pulled back troops to disengage from Patrolling Point-15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area of Eastern Ladakh.

Friction points such as Galwan Valley, north and south banks of Pangong Tso and the Gogra-Hot Springs area have seen some amount of resolution in the last four years with the creation of buffer zones along the LAC.

While legacy issues of Depsang Plains and Demchok — pre-dating the current ongoing military standoff remained — troops deployed at the Depsang Plains were blocked from accessing their patrol points in an area called the Y junction.

Disengagement one part of problem, main issue is patrolling: Jaishankar

"I think the India-China relationship is key to the future of Asia. In a way, you can say that if the world is to be multi-polar, Asia has to be multi-polar. And therefore this relationship will influence not just the future of Asia, but in that way, perhaps the future of the world as well," Jaishankar said at the event titled "India, Asia and the World".

"You have two countries who are neighbours, unique in the sense that they are the only two countries with over a billion people, both rising in the global order and who often have overlapping peripheries, including the fact that

they have a common border. So it's really a very complicated issue," he said.

"I think, if you look today in global politics, the parallel rises of India and China, present a very, very unique problem... When I said 75 per cent of it has been sorted out — I was asked in a way to quantify — it's only of the disengagement. So that's one part of the problem. The main issue right now is the patrolling. You know, how do we, both of us, patrol up to the Line of Actual Control."

Jaishankar said the patrolling arrangements after 2020 have been disturbed. "So we've been

able to sort out much of the disengagement, the friction points, but some of the patrolling issues need to be resolved."

He said once we deal with the disengagement, "there is the larger issue as both of us have brought a very large number of troops up to the border. So there is what we call the de-escalation issue, and then there is the larger, the next step is really, how do you deal with the rest of the relationship?" Jaishankar gave a historical perspective of the relationship and of the border dispute, saying the "entire 3,500 km-border between India and China is dis-

puted". "And so you make sure the border is peaceful so that other parts of the relationship can move," he said.

He said there were a series of agreements between the two countries that went into greater and greater detail on how to make sure the border remained peaceful and stable. "Now the problem was in 2020, despite these very explicit agreements, we saw that the Chinese — we were all in the middle of Covid at that time — moved a large number of forces in violation of these agreements to the Line of Actual Control. And we responded in kind," he said. PTI

Firm handled waste for 44 months without treatment plant

The government terminated SNG's contract in June 2023, when the sub-contractor pulled out. Within three months, SNG set up its first treatment plant in the state — and was awarded a fresh contract.

When contacted by The Indian Express, Rajiva Sinha, who was the state's Health Secretary when SNG won the contract, said that "everything went by the book". He added that the rules allowed companies without treatment plants, "provided they set up the facilities within the prescribed deadline of four months from getting environmental clearance (EC)". SNG, however, did not complete the EC application process for years.

Asked about this, Sinha, who is now the state's Election Commissioner, said: "If a company violated any condition later, my successors in the Health (department) must have taken appropriate steps."

Incidentally, Sinha was the Calcutta Environment Improvement Project director in 2006 when another company owned by SP Singh, SNG Mercantile, was hired as a consultant for a project funded by the Asian Development Bank. In 2016, Sinha led a state business delegation to Italy with SP Singh as a member.

When contacted, S P Singh blamed Covid for the delay in setting up waste treatment plants. "We took serious losses after providing critical waste disposal services during Covid after we won the bid following every rule. This was a genuine joint venture and the partners paid equally for the bank guarantee," Singh told The Indian Express.

However, records show that soon after the bid, Singh, through a web of transactions, got personal ownership in the joint venture and reduced his consortium partners' stakes.

Joint venture — on paper

It was in February 2019 that the West Bengal Health department floated a tender for hospi-

tal waste disposal seeking bids from Common Bio-Medical Waste Treatment Facility (CBMWTF) operators for 13 zones covering the state.

Nine months later, the contract for nine zones was awarded to a joint venture of SP Singh's SNG Mercantile and Delhi-based Spectrum Waste Solutions. "We did it for the tender as per the requirement. Our companies had no prior business links," said Spectrum Waste's director-stakeholder Md Ziaurrahman Khan.

At the rate of Rs 8-9 per hospital bed per day, the contract entailed daily collection of biomedical waste from hospitals, transporting it to treatment facilities, incinerating constituents that cannot be recycled and disinfecting the rest, mostly plastic materials, for shredding and recycling.

Soon after the consortium bagged the contract, S P Singh's dormant family-owned company SNG Envirosolutions transferred all its 10,000 shares equally to SNG Mercantile and Spectrum Waste to become the consortium's 50:50 joint venture vehicle.

Within a year, SNG Envirosolutions issued 9.9 lakh preferential shares to multiple investors and S P Singh himself, reducing the stake of consortium partners SNG Mercantile and Spectrum Waste to 0.5% each. Under the new shareholding in 2020, S P Singh's direct stake in SNG was 24% while the remaining 75% went to investors.

The lead investor with a 50% stake, Silvercross Marketing, is owned by the families of Himanshu Ajmera and Girish Mehta, Kolkata-based commodities brokers. Ajmera also issued an NOC to SNG for using "a table space" to run its businesses in an apartment he owned in Kolkata's Ballygunge.

Ajmera did not respond to requests for comment. Mehta said their company "exited" SNG recently.

Tie-up with main rival

Under the 2019 contract, SP

Singh had four months to set up nine treatment plants — one in each zone — from the time it obtained Environment Clearances (EC) for construction.

Instead, SNG Envirosolutions struck a deal with Hyderabad-based Medicare Environment Management, the company that got the contract for the remaining 30% of government hospital waste.

Krishnendu Datta, who led Medicare's West Bengal operations in 2019, and his successor Snehanshu Chakraborty, declined to comment on the details of the "internal arrangement" with SNG.

A senior Medicare employee said the "offer" of a subcontract to treat the waste lifted by SNG "made sense" since it was also "endorsed by the state government as an interim measure" — a fact corroborated by Health department records.

The "internal arrangement" functioned until a PIL in August 2022 challenged SNG's contract citing Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, which require a person or a company to be the owner or to be in control of a treatment facility to qualify as its operator.

The PIL, filed by Kolkata-based social worker Prabir Das, flagged allegations of dumping hospital waste by the company in municipal dump sites.

Out of business — and back

By now, the state Health department had served four notices — between December 2020 and August 2022 — to SNG for not setting up the treatment plants.

"In all those years, the company completed EC applications for only two plants, instead of nine, and all we did was to wait, watch and send periodic notices to be put in the file. But the department had to act after the PIL was admitted," said a Health official.

In October 2022, the department terminated SNG's contract for failing to set up CBMWTFs — without serving the two-month

notice under the E-tender condition.

Within days, SNG moved the Calcutta High Court against the termination, and the state missed the court date.

On May 31, 2023, Medicare informed the Health department about the termination of its sub-contract with SNG from June 1. SNG sought one month to "resolve" the issue.

As an interim measure, the Health department transferred all zones allotted to SNG to Medicare on June 2.

Asked if SNG passed on the waste it collected to Medicare's treatment plants, SP Singh said "Every (waste) bag is barcoded and can't be tampered with. Official site inspections showed that the allegations of dumping waste in municipal bins were totally false. Our books will show all the payments made, with GST, to Medicare." He declined to comment on the amount SNG billed the Health department under the contract and how much it paid Medicare under the sub-contract.

With the company out of business, the work on SNG's treatment plants moved rapidly and the first unit was ready in just two months. On June 30, 2023, the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) issued a 'Consent to Operate' certificate for the first treatment plant in Bankura.

Asked if the Board took any action against the company for lifting bio-medical waste for 44 months without a licence, WBPCB chairman Dr Kalyan Rudra and member-secretary Rajesh Kumar declined to comment.

On August 11, 2023, a fresh order by the Health department assigned Bankura, Bishnupur, Purulia and Murshidabad zones to SNG.

Principal secretary (Health) Nigam did not respond to queries asking why the Health department took so long to revoke SNG's contract and whether it considered its violations while signing an agreement with it afresh.

Police have to come clean, underlines Bombay HC

trained police officers" were accompanying the man, the HC said they should have tried to disarm and overpower him first. "Ordinarily, you would fire on the leg. How you fired on the temple or head of the deceased?" it asked.

On Monday, the 23-year-old janitor, arrested last month for allegedly sexually assaulting two four-year-old girls at a school in Badlapur (Thane district), was gunned down when he was being taken in a police vehicle. Police said he was killed in "retaliatory firing" after he snatched an officer's service weapon and opened fire. Police said the accused fired three rounds, injuring an officer.

Alleging a fake encounter, the father of the deceased had filed a plea in court seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Hearing the plea Wednesday, a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Prithviraj K Chavan said: "We are looking at the matter from all angles. We make it clear that we want to know the truth and we are not remotely suspecting activities by the police, but they have to come clean." The court asked if the deceased knew how to unlock the pistol. Public prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar, who represented the state government, submitted that the weapon was not locked, and the magazine was released when the deceased tried to pull the upper part.

"This is very hard to believe. Have you ever fired a pistol anytime? I have fired it 100 times. It requires strength... A layman cannot fire a pistol unless he is trained. It requires strength. A weak man cannot pull the slide back. There is a lanyard... attached to the pistol, was it there or not? Whether there was a lanyard to the pistol? Why was it not there? Why was it not locked? What is the SOP? What are the guidelines," Justice

Chavan asked. Responding to queries from the court, the state submitted that it was an old pistol, and the officer was in plainclothes with his gun tucked in the left side of his waist. The court pulled up the police for being "negligent and careless".

"And was he handcuffed," the court asked. Venegaonkar responded that the man was initially handcuffed, but one of his hands was freed as he asked for a glass of water.

"He (deceased) fired three bullets and only one bullet hit the officer in his thigh? Where are two bullets? Whether ricochet injury was there to the policeman or was it direct fire? It seems there are four empty shells. Three fired by him and one by an officer. Ordinarily, you would fire on the leg. How you fired on the temple or head of the deceased? The object was to disarm him. There were four of your officers trained, and one of the officers was involved in encounters in the past. So four trained police officers couldn't overpower... (a person) who was not trained in operating firearms? Police are trained. We understand if laypersons did it. It could have been avoided," Justice Chavan said.

"It was an immediate reaction," Venegaonkar responded.

The court said that according to the autopsy report, the bullet appeared to have been fired from point blank range with a 9mm Browning pistol. "First you had to try to disarm him. What were you doing till he fired three bullets? He is not a hefty, tall man. You could have overpowered him... This can't be termed as an encounter. Definition of an encounter is different," the Bench said.

"We expect the investigation to be done fairly and impartially even if the police are involved, and if it is not done, we will be con-

strained to pass orders. Don't take it that we are suspecting, but we are doing it because we want the truth," it said.

The court, while passing a slew of directions related to collection of evidence, also directed that the CDRs (call detail records) of the four police personnel and driver present in the vehicle be collected, along with the CCTV footage of the visitors' area of the Talaja Central Jail, where the parents of the deceased had last met him, prior to the incident. It emphasised that sealing a crime scene is essential to avoid further complications and speculation. "Time is of the essence in any investigation. Delay will lead to suspicion among the public," it said.

The father of the accused had sought registration of an FIR against the police personnel and preservation of CCTV footage from Talaja Central Jail, the shops and streets that the police vehicle passed through, and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Hospital in Kalwa (Thane district) where he was taken. He alleged the "fake encounter" was done in view of the upcoming polls, saying it would work in favour of the ruling party. His counsel also mentioned that no cognizance was taken of a complaint filed by the father against the police personnel.

The government informed the bench that the probe was transferred to the CID and related documents were forwarded to the agency Wednesday morning. The bench noted that nobody from the CID was present at the hearing. The government also submitted that forensic samples had been sent to the JJ Hospital to check for gunshot residue, and the vehicle in which the accused was being taken, along with the bullets fired, had also been sent for examination. The court posted the next hearing for October 3.

Himachal

His mother Pratibha Singh, president of Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee, did not weigh in on the decision, saying one should ask Vikramaditya about it.

Senior BJP leader and MLA Randhir Sharma, who is also the spokesperson for the Opposition party in the state, said, "Like Vikramaditya Singh, I too am a member of the recently constituted committee to finalise the street vending policy. But he started making statements before we arrived at a conclusion and formed a policy. However, displaying ID cards of owners of eateries and food stalls should be a must in the state."

The meeting where the decision was taken was held at Vikramaditya's office, and had been called to finalise the state's street vending policy, which has been in focus since the September 11 row related to Shimla's Sanjauli mosque. Behind the communal tensions earlier this month was a fight between two shopkeepers from different communities.

It was also decided at the meeting that street vendors will display their ID cards and vending licence once the policy is finalised.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Vikramaditya, son of six-time CM Virbhadra Singh, said, "There was unrest in our state in the last few days. Our decisions are not driven by any other state. The display of identity cards will be mandatory for all vendors — be it Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian or from any other community. There are instructions to us from the HC to make vending zones, vending policy in the state. Recent unrest was linked to the absence of a strong vending policy."

Shimla Municipal Corporation Commissioner Bhupender Kumar Attri said the matter is unrelated to the decision in Uttar Pradesh.

Judges' new postings mean bail pleas to be heard afresh, third time

His appointment as Manipur HC Chief Justice was notified on October 16, 2023, and he took oath four days later. No order on the bail pleas was delivered before he left.

This meant that the cases had to be heard afresh by a new bench. They were then listed before a bench comprising Justices Suresh Kait and Manoj Jain. This bench heard the bail pleas four times from January to May 2024.

Lawyers for the accused had made oral requests to the bench to reserve orders after they closed arguments in their individual cases. However, the bench did not reserve orders, and continued hearing other connected bail pleas.

public prosecutor in the HC.

In January 2024, another change of roster was notified, according to which criminal appeals were to be dealt with by a bench of Justices Kait and Manoj Jain. This bench heard the bail pleas four times from January to May 2024.

Lawyers for the accused had made oral requests to the bench to reserve orders after they closed arguments in their individual cases. However, the bench did not reserve orders, and continued hearing other connected bail pleas.

On July 11, the SC Collegium recommended Justice Kait for appointment as the Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir HC.

While the recommendation was pending with the Centre, another roster change was effected in the Delhi HC.

This time, the cases went to a bench comprising Justices Kait and Girish Kathpalia, which was specifically assigned the bail matters of the Delhi riots accused. However, this bench did not hear the cases.

Earlier this month, the SC Collegium revised its recommendation, listing Justice Kait for appointment as Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh HC instead of the J&K HC. The recommendation was approved by the Centre on September 21, and the Judge took oath as the Madhya

Pradesh HC Chief Justice on Wednesday.

While lawyers get ready to argue the bail pleas for the third time, there is disquiet on the delay.

"My client was arrested in March 2020 and the court has neither framed charges against him nor commenced trial in the case. His bail plea was first filed in the HC in May 2022, and we have to now argue it for a third time all over again. This chronology itself is unconscionable. The right to a speedy trial and the right to be granted bail are constitutional rights," senior advocate Rebecca John, who appears for Saifi, told The Indian Express.

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**SKY WATCH**  
 September 26  
 Generally cloudy sky.  
 Light rain/thunderstorm  
**MAX: 34** | **MIN: 25**  
 0.3°C below normal | 1.1°C above normal

## TO ELECT FINAL STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER

# Day before crucial MCD internal poll, three AAP councillors jump ship to BJP

**SAMAN HUSAIN**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

A DAY before the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to elect its final member to the crucial Standing Committee, three AAP councillors defected to the BJP Wednesday. With this, AAP now holds 124 seats in the 249-member House — one short of the majority — while BJP has 115.

The BJP announced that AAP councillors Behen Preeti from Dilshad Colony and Sarita Phogat from Green Park joined the party at 2 pm, exactly 24 hours before the election is to begin Thursday. Two hours later, Praveen Kumar, AAP councillor from Madanpur Khadar East, also joined the BJP in the presence of BJP state chief Virendra Sachdeva.

The vacancy in the 18-member Standing Committee — the highest decision-making body of the MCD — was created by the resignation of BJP councillor Kamaljeet Sehrawat after her election from the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat earlier this year.

The committee is the MCD's key decision-making body, overseeing the civic body's finances. No proposal exceeding Rs 5 crore

can proceed without its approval. If the BJP secures a majority in the Standing Committee on Thursday, it could create a scenario where AAP leads the MCD, but the BJP controls its finances.

Speaking to mediapersons, Sachdeva said the decision of the leaders to leave AAP stemmed from disappointment over "unfulfilled promises" and "increasing corruption" within the party. Taking on AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi, he added, "If Kejriwal is so keen to become Shri Ram, he should first stay away from the political chair for 14 years."

Preeti, meanwhile, accused Atishi of allegedly instigating councillors to beat up BJP members during the mayoral polls. "If Atishi has become the chief minister, this isn't proof of her being educated but rather a result of her being a puppet," she alleged.

This is not the first wave of defections from AAP — while two party councillors had joined the BJP before the Lok Sabha polls, five more had defected to the BJP on August 26. The BJP has also nominated a former AAP councillor to contest the election for the final Standing Committee seat.

Leader of Opposition in the



(Top) Councillor Praveen Kumar; (above) councillors Behen Preeti, Sarita Phogat with Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva

MCD, Raja Iqbal Singh, said, "The MCD at present has an effective strength of 249 members. AAP has only 124 councillors while the majority mark is 125... it has clearly lost majority."

Meanwhile, taking to X, AAP Malviya Nagar MLA Somnath Bharti expressed concern over the switch, particularly by Phogat. He claimed that while joining the party at the BJP head-

quarters, Phogat "didn't even speak a word and hence I am worried about her".

He added that Phogat is in a vulnerable state, as she is unwell. "Since her house is locked, phones are off not only of her but of her children too. She is not reachable to even her own family... She seems to have been abducted," he alleged, requesting the L-G and Delhi Police to locate her.

When *The Indian Express* reached out to Phogat, there was no response.

### Who will dominate the civic body?

The Standing Committee comprises 12 elected members from ward committees and six from within the House. In the ward committee polls, held on September 4, BJP won seven seats while AAP bagged five. Elections to the six Standing Committee members, after the 2023 mayoral polls, had resulted in both AAP and BJP securing three seats each. Following this, Sehrawat was elected to the Lok Sabha.

At present, while AAP holds eight Standing Committee seats, the BJP has 9. If the AAP secures the last seat, it will lead to a tie. However, if the BJP wins, giving it a clear majority, it will have power to control the MCD's purse strings.

If the Congress, which has nine members in the House, chooses to vote against AAP in Thursday's election, AAP could lose its majority in the Standing Committee too. However, sources said Congress may abstain from voting, which could leave AAP with a slim advantage in securing the final seat.

# AAP & L-G spar over work in limbo at 24 govt hospitals

**JATIN ANAND**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25



Saxena, Bharadwaj

A "SEVERE" lack of funds and medical staff, the absence of basic facilities such as rooms for doctors, nurses, mortuaries and even parking spaces in the construction plans have forced work at 24 new and existing hospitals into limbo, officials said.

The redevelopment of 13 existing hospitals, four new hospitals, and re-engineering of seven new hospitals as ICU facilities is being taken up as part of a consolidated project. These under-construction facilities now require Rs 10,250 crore so work can be completed in three years — apart from an annual sum of Rs 8,000 crore to remain operational — as per the Delhi Health Department's submissions at a review meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Delhi L-G V K Saxena at Raj Niwas on September 11 and attended by Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj in addition to senior officers.

Delhi Health Secretary S B Deepak Kumar, officials said, made a presentation outlining the challenges being faced by the department in completing the projects, highlighting that the annual allocation of Rs 372 crore for them meant it was "unlikely these hospitals would be completed even in a decade".

Kumar also said the amount will have to be doubled to even run the hospitals. Saxena, officials said, expressed concern regarding arbitration cases already trickling in and cost escalation because of delays. The initial cost projection for the work was Rs 3,800 crore.

The first tenders for the project were floated in 2019-2021 where an estimated cost of Rs 3,906.70 crore was projected. The projects were expected to be completed in six months to a year given the fact that prefabricated material was to be used for a majority of them.

Due to the delay, according to government officials, initial costs have shot up by several thousands of crores including, among other components, about Rs 5,000 crore just for furniture and medical equipment.

What also needs to be done, officials said, is the creation of an estimated 38,000 additional posts of doctors, specialists and paramedics for the functioning of the upcoming facilities.

In response, the AAP said, "The health Minister was constantly writing to the L-G regarding his duty to create posts for upcoming hospitals... However, the L-G was running away from his constitutional responsibilities and duties. The Minister had been reminding the L-G, through written letters, that full-time permanent specialists and doctors are recruited through the UPSC, the L-G should initiate the process of hiring doctors and specialists on a contract basis. However, he did not initiate that process by citing frivolous excuses."

"Now, after the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi, the L-G was bound to hold a meeting and has accepted it is indeed his duty to create posts for upcoming hospitals," it added.

In the meeting, the L-G is learnt to have flagged the lack of proper planning, including decisions about whether the hospitals would be run in a partnership with the private sector or by the government. Officials said when the L-G asked how the hospitals would be run, he was told a decision on this had not yet been taken. Saxena directed the Council of Ministers to decide on budgetary allocation and staffing needs could be finalised, it is learnt.

A decision, officials said, was also pending on if the hospitals would be super-specialty, general or district level or tertiary hospitals "since the requirement of specialists will be determined on the basis of these decisions".

The AAP, however, said, "The L-G fails to understand that a few years ago, the world was facing

Covid, the biggest pandemic of the last few decades. In June 2020, there were scientific projections that Delhi will have 20 lakh Covid patients and around 80,000 patients will require hospitalisation. The Delhi government at that time was proactive in deciding and allocating resources to build thousands of ICU beds in the form of new hospitals and hospital blocks. The government has always prioritised the health of its people over budget constraints... With time, the urgency of requiring thousands of ICU beds has faded across the world. All these things were discussed in the meeting of the L-G in the presence of a dozen officers."

An officer at the meeting said it was pointed out that of the new hospitals being constructed, there was no place for parking. Officials also said the Administrative Reforms Department said it had recently begun the process of finalisation of creation of posts for the upcoming hospitals which would be completed during the current year and the process will then be started for hospitals that will be completed in the next year.

It is learnt that Health Minister Bharadwaj stated that the challenges he was now being informed of by the Health Secretary had not been communicated to him in the past. "The secretary, however, said all issues were duly brought up in meetings taken by the minister," an official said.

Responding to AAP's comments, the L-G's Secretariat said it had not issued any statement regarding the meeting. "Minutes of the meeting have been issued by the Secretary (Health), who reports directly to Minister Bharadwaj, and not by L-G Secretariat. (AAP's) statement takes alibi of Covid to justify construction of 24 buildings worth Rs 10,000 crore, construction of which started in 2020 with a deadline of one year, but all of them are far from completion... the minister would have done better to initiate the process of creation of posts for these supposed hospitals. The Services Department and L-G have nothing to do with creation of posts. The Services Department only fills those posts through UPSC and DSSSB."

## HC expresses shock at defacement of public property

**SOHINI GHOSH**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

EXPRESSING SHOCK at defacement of public property, purportedly by candidates contesting the September 27 Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections, the Delhi High Court Wednesday directed the police to ensure no these are removed and no further defacement takes place.

The bench of Acting Chief Justice (ACJ) Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela recorded in its order, "This court is of the prima facie view that expenditure in crores has been incurred by the candidates contesting the elections."

The bench also orally remarked that DU has two or three ways to deal with the defacement. ACJ Manmohan said, "... Either you will defer elections till everything is cleaned up or you disqualify them and ask for new nominations to be filed. Or third is you allow the election on the date fixed but you don't announce the results till everything is cleaned."

Expressing shock at the expenditure being incurred in the polls, ACJ Manmohan said, "It has to be repainted. If they can put up posters, they can pay for repainting... This does not seem like an ordinary student who is fighting an illiterate group? This sort of defacement... will be done by someone who is illiterate...," ACJ Manmohan remarked, addressing DU.

Pulling up the chief election officer, ACJ Manmohan orally remarked, "It is time V-C took a decision and if he has to annul the elections, then annul elections..."

# Nine of 21 candidates in the fray are women, just 3 for top post of president

**VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

SIXTEEN YEARS ago was the last time the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) had a woman president. Over the years, the representation of women in the students' union polls has remained low.

Consider this: Of 21 candidates in the fray this year for the four posts on the panel, only nine are women. Of these, only three have been fielded for the post of president. Last year, 11 of the 24 candidates were women, while in 2019, four out of 16 were women.

Polls are on September 27. Over the years, women candidates who have been elected as president include former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and former Member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly Alka Lamba from the National Students' Union of India (NSUI).

This month, a plea was moved in the Delhi High Court seeking introduction of women's reservation in the upcoming DUSU polls, as the number of women candidates in the fray this year, like in previous years, is less than half of the total number of candidates in the final list after withdrawals. The court advised the varsity to swiftly address the representation. The petition, filed by Shabana Hussain and represented by advocate Ashu Bidhuri, calls for a 50% reservation for women in the polls, emphasising lack of female participation due to the influence of money and muscle power.

Neither ABVP nor NSUI have fielded woman candidates for the post of president this time. The two have fielded a woman for the post of secretary — Mitravinda Karanwal from ABVP and



Candidates and their supporters campaign at Delhi University, Wednesday. Tashi Tobgyal

### Brawl outside Miranda House

New Delhi: A brawl broke out outside DU's Miranda House College as a few students allegedly tried to enter the campus forcibly to campaign for the DUSU election. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Miranda House Principal Bijayalaxmi Nanda said, "Whatever happened, it was outside the gate and was handled by the college election committee, student union and staff. Many student candidates from outside were trying to enter the campus forcibly... we let in about 3-4, along with women candidates, to proceed with their campaign, the rest were stopped outside." ENS

Namrata Jeph from NSUI. The Left coalition of the All India Students' Association and Students' Federation of India has fielded three women — including Saavy Gupta for the post of president.

On how they pick candidates, Ashutosh Singh, ABVP National Media Convener, told *The Indian Express*, "We've divided the campus into different zones; our units in colleges of each zone let us know as to which person is more active, can mobilise people and bring in votes. It could be a woman or a man, it doesn't matter. We go by this year-long survey and finalise candidates."

A student party official, who wished to be anonymous, pointed out: "As per my analysis, female students at off-campus colleges, hailing from outskirts areas, actively take part during elections... those who perhaps go to North Campus colleges come from far away states and are not so familiar with Delhi-NCR and, hence, do not show much participation."

NSUI's Ravi Pandey, chairman of the media unit, said, "It has always been our party's effort to make sure more women candidates participate in the election; we try to give preference to them too. We take many factors into account — including a candidate's winnability — before fielding them for a post."

He also took a dig at the ABVP, saying women's safety has become a concern: "This year, we fielded a woman candidate, who also belongs to the Scheduled Tribe community, for the post of Secretary. We hope she wins and sets an example that anyone can participate in student politics without fearing ABVP."

In the history of DUSU, which started in 1954, only 11 women have been elected president. Anju Sachdeva was the first woman to be elected in 1989, followed by Monika Kakkar in 1993, Shalu Malik in 1994 and Alka Lamba in 1995. The last woman president was Nupur Sharma in 2008.

# Delhi DMs to assess depts, move ruffles feathers in bureaucracy

**JATIN ANAND & MALLICA JOSHI**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE DELHI government has ordered "working groups" of District Magistrates (DMs) to assess the functioning of different departments in the city and to report on and ensure convergence between them. The groups have also been empowered to "call meetings with officers of the department concerned" and submit a detailed report with proposals and recommendations by October 5.

The move has ruffled feathers in the bureaucracy, with questions being raised about the feasibility of the exercise which "places junior district officials above senior officers".

On the other hand, a senior Delhi government official said this was in line with L-G V K Saxena's aim of making the post of an average DM "a more active and dynamic one". "Through these working groups, junior civil servants will be able to iden-

tify administrative possibilities in their jurisdiction across various avenues of public services. It will also enrich them in terms of experience for when they head larger individual departments," the official said.

Sources pointed out that the order coincided with the first meeting between newly sworn-in Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and her Council of Ministers and civil servants heading government departments during which both sides are said to have announced they would function as a cohesive unit.

"It is an odd situation, to say the least, where junior IAS officers with less experience — from AGMUT (Central cadre) batches 2011 to as recent as 2019 — of the service have been asked to make recommendations on better functioning to senior officials who've been heading government departments, in most cases, for longer tenures than they have been IAS officers," a senior official said.

As per the order, issued by the office of the divisional com-

missioner Tuesday, the DMs have been tasked with submitting detailed reports "with actionable recommendations" and "concrete proposals" related to the efficient functioning of 17 important government departments, including transport, health, education and environment as well as the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Council.

The order states that 10 district magistrates will also identify rules where the role of the Revenue Department functionaries has been envisaged.

According to the order, the aim was to "strengthen the functioning and operations of the Revenue Department, facilitate better convergence of work, schemes and service delivery involving multiple agencies, and foster greater inter-departmental coordination at the field level."

Four separate working groups of Delhi DMs, the order added, were being created for "detailed examination and preparation of cogent proposals".

## RALLY IN GURGAON AHEAD OF HARYANA POLLS

**AISWARYA RAJ**  
GURGAON, SEPTEMBER 25

STATING THAT the work he carried out in the last 10 years was just a trailer, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari Wednesday asked Gurgaon to vote for the BJP for improved road infrastructure.

The Haryana Assembly polls are on October 5. The BJP has fielded Mukesh Sharma from the Gurgaon Assembly seat.

At Bhim Nagar's Ram Leela ground, Gadkari, along with Gurgaon MP Rao Inderjit Singh, extended support to Sharma.

election will not decide the fate of BJP or Congress, but the future of Gurgaon. "It's been 75 years since Independence. The Congress was in power for 65 years at the Centre and state. In my department, in the last 10 years in Haryana, we've done three times more work than what Congress did in 65 years," he said.

Sharma, meanwhile, said he had appealed to Gadkari for an elevated road to deal with frequent traffic snarls in the city: "In 2009, when the Delhi-Jaipur highway was being made, the Congress awarded the tender to a contractor who abandoned the project... I will complete work on the highway by December and relieve you from this hardship."

Gadkari said in Delhi-NCR, his ministry's projects are worth Rs 65,000 crore: "We have Rs 2 lakh crore worth projects in Haryana that we have completed, begun, and are in the pipeline by the end of 2024."

He listed out projects including Dwarka Expressway, Gurgaon-Rewari Highway, and Mumbai Expressway and said tenders for 9 foot-overbridges will be floated in October for Rewari and Gurgaon and work on four flyovers in the region will start in two months: "I ask my journalist friends to record everything and to make 'breaking news' if I go back on my announced projects. No one will be able to publish news against me because if I take some-



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari (centre) with Gurgaon MP Rao Inderjit Singh and MLA pick Mukesh Sharma. Tashi Tobgyal

thing up, I won't go back on it." "Haryana's national highways

infrastructure will be better than the US by end of 2024... Work in

this 10 years was just a trailer, *asli film shuru hona baaki hai*," he said.

On caste, Gadkari said everyone wants to compete with each other on being the most backward and it is becoming political.

Stating that he won for the third time in his constituency, Nagpur, he added: "There are around 40,000-45,000 SCs and Muslims. In front of these 50,000 people, I said I won't compromise on my principles. *Jo karega Jat ki baat, usko kasse marunga lathh* (Anyone who talks about Jat, I will beat him with a stick)."

There needs to be "social and economic equality," he said. "Our issues are not due to caste, religion, language." MP Inderjit said he had asked

for support from Gurgaon and it gave him over 1 lakh votes and sent him to the Lok Sabha. "I presented your demand to Gadkari. We need an elevated road and he gave his assurance that it will be made. You have the assurance that an elevated road will come up in Gurgaon as well," he said.

On local issues of garbage, electricity, and roads, he said: "... Whose money runs Haryana? I'm telling you 100% of the income is from Gurgaon. In the coming days, we will give power to the pen wielded by the mayor, councillor, and MLA over bureaucrats to control them and even write an ACR against them if need be. We have the biggest budget and our roads have potholes, our sewage

lines are not clean, and our homes don't have electricity. We will make sure the 73rd and 74th Amendments are in effect like in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. I'm raising my voice for you and I need a companion to raise your demands. That is Mukesh Pehehwan (Sharma)."

Addressing Dalits in the crowd, the MP said, "The opposition said reservation will be revoked and the Constitution will be amended. When the party was elected, the PM first went to the Constitution. The SC community among us should rethink this, we are not seeking votes in the name of Brahmins or Ahirs, we are leaders of *chhattis biradaris* (36 clans)," he said.

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L-G seeks higher insurance premium for vehicles with history of traffic violations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

DELHI LIEUTENANT Governor (L-G) V K Saxena has written to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, seeking a change in policy that allows for higher insurance premium for vehicles that have a history of traffic violations.

involved vehicles that had previously been fined for traffic violations, primarily for speeding and red-light jumping. The vehicles that received more than three traffic challans in a year were found to have a high involvement in severe accidents, he said.

Table 12 pending CAG reports: L-G Secretariat to chief secy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

A DAY before the special two-day session of the Delhi Assembly begins, the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Secretariat on Wednesday wrote to Chief Secretary Dharmendra and Finance Secretary Ashish Chandra Verma, asking them to present 12 pending Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) reports in the Assembly after bringing the matter to the attention of Chief Minister Atishi.



L-G V K Saxena

the CAG to enable the laying of these reports in the Legislative Assembly of Delhi," the statement said. It added that these communications have been forwarded to the finance department and the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi but no proposal has till now been submitted to the L-G by the government for tabling these reports in the Assembly.

NBCC official duped in 'digital arrest' case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

A SENIOR official in the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) was duped of Rs 55 lakh in a case of 'digital arrest', said police. Three people have been arrested in the case. Of the duped amount, Rs 20 lakh was returned to the victim.

According to police, on September 9, the 35-year-old woman received a call, wherein the caller claimed to be a customs official from Terminal 2 of Mumbai International Airport. "The caller claimed

a parcel containing 16 fake passports, 58 ATM cards, and 40 grams of MDMA, with her details listed as the sender, was intercepted on September 6. He further claimed Mumbai Police had issued an arrest warrant against her," said DCP (IFSO Special Cell) Hemant Tiwari.

According to police, the accused kept video calling the victim on WhatsApp, claiming she was under digital arrest till the CBI made their way to nab her. "They then asked her to transfer Rs 55 lakh to

proceed with money laundering charges," the officer said. The men then vanished. The woman filed a complaint with the IFSO on September 12. The IFSO tracked the money to accounts of a fake firm used to funnel the proceeds from frauds through multiple accounts. Tracing the mobile numbers used in the fraud, police arrested Prabhakar Kumar, 24, and Rajesh Kumar, 27 and Arjun Singh, 29.



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THINK LOGISTICS THINK CONCOR CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH AT 36th AGM OF CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED Held on 25th Sept., 2024

Putting India's Growth Story On High-speed

Green Logistics-LNG Powered Trucks, Warehouse & Distribution Logistics, AI Based Terminal Management System, 66 Terminals including 16 MMLP's setup across the Country, First Mile Last Mile Service

Dear Shareholders, Ladies and Gentlemen! Good afternoon. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend a very warm welcome to our shareholders and all stakeholders. It is a great privilege and honour to address you for the first time after taking over as Chairman and Managing Director of CONCOR in this 36th Annual General Meeting. Thank you for sparing your valuable time for joining this AGM of our Company.

The World today is at a juncture facing both new opportunities and concerns. On one hand, we have immense developments in the field of artificial intelligence, use of digital platforms, robotics and computing. While on the other, there is an instability created by global conflicts threatening peace, stability and economic development. And then there are the over-loomng issues of climate change, rising cost of living, lack of food security, inadequate livelihood and decline in the global merchandise trade by 1.2% last year. In the last Union budget of India, there is an attempt to address these concerns by focusing on employment, skilling, MSMEs, infrastructure, energy security and next generation reforms, to accelerate socio economic development.

Albert Einstein has said and I quote-In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity. This is truly applicable to our country, which is an oasis of opportunities amidst global turmoil and supply chain disruptions, steadfastly marching ahead confidently to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat in the Amrit Kaal.

The report of the Directors and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 with the reports of Auditors and comments of Comptroller & Auditor General of India have already been circulated to you and with your permission, I take them as read. Now, I would like to elaborate briefly inter-alia about the economic scenario, sectoral outlook and Company's achievements during the year 2023-24 along with the future prospects.

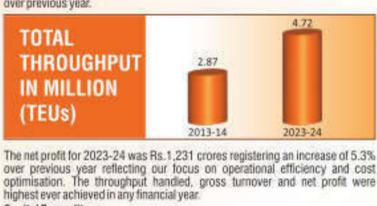
As per the World Economic Outlook, April 2024 from International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global economy registered a growth of 3.2% in 2023, marginally lower than 3.4% in 2022. In this turbulent year, India is a lighthouse of growth as the fastest growing economy with 8.2% GDP growth last year. This has evoked global respect and a promise for a bright future for our country.

It is being predicted that India may contribute 18% of World GDP growth in next five years from 10% at present. Its per capita GDP is likely to touch US\$4,000 by 2030 from around US\$2,500 at present. The economic transformation achieved by India is a testimony of Governments' far-sighted policies and execution on the ground. It is expected that the capital allocation for creating physical and digital infrastructure and efficient execution, will propel the cycle of investment, consumption and employment.

In India, the major opportunities are emerging from diversification of global supply chains, digital revolution and the green transition. Recognising this, the Government has continued to carry out path breaking reforms and policy interventions to create conducive environment enhancing our competitiveness globally. Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government in this respect are enhanced public Capex, creating digital infrastructure, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes to attract private investment, Atmanirbhar Bharat targeted welfare spending, efficient delivery of grass root benefits, etc.

automation, robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) has helped logistic sector in reducing human error, optimizing solutions, monitoring and managing services in real time thereby ensuring that goods are moved, stored and delivered with maximum efficiency. I would like to assure you that your Company is fully geared up to reap the benefits from these emerging opportunities to achieve substantial growth.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS: In the backdrop of challenging global business environment, it is comforting to note that with the dedication and hard work of team CONCOR, your Company has delivered robust performance during the year. This impressive performance on various parameters are as follows:



The net profit for 2023-24 was Rs.1,231 crores registering an increase of 5.3% over previous year reflecting our focus on operational efficiency and cost optimisation. The throughput handled, gross turnover and net profit were highest ever achieved in any financial year.

Capital Expenditure: In order to capitalise on emerging business opportunities and to achieve long term sustainable growth, the company is firmly continuing with its strategy of capacity addition with an expansion of its terminals, acquisition of wagons, containers, handling equipment and creating IT infrastructure. It incurred a capital expenditure of Rs.745 crores during the year. Further, recognising the importance of research and development for improving efficiency, mitigating risks and exploring new avenues, an expenditure of Rs.7.4 crores was incurred towards development of indigenous containers, solutions for bulk cement movement, modification and upgradation of BLC wagons into BLCM wagons. Three new terminals at Jajpur, Kadakola and Paradip were developed during the year.



Net Worth, Dividend and Market Capitalisation: The Net worth of the Company as on 31.03.2024 was Rs.11,812 crores. It scaled the highest ever market capitalisation of Rs.72,747 crores recently on 04.06.2024. The Company has always followed the policy of rewarding its shareholders and now it is paying dividend every quarter. During the year, three interim dividends totalling to 180% (Rs.9/- per share) were paid and a final dividend of 50% (Rs.2.50 per share) has been proposed for your approval. The total dividend for the year would be Rs.700.69 crores as compared to Rs.670.22 crores in previous year.

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES: Your Company has cemented its leadership position with the largest available modern terminals having presence in almost all container handling ports and major industrial hubs. It has a large fleet of rolling stock, containers, handling equipment, IT enabled operations with Customs and customer interface enabling your Company to provide efficient and reliable value-added services to its customers. Your Company is well poised to tap new business opportunities arising from potential in EXIM and Domestic container volumes particularly from full commissioning of DFC. The initiative to use terminal capacity for promoting double stack movement between hinterland and gateway ports has helped in an increase of rail co-efficient and made its services more competitive. Several initiatives have been taken and strategies are in place to propel the business. Some of the strategies which are being adopted are as under:

There has been a substantial improvement in the performance of two subsidiaries of the Company namely SIDCUL CONCOR Infra Company Ltd. and Punjab Logistics Infrastructure Limited and they have now started generating profits. The impetus of the government for setting up new MMLPs, Ports, SEZs, etc. offers tremendous opportunities to your Company to be the partner in same through arrangements of mutual benefit.

While the existing Joint Ventures have continued to perform well, new strategic alliances are also being explored. During the year, MOUs were entered with Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Indraprastha Gas Limited for LNG fuel, NTPC Vidyaar Nigam Limited (for solar power), DB Schenker (for EXIM and Domestic Business) and Central Warehousing Corporation (for logistics solutions).

TECHNOLOGY AND STANDARDISATION: The Company is always on the forefront to leverage technology for sustainable progress well ahead of its peers. The proactive investment in technology by the Company has paid off well. Your Company has robust system covering the following functions:

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: I agree with the quote of a well-known writer Robin Sharma that "The bigger the dream, the more important the team." Your Company is a progressive organisation and it firmly believes in the magic of team work. It is true that none of us is as smart as all of us. Thus, the thrust of your company is to capture the collective capabilities to triumph. The business of the Company is run professionally by talented team of 1286 CONCORians.

Right placement and refinement of employees is primary function after their induction and an alignment is maintained between individual performance and goals of the organisation. Appropriate training is provided through in-house and external programmes to improve the skills of the employees. The remuneration policies are in line with the DPE guidelines and the social security measures, in addition to gratuity and provident fund, include compensation employment, post retirement pension and medical benefits.

Health and safety of employees is a priority and the company strives for a secure work-life balance for them. Employees' physical and mental health are fostered by offering facilities such as gym and yoga courses at the workplace. The company also encourages them to participate in sport activities such as marathons, cricket and badminton matches and other sport events. With the objective of skilling our youth, students from various educational institutions are also being provided 8-12 weeks of internship in the organisation. With the conducive working environment, best practices and remuneration, the attrition rate is less than 2%.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE: Your Company is a Navratna Undertaking committed to promote and strengthen the standards of corporate governance by abiding with best practices of accountability, transparency, fairness and responsibility in all its activities. It has put in place the framework of best policies, practices, structure and ethics in the Organisation. The Company is committed to do things the right way which is ethical as well as compliant to all applicable legislations. In recognition of Company's adoption of best practices and compliance with various performance standards, DPE has rated your Company outstanding on Corporate Governance parameters.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES: Your Company has been conferred with several awards and accolades for its outstanding performance, some of these are: CONCOR ranked 248th on the "Fortune India 500" list of 2023. Conferred award of 'Inland Container Depot & Rail Operator of the Year (Public)' during the 15th Edition of CONQUEST 2024 by EXIM India. Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) felicitated the Company for Outstanding Performance for achieving high rail handling in FY 2022-23. Goldman Sachs has picked up CONCOR as one of important enabler companies for Hon'ble Prime Ministers ambitious Make in India program.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & SUSTAINABILITY: Here I would like to quote the father of our Nation Mahatma Gandhi who said - "Be the change that you wish to see in the world". Inspired by this vision, your Company is committed for carrying out its business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. It has put in place well-structured policy and procedures for implementing the projects under its CSR initiatives. It believes in the philosophy that the long-term sustainable growth can be achieved by balancing the needs of all stakeholders and contributing to the upliftment and well-being of the under-privileged sections of the community. I want to read few lines from the book 'Kuruksheera' written by Rashtra Kavi Shri Ramdhari Singh Dinkar:

With these principles, the CSR initiatives during the year continued to be focused on overall development of the society with emphasis on health and nutrition activities in line with the guidelines of DPE. In addition, the CSR activities of the Company are also carried out in the areas of education, skill development, environment sustainability, sports, infrastructure development, etc. Through these initiatives, your Company has positively impacted the lives of large number of stakeholders in the country and the work done by it has been

appreciated. During 2023-24, an amount of Rs. 17.31 crores have been spent on CSR, which inter-alia includes work in the following areas:

- Several activities in the field of health and education were carried out in Aspirational districts adopted by CONCOR, i.e. Kandhamal (Odisha), Shrawasti and Chandauli (Uttar Pradesh), Asifabad (Telangana) and Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).
- 115 nos. of health camps were organised at major locations of CONCOR facilities, which benefited approximately 50,000 stakeholders.
- Upliftment of 300 children and young women engaged in beggary by funding a campaign 'Bhiksha Nahi Shiksha' in Delhi.
- Improvement and up-gradation in 23 Rural Schools of Jajna District of Maharashtra; construction of classrooms in School at Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh and construction of Computer Training Centre at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- Supported education of under-privileged students in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi benefiting 1,200 students.
- To promote Atmanirbhar Bharat mission, supported the skilling of 100 students in field of Business Process Management, Finance & Accounting at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.
- To promote women empowerment, provided skill development training to 240 women/girls in the field of Tailoring and Make-up Artist at Tughlakabad, New Delhi.
- Installed 350 solar lights at Barabanki and Lucknow Districts, Uttar Pradesh.
- Development of sports infrastructure at Delhi and Bhojpur, Bihar.

As you know, MSMEs are a significant contributor to India's GDP and overall economic development. They are a major source of employment and a driving force behind the country's international trade. In recognition of their deep roots in local communities promoting grassroots-level economic prosperity, your company is continuously making efforts to work for development of MSMEs. In this direction, during year 46.45% of total input material was directly sourced from such producers.

To make our country atmanirbhar in container manufacturing, the Company took the lead by giving development orders to the beginning and has created an ecosystem for container manufacturing in the Country. Later regular orders on domestic manufacturers were placed, who are now supplying containers. To promote environment friendly mode of transportation, the Company has started its LNG fleet of 100 trucks for providing FLM services. Further, looking at the performance of this fleet and its contributions to environment, the Company is in the process of placing orders for procurement of 200 more such LNG trucks.

WAY FORWARD: India took 60 years to become a one trillion US\$ economy and 12 years to add another two trillion US\$. India's achieving 5th place in the World economy is remarkable at a time when most of the economies are facing slowdown. As per a forecast of IMF, by 2027 India is set to emerge the 3rd largest economy surpassing Japan and Germany. The Company is fully convinced about the long term sustainable economic progress of our country posturing a bright prospect for logistics sector, which is the backbone for trade and commerce. In the famous book 'The Wings of Fire' by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, there is a quote, "To succeed in life and achieve results, you must understand and master three mighty forces - desire, belief and expectation."

The Company aims the holistic growth not only in terms of profits but to bring positive changes in the society and environment and create sustainable value for all stakeholders. I am sure that expansion of rail and road infrastructure, full commissioning of DFC, burgeoning e-commerce, expansion of infrastructure at existing sea ports, proposal to set up mega ports at Cochin, Tamil Nadu, Sagor, West Bengal, Durgapattinam, Andhra Pradesh and Vidhawan, Maharashtra, Make in India push, rising trade, consumption, commencement of rupee bilateral trade with 19 countries, etc. will open new avenues for substantial growth in the logistics sector for which your Company is future ready. The Company with its strong capabilities of 66 terminals, 16,997 wagons, 44,492 containers, 108 RSTs, etc. is well geared up to retain its leadership position in the industry. Your company today is well positioned and committed to be partner in this progress of our country as a leader in the logistics sector with its motto of Think Logistics, Think CONCOR.

I firmly believe in a famous saying: The best way to predict your future is to create it. Our mission is to make CONCOR a Company of outstanding quality and to provide responsive, cost effective, efficient and reliable logistic solutions to customers and be the first choice. Your Company derives inspiration from its above mission to make it an institution of repute, competitive and champion of change. Your Company is blessed to be in sunrise sector which is at the point of inflection of growth. With abundance of opportunities, strong balance sheet, conducive business environment and skilled team, I see a very bright future for your Company.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Before concluding, I express my sincere appreciation to my fellow Board members for their valuable inputs and guidance. I wish to thank the Ministry of Railways, Shipping, Commerce and Industry, Finance and other Ministries, Departments of Customs, various State Governments, investors, JV partners, value chain partners, customers and regulators, with whose motivation and support, the Company has been flourishing.

I acknowledge and appreciate the guidance and valuable support of C&AG of India and our Auditors. I also extend my thanks to the electronic and print media for providing constructive coverage. I would like to place on record my appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for team CONCOR for their outstanding performance and their hard work and talent. Your Company is well poised to attain new heights. My Dear shareholders, a special thank to all of you for the faith and confidence reposed in the management. I look forward to your valuable support to us going forward. May God bless you all and our dear country always.

Jai Hind, Jai Bharat! 25th September, 2024 Sanjay Swarup Chairman and Managing Director

## MAHARASHTRA ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (MEDA)

(A Government of Maharashtra Institute)  
Aundh Road, Opposite Spicer College, Near Commissionerate of Animal Husbandry,  
Aundh, Pune - 411 007 | E-mail: gmsolar@mahaurja.com | Tel. No.: 020-35000450

### NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER

Maharashtra Energy Development Agency (MEDA) invites Tender for Survey, Design, Fabrication, Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning and Operation & Maintenance for a period of 5 years of 216 Nos. of 9-meter Solar LED High Mast at various locations in NAGPUR District in the state of Maharashtra.

For detailed Tender Document, interested bidders should visit website [www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in). Tender submission will be online from 26-09-2024 @ 11.00 am to 03-10-2024 @ 3.00 pm. Additional Director General, MEDA reserves the right to accept or reject anyone or all the Tender without giving reasons thereof.

Additional Director General, MEDA

## कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल

केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैके शाखा)

द्वितीय निविदा सूचना

क्र. 149/के.कर्म/2024 भोपाल, दिनांक 24/9/2024

नगर निगम भोपाल केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला के द्वारा विभिन्न प्रकार के वाहन किराये पर लिये जाने हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदा निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।

क्र.	निविदा क्र.	सामान का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत	धरोहर राशि	निविदा फार्म का मूल्य	प्रदाय अवधि
1	2024_UAD_357230_2	HIRING OF VEHICLES J.C.B. MACHINE (3 D.X. OR 76 H.P.), DUMPER (8-10 METER CAPACITY) OR EQUALANT VEHICLES, TRUCK 407 OR EQUALANT VEHICLES. E-RICKSHAW AND TATA MAGIC FOR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL (SECOND CALL)	15318000/-	76590/-	12500/-	आवश्यकतानुसार

BID SUBMISSION END DATE 22/10/2024 TIME-05:30 PM  
BID OPENING DATE 23/10/2024 TIME-05:30 PM

निविदा से संबंधित अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी वेबसाइट [mptenders.gov.in](http://mptenders.gov.in) पर देखी एवं केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैकेनिकल) से कार्यालयीन समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

नि० क 499/024/025

## Govt. of Odisha

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (AGRI.), CENTRAL ZONE, BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA

Phone No- (0674)-2571975, Fax No. (0674)-2571075, E-mail ID-secz.dag@gov.in

"e"-Procurement Notice No- 1250/Agri, Date-24.09.2024  
Bid Identification No: S.E. (A), C/Z,BBSR - 02/2024-25

The Superintending Engineer (Agri.), Central Zone, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system from the eligible class of contractors through e-procurement in ONLINE MODE only in the website "www.tendersodisha.gov.in", for the work as detailed below(Composite Tender)

1. Nature/Type of the work	: 2nos. Precast RCC Boundary Wall works
2. Estimated Cost put to Tender-	: Varies from Rs. 52.00 Lakhs to Rs. 226.50 Lakhs
3. EMD Amount	: Varies from Rs. 52554.00 to Rs.226092.00
4. Bid Cost	: Rs. 10,000/- as Mentioned in Column - 04
5. Period of completion	: 04 (Four) to 06(Six) Calendar Months Mentioned in Column - 07
6. No. of work (Tender)	: 02 no.
7. Class of Contractor	: 'B' & 'A' class with valid License as Mentioned in Column - 06
8. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: 27.09.2024 at 10.AM. to Dt.15.10.2024 at 5.00 P.M.
9. Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt.15.10.2024 at 5.00 P.M
10. Date of submission of original documents in the tender box	: Dt. 30.09.2024 at 10.AM. to Dt.17.10.2024 at 5.00 P.M. Working days only.
11. Date & time of opening of online bids	: Dt.18.10.2024 at 11.00 AM & onwards
12. Name and address of the officer inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer (Agri.), Central Zone, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

NB. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only in the e-Procurement website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> with matching class DSC. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender / other details of the DTCN can also be seen in the said website. Authority reserve the right to reject/accept any or all of the tenders, increase/decrease the quantities of works without assigning any reasons thereof.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Agri.)  
Central Zone, Bhubaneswar

(OIPR- 01486/11/0001/2425)

## कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूँटी।

ई-अति अल्पकालीन पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ई-अति अल्पकालीन पुनर्निविदा संख्या:-17/RI/2024-25/RWD/KHUNTI, दिनांक- 24.09.2024

कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूँटी द्वारा निम्न विवरण के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

1. कार्य का नाम:-

क्र० सं०	आई०डी० सं० / पैकेज सं०	प्रखण्ड	पथ का नाम	प्राकल्पित राशि (रुपये में)	अग्रघन की राशि (रुपये में)	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि	टेंडर कोल नं०
1	RWD-KHUNTI-15/2024-25	मुख्.	खिलीकोटा से सुरंग तक पथ निर्माण कार्य (लं०- 3.200 कि०मी०।)	3,23,35,100.00	6,47,000.00	12 माह।	द्वितीय।

वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि:- 26.09.2024।

ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय:- 04.10.2024 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे।

निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय:- 07.10.2024 अपराह्न 3.30 बजे

निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता:- कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूँटी, पिन-835210।

ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं०:- 9431170803

अग्रघन की राशि स्वीकृत परिमाण विपत्र के अनुरूप भी मान्य होगा।

विरस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट [jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in) में देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता  
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूँटी।

PR 336877 Rural Work Department(24-25)D

## KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

# 49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road

Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : [www.kiadb.in](http://www.kiadb.in)

No. IADB/ENG/ETND-DPR-03/436/2024-25 Date: 25.09.2024

### SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites tender from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system having an office at Bengaluru with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of work for project mentioned below:-

**Name of the work :** Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) Including Economic Analysis, Surveying, Layout Plan, Design, Preparation of Estimates, Cost Structure etc., for the proposed Industrial Area at Geddalahalli, Machenahalli & Gottigere, Sompura Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. (Extent 520A-30 G).

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **14.10.2024 upto 4.00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-

DIPR/CP/2193/Zen/2024-25 Chief Engineer-1, KIADB, Bengaluru

## OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION DIVISION-2, P.W.D AGRA

### Notice inviting E-Tender

Letter No: 45/10A/2024-25 Date: 13.09.2024

1. The Executive Engineer, C.D.-2, P.W.D. Agra on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the Percentage rate bids from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP, P.W.D. Road work in category A,B,C,D. & Experience holder of Two Years of ferry work. The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

2.

Sl. No.	District	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lac)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Document (in Rs.)	Time of Completion	Address of Executive Engineer executing the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1	Agra	Repairing of Pantoon at Yamuna river between village Nagla Chatura and village Sikandarpur (Dayalbagh) in district Agra Protection of ferry Disintegration, Maintenance.	25.00	2.50	Tender Cost + S.T.C. + G.S.T. = Rs. 950.00	11 Month	Executive Engineer, Construction Division-2, P.W.D., Agra	Superintending Engineer, Agra Circle, P.W.D., Agra	Chief Engineer, Agra Zone, P.W.D., Agra
2	Agra	Repairing of Pantoon at Yamuna river between Gijauli village and Mau (Anandi) Bhairi Ghat in Agra district Protection of ferry Disintegration, Maintenance.	25.00	2.50	Tender Cost + S.T.C. + G.S.T. = Rs. 950.00	11 Month	Executive Engineer, Construction Division-2, P.W.D., Agra	Superintending Engineer, Agra Circle, P.W.D., Agra	Chief Engineer, Agra Zone, P.W.D., Agra
3	Agra	Repairing of Pantoon at Samogar Ghat Ferry in Distt. Agra on Yamuna River, erection of ferry, Protection of ferry Disintegration, Maintenance and Supply of Power Warge in Rainy Season.	23.50	2.35	Tender Cost + S.T.C. + G.S.T. = Rs. 950.00	11 Month	Executive Engineer, Construction Division-2, P.W.D., Agra	Superintending Engineer, Agra Circle, P.W.D., Agra	Chief Engineer, Agra Zone, P.W.D., Agra

3. Time allowed for completion is including Rainy Season.

4. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website <http://etenderup.nic.in> and Prahari (<http://wms.upppw.gov.in/Prahari>) From 05-10-2024 to 11-10-2024. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of (<http://etenderup.nic.in>) and Prahari App with all documents as per GO No 14/2020/879(1)/23-7/2020(176) (m) / 06 Dt 25-08-2020 on or before 12:00 Hours Dt. 11-10-2024. Technical Bid received online will be opened on 11-10-2024 at 12:30 Hours.

5. Contractor will upload Tender the copy of Registered Power Warge.

6. Contractor will upload the experience certificate of the same work.

7. Contractor should Quote their rates without G.S.T. which shall be paid extra as per applicable at the time of payment.

8. The prospective bidders who do not possess Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) must get the same issued from approved agencies before submission of bids.

9. Labour Cess @ 1.00% will be Deducted from contractors bill at the time of payment.

10. The bidders are required to submit Original receipt of Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account as per GO. No.- 742/78-2-2018-42 LT/2017 T.C. IT & Electronics Section-2 Dated-03-12-2018 follows as:

(1) Online Tender Cost towards the cost of bid designation (As per Column 6) by Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account (Non Refundable).

(2) Online Bid Security (As per Column 5) in favour of disbursement of Column- 8 by Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account.

(3) Original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4(B)(i) of ITB as per GO. No.-3070/78-2-2018-421-7/2017(22)IT. and Electronics Section-2 Dated-03-01-2018.

UPID-219820 Dt. 24/09/2024

Executive Engineer  
Construction Division-2, P.W.D., Agra

[www.upidadv.gov.in](http://www.upidadv.gov.in)

## SALUTE THE SOLDIER

INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE (ITBP)

26 September, 2024



Constable Balbir Singh

ITBP salutes its braveheart Constable Balbir Singh of 10th Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty fighting bravely on this day in Jammu & Kashmir in 2002.

Resident of : Vill.- Behrawala, Distt.- Sirmour (Himachal Pradesh)

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

JAMMU & KASHMIR

26 September 1990

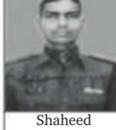


Shaheed Inspector R. S. Upadhyay 15-07-1939 To 26-09-1990

On 25 September 1990, while returning from Battalion HQ Quazigund, two vehicles of 53 Battalion were ambushed around 1845 hrs. The terrorists, firing recklessly from behind a vegetable garden fence, targeted the convoy. Despite being hit by bullets, C/Dvr Darshan Lal Dogra bravely drove through the ambush. Insp R.S. Upadhyay, though wounded, continued to fight and inspire his men. He was evacuated to Hospital, but succumbed to his injuries on 26 September 1990.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

26 September 2014



Shaheed Constable Kirtikar Nishad 06-07-1990 To 26-09-2014

On the 26th of September 2014, Shaheed Constable Kirtikar Nishad was on sentry duty at main gate of E/44 Battalion of CRPF under PS- Mahraj Ganj, Distt. Srinagar. At around 1824 hrs, some unknown militants, taking advantage of the dense crowd, fired at him. One bullet hit him and he sustained severe injuries. Despite sustaining injuries he tried to open fire but did not fire as the target was not clear. He was evacuated to the hospital but he succumbed to his injuries and attained martyrdom.

JHARKHAND

# Govt hikes minimum wage, DA for skilled & unskilled workers

## REVISED MONTHLY WAGES

Unskilled worker	₹18,066
Semi-skilled worker	₹19,929
Skilled worker	₹21,917
Non-matriculate	₹19,929
Matriculate (non-graduate)	₹21,917
Graduate	₹23,836



### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

TWO DAYS after assuming charge as the chief minister, Atishi on Wednesday increased both dearness allowance (DA) and minimum wage for skilled and unskilled workers. The new rates will come into effect from October 1.

The minimum wage was last revised in 2019, following which the government has been revising DA every six months. "After the DA was revised last October, it was supposed to be revised again in April this year. But with the then chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in jail and due to the Lok Sabha elections, the same was delayed," said an official.

The monthly wages of unskilled workers have been increased from Rs 17,494 to Rs 18,066. While for semi-skilled workers, the monthly wages have been increased from 19,279 to Rs 19,929, skilled labourers have seen a salary jump from Rs 21,215 to Rs 21,917.

Further, the government has increased the minimum wages for supervisor and clerical cadre of employees, such as matriculate, non-matriculate and graduate.

Addressing her first press conference after becoming the CM, Atishi on Wednesday took on the BJP. "The Delhi government has once again decided to increase minimum wages in Delhi. Delhi has the highest minimum wages in the entire country... On the other hand, there are BJP-ruled states where the minimum wage is half that of Delhi."

Accusing BJP of being "anti-poor" and earlier trying to stop labourers from getting a salary hike, Atishi said, "The BJP has always worked against the poor. When Arvind Kejriwal's government in Delhi talked about increasing the minimum wage in 2016-17, BJP stopped it through its L-G. But then we moved court and hiked the wages twice a year."

She further said that before the AAP came to power in Delhi, the minimum wage for unskilled workers in Delhi was only Rs 7,722. The minimum wage for semi-skilled workers was Rs 8,528 and that of skilled workers was only Rs 9,388, she added.

"In the last 10 years, the government has been providing a better and respectable life to the common people. In the coming four months also, we will continue to work in the same way..."

# Delhi sees poor AQI for first time since June

## SOPHIYA MATHEW NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

DELHI'S AIR quality dipped to 'poor' on Wednesday, after a relief of over three months.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the city saw an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 235 on Wednesday. The last time that Delhi's air fell to the 'poor' category was on June 12 when it recorded AQI of 211. On June 19, it had recorded 'very poor' AQI at 306.

Delhi is expected to see light rain for at least six days, which is set to help clean the city's air.

The primary contributor to the city's air pollution is currently the transport sector, according to the Decision Support System for Air Quality Management in Delhi. On Tuesday, the AQI had been recorded in the "moderate" category, with a reading of 197 until 4 PM, the CPCB said.

Restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which are invoked once the AQI falls to the poor category (201 to 300), however, are not in the offing, as pollution levels are expected to dip further over the next few days.

The Sub-Committee of the Commission for Air Quality

Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) has decided to keep a close watch on the situation for a day or more, before invoking restrictions.

"Delhi's average AQI has already started showing a declining trend... and is further expected to improve with time," the CAQM said in a statement. It also referred to an improvement in overall AQI expected as per the India Meteorological Data (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) forecasts.

As per the IITM forecast - designed to provide early air quality warning in the Capital - the AQI

is expected to be in the moderate to poor category in the coming six days. A generally cloudy sky with light rain has been forecast until September 28 by the IMD.

The IMD's extended range forecast from September 19 to October 2 forecasts southwest monsoon withdrawal to be majorly complete in a week from Thursday (September 26).

Paddy stubble burning, which contributes to Delhi's overall pollution load, meanwhile, has started in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

According to the data received from the daily bulletin on paddy residue burning prepared by

Consortium for Research Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modeling from Space, 166 such cases have been reported between September 15 and 25 across Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The number of cases in Haryana, at 70, have been the highest since 2020. In Punjab, 93 cases have been reported so far, higher than last year but below the 139 cases reported in 2022. Uttar Pradesh, meanwhile, has seen only three cases so far.

V K Sehgal, nodal officer at ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, said, "The burning detected so far is not con-

cerning... The real problem will arise from October 15 and the expected peak time will be between October 26 and November 10."

Meanwhile, the maximum temperature in the Capital on Wednesday settled at 37.3 degrees Celsius, three notches above the season's average, according to the IMD. The minimum temperature was recorded at 26.8 degrees Celsius, 2.9 notches above normal while the humidity was 60 per cent at 5.30 pm. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle around 34 degrees Celsius and 25 degrees Celsius, respectively, on Thursday.

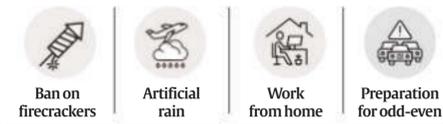
# Come winter, drones to monitor hotspots, ban on firecrackers

## 21-point Winter Action Plan unveiled

- Real-time monitoring of pollution hotspots through drones
- Formation of special task force
- Control of dust and vehicular pollution, open waste and stubble burning
- Operating green war room, green Delhi app and e-waste eco-park
- Operation of mobile anti-smog guns
- Real-time source apportionment study
- Increasing green area or plantation
- Holding dialogue with Union government and neighbouring states
- Seeking public participation



Delhi expected to see light rain for six days. Praveen Khanna



- Hari Ratna Award
- Voluntary restriction of vehicles

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

REAL-TIME MONITORING of pollution hotspots through drones, ban on firecrackers, formation of a special task force, operation of mobile anti-smog guns, work from home and artificial rain are some of the measures the Delhi government plans to implement to combat air pollution this winter.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday announced a 21-point Winter Action Plan (see box), saying that real-time monitoring will be conducted this year to identify the source and cause of pollution.

"For the first time, we have decided to use drones to monitor the (pollution) hotspots. Until last year, the inventory was done manually. This year, there will be real-time monitoring to identify the source and cause of air pollution," said Rai.

Rai said a six-member task force comprising officials from environment, transport and revenue departments, PWD, traffic police and Municipal Corporation of Delhi, would be responsible for monitoring the situation.

All construction sites spread over 500 sq m should complete mandated registrations in the appropriate portal, he added. Workers at such sites are to be sensitised to pollution norms.

On curbing dust pollution, Rai said, "In November and December, when pollution is at its peak, we have decided to sprinkle water on the roads thrice a day. Earlier, it was done only once."

In all, 85 road-sweeping machines, 500 water sprinklers and 200 mobile anti-smog guns will be put to use. An anti-dust campaign will begin on October 7.

"A ban on firecrackers will be implemented this year as well and

once the notification is issued, the ban will be fully enforced. The GRAP (Graded Response Action Plan) stages will come into effect and 588 teams have been formed to control the open burning of garbage," he said.

"We will encourage work from home and a voluntary reduction in the use of private vehicles. If necessary, the odd-even (road rationalisation) scheme will be implemented and artificial rain is also an option that we are exploring," Rai said.

Rai called "unique" the plan to honour those who have contributed to combating air pollution with Hari Ratna Awards in order to yield a positive encouragement.

With cases of stubble burning already having started coming in, Rai said a meeting with ministers of neighbouring states should be held to resolve this.

## Minor demands money, threatens to set off explosion in bank

New Delhi: Panic gripped a branch of the Axis Bank in West Delhi when a minor entered the premises on Wednesday night and threatened to set off an explosion if he was not handed over money by the staff. A police officer said that around 8 pm, they were informed that a teenager, who was carrying a box and a remote, had entered an Axis Bank branch in Vikaspuri, and was threatening the staff members who were about to close the office. "He shouted that he should be given the money, else he will set off an explosion," the officer said, adding that he carried a paper slip with the money demand. "The suspect was overpowered and was found to be a minor," the officer added. PTI

"In Eternal Memory"  
We salute the brave hearts who made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation.

With profound respect and gratitude, we remember our heroes, who laid down their life in the line of duty, protecting our country and its people. Their unwavering courage, unshakable commitment, and supreme sacrifice will forever be etched in our hearts. May their legacy inspire future generations forever. We offer our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of the martyr.

May their soul rest in eternal peace.  
In Homage  
Remembering The Immortals of Samba  
who fearlessly laid down their lives battling terrorists in OP CARNATIC on 28th September 13  
Colonel of the Regiment & All Ranks, 16th Light Cavalry

UNIVERSITY OF RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR  
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY  
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE  
Electronic online Technical and Financial Bids are invited to 04.10.2024 at 03.00 PM for the Purchase of Laboratory Equipments under RUSA Programme 2.0 Details may be seen in the Bidding Documents available at the website Portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> or the State Public Procurement Portal <http://sppp.raj.nic.in> or our website [www.uniraj.in](http://www.uniraj.in) of the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. The Bidding document may be download from there. UBN No: URA2425GLOB00086, NIB No: URA2425A0032. Prof. Ram Avtar Sharma Head & PI RUSA Project No.4

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank  
...भरोसे का प्रतीक ! ...the name you can BANK upon !  
Circle SASTRA Office, Bhagalpur (Ground Floor-Naulakha Apartment), Opp DIG Kothi, Badi Khanjarpur, Bihar-812001, (Email : cs8197@pnb.co.in)  
Possession Notice [Under Rule 8 (1) of security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]  
As per the powers conferred under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and under Section 13(12) of the Securities Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 read together with Rule 3, the Authorized Punjab National Bank. The undersigned as an officer issued demand notice as mentioned in the table below, asking the borrowers/guarantors to pay the amount specified in the respective notices against their names in the table within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said intimation in writing, was asked to The following borrowers/guarantors have not paid the amount specified in the respective notices issued under section 13(2) within the stipulated time, the aforesaid borrowers/guarantors and the general public are hereby informed that the undersigned has made payment against the property concerned have taken symbolic possession of the properties (guaranteed assets) mentioned in the following table in compliance with the powers conferred on them under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the dates mentioned. In particular the aforesaid borrowers/guarantors and the general public are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties mentioned in the following table and any transaction with the said properties shall be effected on the amount mentioned in the relevant column of the table and thereon. The interest will be subject to the charge of Punjab National Bank.

S. No	Branch Name	Name of Borrower / Guarantor	Claim Amount on Date	Date of Demand / Date of Possession	Description of Immovable Property
1.	BO - Khagaria Branch (493100)	Rupesh Kumar S/o Umesh Pathak & Priyanka Pathak W/o Rupesh Kumar	Rs.46,50,984.70 (Rupees Forty-Six Lakhs Fifty Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Four and Paise Seventy Only) as on 30/04/2024 plus interest and incidental expenses incurred by bank w.e.f.01/05/2024	13 (2)-04.05.2024 13 (4)-23.09.2024	Sale Deed Bearing No-1260 Dated 24-04-2017 Mortgaged In Favor Of Punjab National Bank By (1) Rupesh Kumar, S/O Sri Umesh Pathak & (2) Priyanka Pathak, W/O Sri Rupesh Kumar. At Mauza-Mathurapur, Tauzi No-1447, Thana No-265, Khata No 119, Khesra No-2064,2065, Pargana- Farkiya, Ward No-10, Area-09 Dhur (1.83 Decimal) under Nagar Parishad Area Khagariya. Bounded:- As per deed- North-Amarjeet Yadav, South-Hal Hari Lal, East-Sambhu Prasad, West-06-0' wide P.C.C Roads

Date- 23.09.2024  
Place- Khagaria  
Authorised Officer  
Punjab National Bank

# EXPRESS Careers

MORMUGAO PORT AUTHORITY  
APPOINTMENT ON DEPUTATION BASIS  
Brief Advertisement Notice No. GAD/PC-A/151/2024 Date: 26th Sept, 2024  
Mormugao Port Authority, Headland Sada invites applications from Central Government / State Governments / Union territory administration / Public Sector Undertakings / Autonomous Bodies (Other than Major Port Authorities) for filling up of One vacant post of Chief Engineer (HoD) on deputation basis for a period of 03 years through "Online Application Portal" (OAP) of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways website <https://onlinevacancy.shipmin.nic.in>. The applicant should register the same in online Application Portal.  
The last date for applying online is 11.10.2024. Applications in prescribed proforma through Proper Channel along with the documents in an envelope, superscribing "Application for the post of Chief Engineer (HoD) in Mormugao Port Authority on deputation basis" addressed to the Secretary, Mormugao Port Authority, "Saarasi" General Administration Department, Administrative Office Building, Headland Sada, Goa-403804 along with self-attested copies of certificates, last 5 years ACRs/APARs, etc. through Registered Post/Speed Post only. For further details, visit MPA website <https://www.mptgoa.gov.in>.  
Sd/-  
SECRETARY

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED  
(See Section 30BNS 2023 (section 82 Cr.PC)  
WHEREAS complaint has been made before me that Mohammad Moshin Ahmady S/o Ahmad Shah Khan R/o Flat No- 10, 3rd floor, Gali no- 01, Lal Dora, near Cambridge School Deoli, Delhi-110062 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence case no. SC/86/2020, VIII/38/DZU/2019, u/s 8, 21 & 29 NDPS Act, 1985 of Narcotics Control Bureau, Delhi Zonal Unit and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said Mohammad Moshin Ahmady S/o Ahmad Shah Khan cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Mohammad Moshin Ahmady S/o Ahmad Shah Khan R/o Flat No- 10, 3rd floor, Gali no- 01, Lal Dora, near Cambridge School Deoli, Delhi-110062 has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the Mohammad Moshin Ahmady S/o Ahmad Shah Khan R/o Flat No- 10, 3rd floor, Gali no- 01, Lal Dora, near Cambridge School Deoli, Delhi- 110062 is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on the day of 19.11.2024.  
By order  
Sh. Sudhir Kumar Sirohi  
SPL, Judge NDPS Act.  
Room No.35, P. Building  
Patiala House Court, New Delhi.  
CBC 19126/11/0020/2425

REGIONAL OFFICE:  
Bank of Baroda, First Floor, Diamond Complex, Dilli More, Darbhanga-846004 Cont. No. 8969513429, Website: [www.bankofbaroda.com](http://www.bankofbaroda.com)  
POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)  
[As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]  
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the receipt of the said notice.  
The borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules.  
The borrower(s)/guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF BARODA for the amount stated herein below and further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.  
The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time, available to redeem the secured assets.  
Name of Borrower / Guarantors & Description of Immovable Properties  
Branch / Name of Borrowers/ Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession / Amount Outstanding  
Description of the properties  
Branch: E Vijay Darbhanga Branch  
Mohammad Sabir S/o Mohammad Mohid (Borrower), Mrs. Uzama Reyaz W/o Mohammad Sabir (Co-Borrower) and Guarantor: Md. Samsuzzama S/o Md. Nisarul Haque  
Date of Demand Notice: 20.05.2024  
Date of Possession: 20.09.2024  
Amt: ₹20,40,077.32/- (Rupees Twenty lakh forty thousand seventy seven and thirty two paise only) plus unapplied interest from 09.05.2024 plus other charges (if any) as on 09.05.2024 (interest included upto 08.05.2024) together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.  
Date : 20.09.2024  
Place : Darbhanga  
Authorised Officer  
Bank of Baroda

REGIONAL OFFICE:  
Bank of Baroda, First Floor, Diamond Complex, Dilli More, Darbhanga-846004 Cont. No. 8969513429, Website: [www.bankofbaroda.com](http://www.bankofbaroda.com)  
NOTICE  
(Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (SARFAESI Act)  
In respect of loan availed by below mentioned Borrower through Bank of Baroda, Riga Branch which have become NPA on 08.09.2024 with below mentioned balance outstanding of dates mentioned below. We have already issued detailed demand notice dated 19.09.2024 mentioned below under section 13(2) of Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 by registered post with acknowledgment due to you, which has been returned undelivered/ due to not accepted by borrower. We have indicated our intension of taking possession of hypothecated securities and Mortgaged Property Owned by following Borrower/ Guarantors as per section 13(4) of the Act in case of your failure to pay amount mentioned below within 60 days Details are hereunder.

Name & address of Borrowers/Guarantor	Demand Notice Date Outstanding Amount as on 08.09.2024 (inclusive of interest up to 08.09.2024)	Security agreement with brief description of securities
Borrower: 1. M/s Kunal Enterprises, Prop.-Mr. Ashwini Kunal Srivastava S/o Nawal Kishore Prasad, Village-Bhakurhar, House No.-111, Ward No. 18, P.S-Bairganiya, Dist.-Sitamarhi, Pin-843313. 2. Mr. Ashwini Kumar Srivastava S/o Nawal Kishore Prasad, Village-Bhakurhar, House No.-111, Ward No. 18, P.S-Bairganiya, Dist.-Sitamarhi, Pin-843313. Guarantor: Smt. Shashi Srivastava W/o Nawal Kishore Prasad, Village-Bhakurhar, House No.-111, Ward No. 18, P.S-Bairganiya, Dist.-Sitamarhi, Pin-843313. Branch: Riga Branch	Demand Notice Date 19.09.2024 Rs. 24,90,893.89/- (Rupees Twenty four lac ninety thousand eight hundred ninety three and eighty nine paise only) + Unapplied interest plus other charges (if any)	Hypothecation of Stock: Equitable mortgage of property (description mentioned below)
Detail of Immovable property: 1. Mauza -Sitamarhi, Ward No-22(Old), 17(New), Khesra No-45, Thana no.-315, Thana- Sitamarhi, Anchal-Dumra, D.S.R. Office-Sitamarhi Dist-Sitamarhi, Area-04 Dec. in the name of Mr. Ashwini Kunal Srivastava S/o-Nawal Kishor Prasad. Boundary:- N-Brij Kumar Ray, S-8 feet chaura rasta E-Smt. Ugra Tara Devi W-Nilam Devi, 2. Khata No-283, Khesra No-3803, Thana no.-03, Mauza -Bhakurhar,Thana-Bairganiya, Anchal- Bairganiya, S. R Office-Dheng, Dist.-Sitamarhi Area-16 Dec. in the name of Smt. Shashi Srivastava W/o- Nawal Kishor Prasad. Boundary (As per Sale Deed):- N-Mahajan, S-Nij number Haza, E-Ramashankar Pd. W-Shivdhari Das. Boundary (At Present):- N-Mahajan, S-Pitch Road (Main Road), E-Ramashankar Pd., W-Shivdhari Das.		

Your are all advised the above demand notice letter send to you through postal authority by authorised officer of Bank of Baroda, Riga Branch. (1) Please collect the notice copy from bank for more and complete details. (2) Please pay the balance outstanding amount with interest and costs etc. as mentioned in above within 60 days from the date of notice publication referred to above to avoid further action under the SARFAESI Act.  
Place: Sitamarhi  
Date : 25.09.2024  
Authorised Officer  
Bank of Baroda



BJP's Baldev Sharma (centre) faces, among other things, anger of erstwhile shrine custodians. X

## After Ayodhya, Vaishno Devi seat tough trek for BJP

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 25

ONE OF the two visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Jammu ahead of the elections was to the Katra town in the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Assembly seat of Reasi district.

On September 19, the PM held a rally and road show in Katra, which is the base camp for pilgrims visiting the Vaishno Devi shrine. "A government is required here (in J&K), which respects our faith and promotes our culture," Modi said.

The Vaishno Devi shrine has always been significant for the Modi-led BJP, with the then PM nominee of the party praying at the temple before kickstarting his 2014 Lok Sabha campaign.

This time, the significance is doubled as, after the 2022 delimitation, there is now a Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Assembly seat, carved out of the Reasi and Udhampur Assembly constituencies. It voted in the second phase of the Assembly polls on Wednesday.

After the defeat in Uttar Pradesh's Faizabad seat — where the Ayodhya Ram Temple falls — in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the party "left nothing to chance in Shri Mata Vaishno Devi seat", party leaders admitted.

However, the BJP's chances look tough as its candidate Baldev Raj Sharma, who represented the Reasi Assembly segment earlier, faced a multi-cornered contest.

The biggest problem could prove to be the *baridars*, the erstwhile custodians of the Vaishno Devi shrine. The community, which earlier backed the BJP fielded their own candidate, Sham

Singh, this time. If he gets the 14,000 votes of the community, Sham Singh could emerge as the giant killer.

Baridars, who for generations have performed *aarti* at the Vaishno Devi shrine, have been demanding the restoration of their rights to conduct full prayers at the shrine and the reservation of jobs for members of their families in the Shrine Board. Members of the community speak of being "betrayed" on a promise the PM made in 2014 to find a "permanent solution" to the community's problems.

However, the BJP claims this was not a major hurdle in the polls. "*Baridars*, who had certain genuine issues after the enactment of the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Act in 1986... were never given a fair hearing. It was only after @NarendraModi took over as Prime Minister in 2014 that the holy town of Katra & the Holy Shrine started getting the deserved attention. *Baridars*' issue included in BJP Election Sankalp Patra 2024." Union Minister of State and Udhampur MP Jitendra Singh said in a recent post on X.

The BJP's Sharma had another strong contender in the Congress's Bhopinder Singh, who was the president of the association of the *ponywallahs* and *pithus* who operate on the track between Katra and the Vaishno Devi shrine, and who is banking on the support of the nearly 9,000 Muslim voters in the seat.

Former minister Jugal Kishore, who had left the Congress and joined the Democratic Progressive Azad Party led by Ghulam Nabi Azad, was also in the race, as an Independent. He too has considerable support in the seat.

## IN ARMY RECRUITMENT HUB

# Agnipath shadow on Army dreams, Haryana's youth turn to new jobs

After tally drop in Lok Sabha, BJP rolls out promises and schemes for Agniveers

LALMANI VERMA  
CHARKHI DADR, JHAJJAR,  
SEPTEMBER 25

IRFAN, 19, a resident of Chandeni village in the Badhra Assembly seat in Charkhi Dadri district, says he was inspired by some of his relatives, either ex-servicemen or serving with the armed forces, to join the Army. But when the BJP-led Centre launched the Agnipath short-term recruitment scheme for the armed forces in June 2022, Irfan's family asked him to look for alternative jobs.

"Now, I am waiting for job openings in the Haryana Police and Territorial Army," says Irfan. As part of his physical exercise preparations for these exams, he is playing basketball in a ground on the outskirts of the village. The reason to drop the idea of joining the Army as an Agniveer is the prospects after four years — the period for which recruitment to the Army happens under the Agnipath scheme.

Many villagers echo Irfan's resentment over the Agnipath programme.

In a bid to address such concerns of people, the incumbent BJP has promised a "guarantee of government job for every



Youth in the Chandeni village of Bhadra seat training for the Haryana police exam. Lalmani Verma

Haryanvi Agniveer" in its manifesto for the October 5 state Assembly polls.

In July this year, the Nayab Singh Saini-led BJP government decided to provide 10% "horizontal reservation" for Agniveers in the posts of constable, mining guard, forest guard, jail warders and SPOs (special police officers).

"The BJP is making these promises ahead of Assembly polls... The BJP did not show concern for youths in the past two years," says Irfan.

Irfan's friend Anmol Bumrah, 19, also shares Irfan's concerns but he is still going ahead with his Agnipath plans. Like Irfan, Anmol is also a first-time voter.

Anmol has cleared the Agniveer entrance exam held in February this year and is now preparing for his physical fitness test to be held in November. "I am from a poor family so I can't wait

for other jobs. If I get selected, we will see what happens after completing four years," says Anmol, who is pursuing his graduation.

Chandeni has about 2,300 voters. Almost every family in the village has at least one member in the defence forces. Locals say that 29 Army personnel from the village have been martyred in different wars. Village sarpanch Raj Singh Sangwan says that 23 recruits from the village served as Colonels and Majors in the Army.

"When open recruitment was happening before Agnipath, at least 10-12 youths from this village were inducted in Army in every recruitment process. But after introduction of Agnipath, only two youths have got selected as Agniveers so far," Raj Singh says, adding that many youths have taken private jobs in Charkhi Dadri, Sonapat, Rohtak, Chandigarh and Delhi.

A *jamidar* (land holder) in the village, Ravi Jangda, however, defends the BJP over Agnipath, saying "This scheme will see the Army getting packed with youths. The government is promising quota and priority in other jobs after retirement as Agniveers."

Ravi is confronted by Satyaveer Sangwan, 61, who retired from the Army as *Hawaldar* after serving for 20 years. He says his son joined the Army 15 years ago, but he wants his grandchildren to aim for other government jobs so that they could also receive pension after retirement like him.

Satyaveer says that earlier if a person landed a job in the Army, his next two generations used to become financially secure.

About 50km away from Chandeni, in Bisahan village in the Beri Assembly seat in Jhajjar district, the villagers take pride that

every household has sent recruits to the Army. Bisahan is also the native village of Dalbir Singh Suhag, the former Army chief.

A 24-year-old Bisahan resident Gaurav Suhag is against the Agnipath programme, but to continue his family's tradition of joining the Army he applied for it one year ago unsuccessfully. "Now I have crossed upper age limit of 21 years and have lost the enthusiasm for joining Army," he says, adding that he is now preparing for other exams.

Bisahan sarpanch Inderjeet Suhag, who is contesting the Beri seat as an Independent, says, "The BJP is promising quota at the time of elections. But what will happen if BJP does not win?"

The BJP's Charkhi Dadri district vice-president Vitin Sangwan says, "BJP will ensure jobs for Agniveers and has promised this in its manifesto. Opposition parties have misled and confused youths about this programme. We are clearing this confusion during our campaign. Youths will understand us and support BJP"

In the 2019 Assembly polls, the Badhra constituency was won by the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP)'s Naina Singh, with the Congress and the BJP candidates finishing at second and third positions respectively. This time, the Congress's Somvir Singh will take on the BJP's Umed Singh in the seat.

In Beri, the Congress has again fielded its sitting MLA Raghuvir Singh Kadian against the BJP's Sanjay Kumar. Raghuvir defeated the BJP's Vikram Kadian in 2019.

## I HEREBY DECLARE



TARACHAND, 61  
Former Deputy CM and Cong's Chhamb candidate

**TOTAL ASSETS**  
₹14.76 CR (2024)  
₹2.47 CR (2014)

Movable assets ₹4.5 cr  
Immovable assets ₹10.26 cr  
Liabilities ₹96.69 lakh  
Pending criminal None cases  
Education Class 8



RAJEEV SHARMA, 52  
Former MLA and BJP's Chhamb candidate

**TOTAL ASSETS**  
₹3.49 CR (2024)  
₹2.12 CR (2014)

Movable assets ₹42.99 lakh  
Immovable assets ₹3.06 cr  
Liabilities ₹6.41 lakh  
Pending criminal None cases  
Education Class 8

## IMAGE OF THE DAY



10 DAYS TO GO FOR D-DAY: Ahead of the single-phase polls in Haryana on October 5, BJP supporters at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally on Wednesday in Sonapat, where the party's candidate is Nikhil Madan. PTI

## Why every party in Haryana talks about '36 biradaris' in state



In poll season, candidates get a "36 biradari" welcome. Express

SUKHBIR SIWACH  
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 25

ACROSS THE political spectrum in Haryana, leaders keep talking of how they represent the interests of the "36 biradaris" of the state. At poll meetings, Leader of the Opposition and former Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda keeps emphasising the support of all of them. Recently, BJP national secretary and the party's manifesto committee chief Om Prakash Dhankar said the party has promised a "well-fare board to look after the interests of each of the 36 biradaris" if voted back to power.

**What does biradari mean?**

Professor S K Chahal of Kurukshetra University says the word comes from *baradar*, the Persian word for the brotherhood of a clan or a tribe with a common ancestry.

"The term *biradari* is also referred to as *kaum* (nation) or *jaat* (caste). Though the last two words have different meanings, in north India all three words are used as synonyms for caste," says Prof Chahal, who is the chairperson of the Kurukshetra university's Department of History and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

According to Prof Chahal, the *Ajmer-Merwar Gazetteer* (1951) mentions the existence of 37 castes, but not 36. "Early medieval Persian writings and travel ac-

counts refer to the existence of 36 clans or kingdoms in north India. Similarly, a renowned historian of Rajasthan, Lt Col James Todd, an officer of the British East India Company, refers to 36 dynasties or kingdoms," he says.

**What is the social significance?**

In election season, whenever any candidate approaches a village, he or she is welcomed by the prominent villagers on behalf of the "36 biradari". Among the castes and communities in this category are Brahmins, Baniyas (Agarwals), Jats, Gurjars, Rajputs, Punjabis (Hindu), Sunars, Sainis, Ahirs, Sainis, Rors, and Kumhars. Almost half the Scheduled Castes (SCs) are from the leather-working castes.

**What is the political significance of 36 biradaris?**

Politicians use the phrase to signal their secular image but many prefer to look after the interests of their caste groups to reach out to a specific vote bank. A large number of voters prefer a candidate of their caste as well. Mainstream parties field candidates keeping caste calculations in mind. For the October 5 polls, the BJP has fielded, among others, 21 OBCs, 17 Jats, 11 Brahmins, 11 Punjabi Hindus, five Baniyas, and two Muslims.

In the Congress line-up, there are 26 Jat candidates, 20 OBCs, 17 SCs, 11 Sikhs or Punjabi Hindus, six Brahmins, five Muslims, two Vaishyas, and one Rajput, Bishnoi, and Ror candidate.



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● HARYANA BATTLE

ON HOODA'S TURF, SUPPORTERS RALLY BEHIND THEIR 'FUTURE CM'

## KEY FACES

# 'If PM agrees to terms, should Kashmiris not talk to him?'

THE ENTRY into the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly fray of Sheikh Abdul Rashid, the Baramulla MP popularly known as **ENGINEER RASHID**, who is out on interim bail till October 2, has changed the dynamics in the Valley. With his Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) fielding 34 candidates as Independents and forming a "strategic alliance" with the Jamaat-e-Islami, Rashid's opponents have been calling him "Delhi's man" who is out to "divide votes". In an interview with **BASHAARAT MASOOD**, Rashid speaks about his time in jail, how J&K has changed since the abrogation of Article 370, and how he expects the election campaign to pan out. *Excerpts:*

**Do you see any changes after coming out of jail?**

After the abrogation of (Article 370), people are keen to join the electoral process. But this change of mood is not because of (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's 'Naya Kashmir'. It is because people feel oppressed and suppressed.

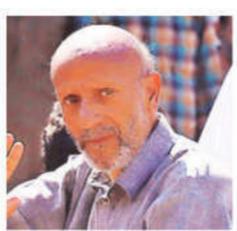
**Why did you contest the Lok Sabha elections from jail? How do you see your win?**

From January 18 (when the Lok Sabha elections were announced) till my release, I was denied the customary weekly call to family. This is because I was being compelled to support a BJP proxy — I will not name him. When I refused, I was subjected to the worst sort of humiliation. I contested because I was pressured to support their (the BJP's) proxy. And now, see the irony, the proxies are calling me a proxy.

**How was your Lok Sabha campaign managed?**

They (the jail authorities) communicated me. My only link was a few newspapers. One day, a jail official told me that my son Abrar was campaigning for me. I was taken aback... I sent him a message that he should be in college. But I did not know what happened after that.

**What do you think contributed to your win?**



THE EXPRESS  
INTERVIEW  
ENGINEER RASHID  
BARAMULLA MP, AIP CHIEF

It was a vote for my commitment to the people of J&K, the model of governance that I started in Langate (his Assembly seat as MLA). When I was sent to Tihar, people started questioning, "Why only him?" There was a realisation that I am not compromised.

**You have been a critic of the NC and PDP. Would you join their 'secular' alliance for J&K's?**

I have supported them on occasion. For me, secularism is not important right now. What is important is the Kashmir issue is resolved. When they (NC, PDP leaders) formed the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, they even

invited the Shiv Sena and AAP; but they didn't invite Engineer Rashid. They have lost the moral authority to criticise me.

**You say the NC and the PDP have no roadmap. What is your roadmap?**

...They (the Valley-based mainstream leaders) should not have gone to the Supreme Court. Article 370 was a political issue, but they made it a legal issue. The street is a politician's playground, not the court... The other thing they did, when PM Modi called an all-party meeting (in June 2021) — only one party was not invited, and that was the AIP...

But even then, I am open to joining hands with anyone... if they have a roadmap. If Rahul Gandhi promises that after coming to power, even after 50 years, he will bring a Bill to restore Article 370, I will follow them.

**But what is your roadmap?**

My roadmap is that I want to take this battle out of Kashmir and to Delhi. Omar *sahab* or Madam (Mehbooba Mufti) were seen as 'Delhi's people' in Kashmir. I am a Kashmiri who represents Kashmir in Delhi.

**So would you ally with the NC-Congress or the PDP?**

The larger issue for me is the resolution of the Kashmir issue. Government formation is petty... will be seen after October 8 (the result day).

**The AIP is being called a refuge for 'turncoat' politicians?**

My strength and resistance against Modi made people follow Engineer Rashid... If tomorrow, Modi ji agrees to my terms and

conditions, should Kashmiris not talk to him? If I could unite one man from that camp (close to New Delhi), it would be an honour and privilege for me.

**The stand of both PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is that there is no issue after the abrogation of Article 370.**

India is saying we will talk to Pakistan if they stop 'exporting terrorism'. What will they talk about? It will obviously be the Kashmir issue.

**How do you see the NC-Congress alliance?**

It is a dirty alliance... The main damage has been done by the Congress... Article 370 was just a skeleton and Modi buried it.

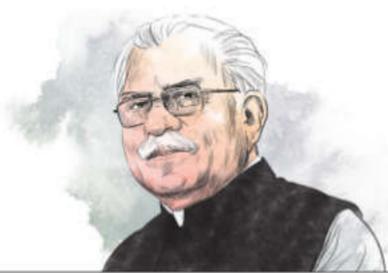
**There are allegations regarding the timing of your bail, just ahead of the polls.**

I got bail because Arvind Kejriwal too got bail. I applied citing the same. Where does the question of timing arise?

# 9 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## DOUBLE WHAMMY

FORMER CHIEF minister and current Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar seems to have become the latest headache for the Haryana BJP, according to some party leaders in the state. While Khattar's open invite to Congress leader Kumari Selja and her subsequent rebuff has already left the party embarrassed, a video of Khattar "directing his security personnel to remove a man from his meeting venue in Hisar after the latter criticised the BJP" has drawn a lot of public ire. "How dare he?... throw him out," Khattar is heard saying in the video, which has gone viral. It also shows the man was being pushed out of the venue. The incident has added to the woes of the Haryana BJP, which is already facing criticism for the remarks made by party MP Kangana Ranaut about the farm laws.

## BUSY SCHEDULE

AMID THE busy campaigning schedule in poll-bound states, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is slated to meet heads of Congress party departments for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities among others. The meetings are supposed to be one-on-one where the department heads "can openly discuss internal and external issues" with the senior leader.

## ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

ON HIS way to inaugurate the UP International Trade Show in Greater Noida, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar gave the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway a miss on Wednesday. Dhankhar is learnt to have flown on a chopper from Delhi airport to a helipad near the Greater Noida Expo Mart to avoid causing a traffic jam on the road to Greater Noida. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other dignitaries who attended the inaugural ceremony greeted the V-P at the helipad.

# J&K: 57% turnout, Kashmir voting down

## Jammu districts hit by terror attacks see around 70% voting

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 25

THE SECOND phase of polling in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections saw a voter turnout of 57.03 per cent on Wednesday, with the exercise passing off peacefully amid tight security. The overall voting in the 2014 state polls was 60 per cent. Voting in the first phase of the 2024 polls was over 61%.

### Jammu turnout

The Jammu districts of Poonch, Rajouri and Reasi — which have witnessed an increase in terror incidents since 2021 — saw high voting.

Reasi district recorded 74.70 per cent polling, followed by Poonch (73.80 per cent) and Rajouri district (70.95 per cent).

Poonch district's Surankote Assembly constituency, where four soldiers were killed in a terrorist ambush in December 2023, recorded 72.18 per cent polling. Almost all voters in the Topa Pir village cast their vote. Three residents of that village had been picked up by Army troops after the attack and died during questioning.

The adjoining Thanamandi assembly constituency's Pangai village — from which five civilians were picked up for questioning into the Topa Pir attack and allegedly tortured — too came out in large numbers. The ST reserved constituency registered 68.44 per cent polling.

Over 69 per cent people voted in the Reasi assembly constituency, where terrorists ambushed a Katra-bound bus carrying pilgrims killing nine people and injuring 33 others in June.

Officials said polling was incident free. There were long queues throughout the day, even in the border constituencies of Kalakote-Sunderbani, Nowhera, Mendhar and Poonch — which fall on the traditional infiltration route.

With elections being held in J&K after a period of ten years, the enthusiasm to have their own elected government drew people to the polling stations in huge numbers, said Mohammad Hussain, a local resident of Khari Karmara village situated along the Line of Control in Poonch.

Similarly, in Mendhar's Balakote village, Basharat Hussain said that through these elections, people would at least get someone whom they can approach for redressal of their grievances. <The Poonch Haveli constituency registered 72.71 per cent polling, Mendhar (69.67 per cent), Nowhera (69 per cent) and Kalakote-Sunderbani (66.37 per cent).

The polling was brisk even in Rajouri's Dangri village where terrorists had killed seven civilians and injured scores of others in back to back twin attacks on January 1-2, 2023.

Since 2021, nearly 33 Army personnel and over a dozen terrorists have been killed at different places in Rajouri and Poonch.

WITH PTI INPUTS



Voters at a polling station on the outskirts of Srinagar on Wednesday. Shuaib Masoodi

## Budgam, Ganderbal turnout falls from 2014 polls, Srinagar voting lowest of 3 Valley dists

BASHAARAT MASOOD & NAVEED IQBAL  
SRINAGAR, BUDGAM, GANDERBAL, SEPTEMBER 25

AT KANGAN, men and women in long snaky queues waited for their turn. At many polling stations of Beerwah, the women voters outnumbered the men. In Srinagar, there was only a trickle of voters.

As the 15 seats of the Valley went to the polls in the second phase on Wednesday, there were contrasting images — enthusiastic voters, men and women, young and old, turned out in

large numbers in Ganderbal and Budgam districts but the majority of voters stayed away from the polling booths in Srinagar.

The Chief Electoral Officer Pandurang Pole said that 29.81 per cent votes were polled in Srinagar while the turnout in Ganderbal and Budgam districts was 62.51 and 62.98 per cent respectively. The figures reveal that while Srinagar has seen a marginal increase from the turnout in 2014 Assembly polls, the Ganderbal and Budgam districts have seen a steep decline. In the 2014 Assembly elections, the eight seats of Srinagar district had

recorded an average turnout of 27.77 per cent while it was 73.11 and 67.21 per cent in Ganderbal and Budgam districts respectively.

The turnout, however, has seen a marginal increase from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as traditionally more people come out to vote during the Assembly elections than parliamentary polls.

Long queues of voters could be seen across the five constituencies of the Budgam district.

The Budgam seat is a direct contest between National Conference's Omar Abdullah and PDP leader Aga Muntazir Mehdi. "We have come out to vote be-

## DIPLOMATS FROM 15 COUNTRIES OBSERVE VOTING IN KASHMIR

Srinagar: Diplomats from at least 15 countries including the US visited Kashmir on Wednesday to "observe" the elections. In a first, diplomats of the rank of Charge d'Affaires or Deputy Chiefs of Mission visited polling booths in the Valley on the invitation of the Ministry of External Affairs. After landing in Srinagar, the diplomats were taken to polling booths in Budgam and Srinagar. Meanwhile, former CM Omar Abdullah questioned the move to invite the delegation. "What was the need to invite this delegation to Kashmir? This is to send a message that people are satisfied with the decisions of August 5, 2019," he said. ENS

## 1995 custodial death: SC gives split verdict

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

A TWO-JUDGE bench of the Supreme Court Wednesday delivered a split verdict in a 1995 case of custodial death of a man accused of stealing.

While Justice C T Ravi Kumar acquitted the police personnel of the charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, Justice Sanjay Kumar disagreed and convicted them for the same offence with stinging remarks.

As per the prosecution, the deceased, Shama alias Kalya, was a history-sheeter and taken into police custody in connection with a house-breaking in Maharashtra's Gondia. He was allegedly tortured in custody leading to his death. The police did not record his arrest. Later, an unidentified body was found in a forest in MP's Balaghat district.

The trial court convicted some of the accused for culpable homicide but acquitted them of murder charge. This was confirmed by the Bombay HC.

Deciding the appeal, Justice Ravi Kumar said, "In the absence of evidence regarding homicidal death of Shama in Gondia City police station coupled with the defence evidence... accused No. 2 (Ravindra) and accused No. 4 (Hans Raj) are entitled to be acquitted for commission of offence under Section 304 Part II read with Section 34, IPC, granting the benefit of doubt".

Justice Sanjay Kumar, on the other hand, said custodial torture

is established and "in such circumstances, it can be safely surmised that Shama was in the illegal custody of the appellants since 16.12.1995, at the very least, and suffered prolonged third-degree treatment till 24.12.1995. That being so, it is very difficult to believe the story projected by the appellants that Shama escaped from their custody... It is highly improbable that he would have been in a physical state of fitness to flee, by jumping from a moving jeep in a crowded residential area..."

On the failure to establish the recovered body as that of the deceased, Justice Sanjay Kumar said as laid down in the Sevak Perumal and another vs. State of TN case, production of a body to prove a murder is not an absolute necessity in a trial for murder.

He said, "Merely because the appellants were clever enough to trump up a story of Shama escaping from their custody and the happenstance of the exhumed body, recovered at their instance, no longer figuring in the picture due to rejection of the fingerprint evidence, it would be improper to proceed on the assumption that the law would not be applicable. Doing so would impel the court to fall into the trap of the ingenious and wily appellants, who have cunningly concocted and falsified records to escape their just desserts." He said, "When sufficient evidence is available to conclude that Shama was in no position to escape from the custody of the appellants, the inevitable corollary that follows is that he died due to torture in custody."

## PM: Instability within Cong, its infighting will ruin Haryana

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 25

ATTACKING THE Congress as the "mother of corruption in our nation", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday accused the party of handing over Haryana to "dalaals (brokers)" and "damaads (sons-in-law)" and urged voters in the poll-bound state to vote for the BJP on October 5 for the sake of "better job opportunities" and "better development".

"Even if by mistake Congress comes to power, it will ruin Haryana due to its infighting. The manner in which Congress's infighting is increasing, the entire state is watching it. Giving your vote to Congress means opening doors for disaster. This instability within Congress will hugely impact the governance and development of Haryana," Modi said, addressing the BJP's Jan Ashirwad rally in Gohana in Sonapat district.

## 'Rat-like' RSS invaded Jharkhand: Hemant

Ranchi: Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Wednesday compared the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh with "rats" and accused both the BJP and the RSS of attempting to undermine communal harmony in the state for electoral gains.

Addressing a rally at Bhognadih in Sahibganj, Soren claimed that the BJP is sowing discord between Hindu and Muslim communities, specifically pointing to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's involvement.

"RSS is invading the state like rats and destroying it. Chase such forces away when you see them entering your villages with local liquor... They want to create communal disturbances and tension ahead of elections for political gains," Soren said while speaking virtually from Ranchi. Soren alleged that the BJP is



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Haryana CM Nayab Saini in Sonapat on Wednesday. PTI

CM Nayab Singh Saini, state BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli and the 22 BJP candidates contesting the Assembly seats under the Sonapat, Panipat, Rohtak and Jind districts shared the stage with the PM.

Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who was campaigning for the BJP's nominee in Kalka Assembly constituency, was not present on the stage. Khattar was

also not present at the PM's Kurukshetra rally.

Slamming the main opposition party, Modi said Congress governments are known for "instability." "In the past few years wherever it formed governments, chief ministers and ministers were involved in infighting. They have nothing to do with the pain and problems of the people," Modi said.

## INDIA bloc will do all in its power to restore statehood to J&K: Rahul in Jammu

ARUN SHARMA & NAVEED IQBAL  
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 25

THE MODI government took away Jammu and Kashmir's statehood to "benefit outsiders" and "ruin the prosperity of the local people", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged Wednesday.

"There's a reason behind taking away your statehood... Because they want Jammu & Kashmir to be administered by outsiders and not the local people. All work here gets done through Lt Governor and the prosperity of the people of J&K is ruined," Congress leader said while addressing an election meeting here at Jammu.

Linking the progress of Jammu and Kashmir with statehood, Gandhi said that the Opposition INDIA bloc will use all its power to get statehood restored to its people. "We will use Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and even hit the streets if needed," he said.

"But if BJP did not restore it for some reason, then this is the first work INDIA bloc government, which will be formed soon, will do. This is your right," he said, adding that downgrading a state to a UT had never happened before in post-Independence India. The Congress leader also crit-



Rahul is welcomed to a public meeting in Jammu, on Wednesday. PTI

icised the NDA government over the Goods and Services Tax regime, which he described as a "a weapon for extortion" meant to shut small and medium business and "pave way for billion-aires such as Adani and Ambani".

"The entire government was working for their welfare. This has broken the backbone of small and medium businesses in Jammu and Kashmir," he said, adding that local people cannot progress and get jobs unless these are made to stand on their feet.

On unemployment, Gandhi said that the youth would get jobs only if small and medium businesses are allowed to flourish.

## NEET leak, exam reforms: Govt seeks 3 weeks to submit report

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE CENTRE sought three more weeks from the Supreme Court for the committee to submit its report on NTA and the exam process in the wake of alleged irregularities in NEET-UG.

Formed in June, the seven-member panel, headed by former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan, was supposed to submit its report to the Union Education Ministry in two months.

In August, the Supreme Court had extended the deadline to submit its report to the Ministry from August 22 to September 30.

Seeking time till October 21, the Centre in its application said that the committee has prepared a "comprehensive first draft" of its report, but it needs more improvement "to effectively communicate the essence of all the deliberations and consultations and bring out a robust road-map for conducting future national entrance tests". It stated the panel has held 22 meetings to evaluate the challenges and complexities in conducting "high-stake examinations", potential risks, and security measures in the process.

Consultations have been held with exam-conducting agencies, state governments, police, regulatory bodies, academicians, students, technology solution advisors, and global testing experts, it said, adding that it had also sought suggestions online.

## BJP looks to avenge Ayodhya loss in prestige UP bypoll; FIR against MP's son

MAULSHREE SETH  
LUCKNOW, SEPTEMBER 25

WHILE BY-ELECTIONS to the 10 vacant Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh are yet to be announced, the contest for Milkipur constituency has begun in earnest, with charges of assault and an FIR entering the race.

For both the BJP and Samajwadi Party, winning Milkipur is a matter of prestige. In the recent Lok Sabha polls, the BJP lost Faizabad, which holds the Ayodhya Ram Temple. The SP winner, Dalit leader Awadhesh Prasad, was the sitting MLA from Milkipur, which falls under the

Faizabad Lok Sabha seat. While the BJP wants to save face by wresting Milkipur now, the SP wants to retain it to make the BJP "humiliation" complete.

Neither of the two parties has announced its Milkipur candidate yet, but Prasad has indicated that the SP ticket would go to his son Ajit Prasad. In recent days, Ajit has found himself facing an FIR alleging assault and kidnapping from one Ravi Kumar Tiwari. The BJP has been calling it an example of Ajit's "goondaism", with the fact that Tiwari is a Brahmin adding a caste angle to the case.

On Monday, BJP IT Cell chief Amit Malviya posted on X: "The

son of the Faizabad MP, whom Akhilesh has been holding close to his heart, had kidnapped Ravi Tiwari and beaten him up." The BJP leader also alleged that incidents of rape and hooliganism have "increased since the SP's Lok Sabha victory".

The SP calls the whole episode "political vendetta" by the BJP, driven by "the fear of loss". "The BJP is doing this out of frustration and fear of losing the seat. The repeated visits of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and ministers to the constituency show that they are jittery. This (filing of the FIR against Ajit) is a smaller version of the misuse of the CBI and ED," SP spokesper-



Awadhesh Prasad was an MLA from Milkipur

son and former Ayodhya MLA Pawan Pandey said.

Prasad has announced a protest on October 1 to highlight the BJP's "atrocities against the deprived classes". Ajit, who has been touring the constituency, has not commented on the FIR registered against him.

While the SP is yet to officially declare Ajit as its candidate, Prasad claims that SP chief

Akhilesh Yadav had approved his candidature from Milkipur after consultations with party cadre.

Local SP leaders say Ajit was to make his political debut in the 2017 Assembly polls from Jagdishpur in Amethi, but could not as the seat went to the Congress in the seat-sharing between the two parties.

The Dalit vs Brahmin line in the FIR, which related to the alleged incident that occurred in Faizabad City on Saturday afternoon after a dispute between Ajit and Prasad over commission in a land purchase case, is significant as the Milkipur segment — which Prasad represented till he won the Lok Sabha polls — has a

significant SC population, but also a substantial number of Brahmins. At around a lakh in the seat, Brahmins, in fact, match the dominant SC groups of Pasis and Koris in numbers, and are seen as holding the key to the electoral outcome there.

A significant chunk of the Brahmin community is believed to have supported Prasad, who belongs to the Pasi community, in the recent Lok Sabha as well as the 2022 Assembly polls. Further, the Koris may not rally en masse behind the SP as the BSP is planning to field a candidate from the community.

Additionally, the SP-Congress front has not got its act together

yet, with the Congress flexing its muscle post the Lok Sabha results and preparing for all 10 by-poll seats. In Milkipur, it has appointed grassroots Brahmin worker Sanjay Tiwari as its media incharge. The BJP is running on a united Hindu plank, with Adityanath repeatedly emphasising, "Batenge to katenge (divided we fall)".

Pandey dismissed the notion that Brahmins may support the BJP due to the FIR against Ajit. "During the SP regime, Brahmins were not targeted as they are now in fake encounters. We are confident they will support us like they have done in the past," he said.

## EXPLAINED Caste angle emerges

A BRAHMIN vs Dalit narrative is developing in Milkipur. Ajit Prasad — the son of SP's Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad and the likely party candidate from Milkipur — is accused of kidnapping and assaulting one Ravi Kumar Tiwari. Brahmins are seen as holding the key to the electoral outcome in the seat.

# 10 EXPRESS NETWORK



Malayalam actor Edavela Babu

## Malayalam actor Edavela Babu held for rape, released on bail

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPTEMBER 25

KERALA POLICE Wednesday arrested Malayalam actor Edavela Babu on charges of rape.

However, due to the anticipatory bail granted by the court earlier, he was released on bail after the medical examination, police said.

The rape allegations against Babu came earlier this year after Hema Committee report's release. Several actors, including actor-MLA M Mukesh and Siddique, have been accused of rape following the report's release last month.

Until he resigned in June, Babu had served as the general secretary of Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) for several years.

On Tuesday, M Mukesh was arrested and released on bail. In both cases, the complainant was the same. In her complaint, an actor claimed she had contacted Babu and Mukesh to get membership in AMMA in 2010.

Granting them anticipatory bail earlier this year, the court had noted the complainant's statement did not show any use of force on the part of the accused. The complainant had "willingly" gone to Mukesh's house in Kochi and had reportedly approached Babu for membership in AMMA.

## Karnataka BJP MLA, accused of rape, sent to SIT custody till Oct 5

**Bengaluru:** A special court in Bengaluru Tuesday sent BJP MLA Munirathna, arrested on charges of rape and harassment, to SIT custody till October 5.

Munirathna, Rajarajeshwari Nagar MLA, who is currently in judicial custody, was arrested for allegedly raping a social worker. The Karnataka government had constituted the SIT headed by IPS officer B K Singh to investigate three cases against the BJP MLA.

The SIT Monday officially received files related to the case and produced him before the court next day seeking his custody for further investigation. **ENS**

## Even Cong could not have made a better film on Indira: Expert who reviewed *Emergency*

**RITIKA CHOPRA**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

ACTOR AND BJP MP Kangana Ranaut's *Emergency* is a "factual" and "sympathetic" film about former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, historian Makkhan Lal, who was invited as a "subject expert" by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to view and offer his comments on the film, told *The Indian Express*, adding that even the Congress could not have done a better job.

The film's release, originally slated for September 6, has been delayed pending CBFC certification.

On September 18, the CBFC informed the Bombay High Court that its examining committee, "owing to the narrative and subject of the film", had invited a "subject expert" during the screening, and that Lal's presence was requested for this purpose.

The High Court ordered the CBFC to decide on the film's certification by September 26.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Lal, who co-authored NCERT's history textbooks during NDA-I government, said, "Congress knows I am not a great admirer of the party. But still, facts have to be accepted. And a personality of Mrs Gandhi's stature needs to be respected. My reaction, when I saw the film, was that even the Congress could not have made a better historical film on Mrs Gandhi. She (Kangana) has not deviated even 0.01% from the facts. This is one of the most sympathetic films I have ever seen on a political leader. It's not at all partial."

However, the historian added he did have one suggestion on the film's ending. "My main suggestion was that the film ends with a shot of Mrs Gandhi. I felt this would create a problem. I suggested that instead of ending the film with her



The Bombay HC has directed CBFC to decide the film's certification by Sept 26

death, the filmmakers should show, maybe in 20 to 30 seconds, what happened after that: Rajiv Gandhi's infamous statement of 'when a tree falls...' and

the subsequent massacre of the Sikhs. Otherwise, it is going to be a problem because it will become a one-sided film," he said.

"To balance it, you must show what happened immediately after that... the impact has to be shown. And I had submitted this in writing (to CBFC) in my three-and-a-half-page note," said Lal, who has been associated with Aligarh Muslim University and has been a fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation.

During the September 18 hearing, the CBFC informed the Bombay HC that the Board's chairman Prasoona Joshi had decided to refer the matter of the film's certification to the revising committee. The examining committee had already cleared the film for UA certification, but this was put on hold in the wake of protests and representations received by several Sikh groups.

According to sources, this was mainly because of two scenes.

"There's one scene (from the film's trailer) in which some Sikhs can be seen opening fire on innocents, and another where Bhindranwale is seen striking a deal with Sanjay Gandhi and promising to bring votes for Indira Gandhi's party in exchange for a separate Sikh state," a source said.

Several Sikh organisations have written to the CBFC and approached the courts to halt the film's release, citing concerns over its portrayal of Sikhs.

Lal said this "controversy is totally unwarranted". "Is Bhindranwale representative of the entire Sikh community? Bhindranwale is an individual, a proper noun, not a collective noun. So where is the question of misrepresentation of Sikhs?" he said.

The film's story is written by Ranaut, who plays the lead role, and its screenplay by Ritesh Shah. It also stars Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Mahima Choudhary and the late Satish Kaushik.

## 'DILLI CHALO' AGITATION

### Khanauri: Protester found hanging in tent; farmers say 'first suicide since Feb 13'

**RAAKHI JAGGA**  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 25

A 53-YEAR-old farm labourer protesting at the Khanauri border since the launch of the 'Dilli Chalo' agitation was found hanging in a tent at the camp Wednesday morning, police said. Protesting farmers said this is the first suicide at the border and the 27th death since February 13, when the agitation started.

Baljinder Singh, the chowki in-charge under Tharu police station, Patran, who visited the spot said, "Primary facie it's a suicide case. The body is at Patran government hospital. We are taking action as per section 194 (police to enquire and report on suicide, etc.) of the BNS."

A member of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Sidhupur), Gurmeet Singh, a resident of Thuthianwala village in Mansa, a landless farm labourer, had come to Khanauri on February 13 when the protest morchha was started and never returned his home since then, farmers at the camp said.

According to farmers, no one was in the tent in the morning around 8, everyone was busy do-

ing daily chores. When some farmers returned to the tent around 8.30 am, they found Gurmeet hanging, they said.

"Gurmeet was taken to a nearby government hospital in Patran, Patiala, but was pronounced dead upon arrival," BKU (Sidhupur) senior leader Kaka Singh Kotda said.

Kotda said, "The postmortem will be done when government assures us about compensation and a job for a family member. We are talking to the administration."

Tejveer Singh, spokesperson of the Shaheed Bhagat Singh (Haryana), part of the morchha, said, "This is the first suicide and 27th death since February 13."

"Gurmeet used to look after the electric supply at the morchha. A few days ago, he asked me if the government would listen to farmers' demands... This is high time for the government to wake up," said BKU (Sidhupur) president Jagjit Singh Dallewal, also coordinator of the Samyukta Kisan Morchha (non-political).

Gurmeet is survived by his wife Paramjeet Kaur, daughter Dasmantpreet Kaur (27) and two sons — Satkartar Singh (25) and Prabhjot Singh (19).

## MUDA LAND ALLOTMENT

### Day after HC setback, special court orders probe against CM Lokayukta Police to investigate; not afraid: Siddaramaiah

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 25

DAY AFTER the Karnataka High Court upheld the sanction granted by Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot against CM Siddaramaiah, a special court Wednesday ordered Lokayukta Police to probe into the alleged irregularities in MUDA site allotment.

On Tuesday, the HC had also vacated its August 19 interim order directing the Special Court to defer the decision on complaints against the CM.

On Wednesday, the Special Court, exclusively to deal with criminal cases related to former and elected MPs/MLAs issued the order, directing the Lokayukta police in Mysuru to initiate an investigation on the complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna.

Special Court judge Santhosh Gajanana Bhat ordered that a report be submitted before the court within 90 days.

Hailing the order, Krishna said that after the FIR is filed, he would appeal to the HC to hand over the probe to CBI.

Following the order, Siddaramaiah reiterated that he was ready to face an investigation and "not afraid of a probe."

Home Minister G Parames-



JD(S) workers protest in Bengaluru on Wednesday. PTI

hwara said Lokayukta police is an independent body and is "not under anyone's mercy, they will investigate independently."

"CM Siddaramaiah has said he is ready for any probe... what investigation and other things let the order come," he said.

Coming out in support of Siddaramaiah again, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar said, "We are confident there is no involvement of the CM. I am making it very clear. He will come out clean."

Mounting a fresh attack, state BJP chief B Y Vijayendra said, "... We urge the CM, before he resigns, he should order the probe to be handed over to independent agency CBI, for free and impartial probe."

Holding posters, placards and raising slogans, members of BJP Yuva Morcha marched towards "Cauvery" — the CM's official residence — but the police took them into preventive custody and whisked them away in a bus.

Former Karnataka Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde said the CM should resign in view of the "serious allegations."

The complaints have alleged corruption in the acquisition of 316 acres of land in Kesare village of Mysuru in 2004 by Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law B M Mallikarjun, who gifted the land in 2010 to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi BM, and the subsequent allotment of 14 housing sites by the MUDA in 2021 under a 50:50 scheme. **WITHPTIINPUTS**

## Amid backlash, Kangana takes back remarks on farm laws

**SAURABH PARASHAR**  
SHIMLA, SEPTEMBER 25

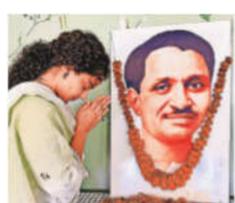
FACING BACKLASH and censure from her own party for calling to bring back the farm laws repealed in 2021, BJP's Mandi MP Kangana Ranaut Wednesday withdrew her statement and expressed regret as the party swung to defuse the crisis amid the Haryana Assembly polls campaign.

The actor-politician said on X, "I need to keep in mind that I am no longer just a film star but also a BJP worker. My party's views should be my views and my opinions should not contradict the party's stance. I regret if by my opinion hurt anyone, and I take back my words."

"In recent days, the media asked me questions about farmers and farm laws. I responded by saying that farmers should urge PM Narendra Modi to bring back the three farm laws. When these laws were proposed, many of us supported them. However, with immense sensitivity and empathy, our honourable PM withdrew them. It is our duty as party workers to uphold the dignity of the PM's Minister's words," she said.

On Monday, while interacting with the media at Nachan, which is part of her Mandi constituency, Ranaut had said that farmers and the government should bring back the three farm laws.

Earlier in the day, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia distanced the party from Ranaut's comments. "The party has not authorised her for making any such



Kangana Ranaut pays tribute to Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Deendayal Upadhyaya on his birth anniversary, Wednesday. PTI

statement and nor does her stand reflect the BJP's views," he said.

While the Himachal BJP had said that Ranaut's remarks were her "personal view", Congress and AAP leaders had condemned her statements saying the BJP was "using her to further its anti-farmer agenda". Farmer union leaders also reacted to the comments, saying it was Ranaut's "tactic" to stay in the spotlight.

### Farmer leader seeks action over remarks

Punjab farmer leader Sarwan Singh Panther sought action against Ranaut Wednesday for her remarks.

Panther, who heads the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, said, "If the BJP-led Centre has already repealed those laws and if its elected MP makes a statement on those laws, action should be taken against her. Can anybody speak on policy matters and then say it was his or her personal view?" **WITHPTIINPUTS**

## Kharge, Rahul hit out at BJP for 'trying to bring back farm laws'

**New Delhi:** Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge Wednesday hit out at BJP saying the party was "already talking about bringing back the farm laws".

He was reacting to BJP MP Kangana Ranaut's remarks on bringing back the three farm laws repealed in November 2021.

"Even after the martyrdom of 750 farmers, the anti-farmer BJP and Modi government did not realize their grave crime! There is talk of re-implementing the three black anti-farmer laws. The Congress strongly opposes this. The Modi government crushed the farmers under vehicles, used barbed wire, tear gas from drones, nails and guns against our food providers, and this is something that 62 crore farmers of India will never forget. This time, farmers from all electoral states, including Haryana, will give a befitting reply to derogatory remarks of the PM himself in Parliament, calling them 'agitators' and 'parasites'," Kharge posted on X.

In a video message on X, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi said, "Who is deciding government's policy? A BJP MP or PM Modi?". "Even after martyrdom of more than 700 farmers, especially farmers of Haryana and Punjab, BJP people are not satisfied. INDIA won't allow any conspiracy of BJP against our farmers to succeed." **ENS**

**ANAND MOHAN J**  
BHOPAL, SEPTEMBER 25

THE MADHYA Pradesh High Court has initiated an inquiry against two judicial officers — including a judge — over the conviction of a tribal man in a minor's rape for partially ignoring the findings of a DNA report during trial. The report had claimed that some of the accused's blood samples did not match the evidence taken from the scene of crime.

In its ruling on September 21, a Bench of justices Vivek Agrawal and Devnarayan Mishra said Special POC SO judge Vivek Singh Raghuvanshi and an Assistant District Prosecution Officer B K Verma had been negligent in their duties while trying a tribal man for the rape of a 14-year-old.

The accused was sentenced

to a 20-year imprisonment.

In its order, the Bench said an "inquiry be instituted against the conduct of ADO P K Verma in not conducting the trial properly and not exhibiting the DNA report and also an enquiry be instituted against (judge) Vivek Singh Raghuvanshi for his negligence and dereliction of duty in not marking exhibit on that report and not recording statements of the accused in relation to that DNA report."

"It was well within his rights to have marked as Court exhibit, and record statements of accused under Section 313 (examination of an accused) of the Code of Criminal Procedure in relation to that DNA report," the court said.

The court has asked the trial court to reconsider the DNA evidence and permit the accused

to cross examine the witnesses and pass a fresh judgment.

The accused Babu Lal Singh Gond had moved HC through his lawyer Madan Singh, with a plea to suspend his sentence.

The HC noted that the prosecutor "for the reasons not known to us chose not to exhibit the DNA report which was already produced in the court" by the police.

"Even after taking that report on record and signing the notesheet, (the) concerned judge was also complacent in not marking exhibit on the said report and putting questions to the accused while taking his statement under Section 313 of the CrPC. For this reason, we are of the opinion that both the trial court and the ADO are prima facie guilty of negligence and dereliction of duty," the court said.

## HC initiates inquiry against judge over 'negligence' in rape case trial

**ANAND MOHAN J**  
BHOPAL, SEPTEMBER 25

A MEGA membership exercise carried out by BJP in Madhya Pradesh ran into rough weather at a government college in Indore. But it wasn't the opposition they were expecting — rather, the RSS-affiliated student organisation, ABVP, was the one that protested against the drive, asking that "temples of learning not be turned into hotbeds of politics".

Armed with the slogans of "Jab jab chhatra bola hai, raj singh-

hasan dola hai" (whenever the student has spoken, the throne has shaken)", ABVP students protested against the principal at Government Holkar Science College, even as Indore-3 MLA Golu Shukla and BJP Indore city president Gaurav Randive tried to reason with students.

Eventually, principal Suresh T Silawat issued a written order that "no political event will take place" inside college premises "without the ABVP's consent."

The BJP has set itself a target of enrolling 100 members in each of the 64,871 booths in Madhya

Pradesh. Tuesday, when ABVP students at the college were attending classes, they spotted some BJP workers entering the campus for a membership drive.

ABVP Indore city secretary Ritesh Patel told *The Indian Express*, "We found some BJP workers carrying out membership drives. We asked why this was being done and found that the principal had given permission. The principal said we can't deny them permission, so we began protesting."

Patel said, "We told them that today, the BJP has come, and tomorrow, some other party will

## HC JUDGE'S COMMENTS

### Top court says judges should be aware of own predispositions

Court closes suo motu proceedings

**ANANTHAKRISHNAN G**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

UNDERLINING THAT judges should be aware of their own predispositions, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said calling any part of India "Pakistan" is contrary to the country's territorial integrity. The court was hearing a matter in which it had taken suo motu cognisance of video clips of "objectionable comments" made by a Karnataka HC judge in the course of two hearings.

On September 20, a five-judge bench presided by CJI D Y Chandrachud had sought a report from the HC Registrar General about the alleged remarks made on June 6 and August 28, 2024.

On Wednesday, the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy, after perusing the report of the Registrar General decided against continuing the proceedings as the judge concerned, Justice V Srishananda, had tendered a public apology from his courtroom on September 21.

"Bearing in mind the apology which has been tendered by the judge of the High Court, in the course of the open court proceedings on September 21, 2024, we consider it in the interest of justice and the dignity of the institution to not pursue these proceedings further," the SC bench said.

The bench, however, said "the text of the report, which has been submitted by the Registrar General, would amply indicate that the observations which were made in the course of the proceedings before the High Court of Karnataka were unrelated to the course of the proceedings and should have been eschewed".

The SC also said that the proceedings which took place before the court of Justice V Srishananda on September 21 "indicate that the judge has indicated that (1)

certain observations made by him have been quoted out of context in social media; (2) the observation in the course of the court proceedings were unintentional and were not intended to hurt the feelings of any segment of society or any individual in particular; (3) an apology is being tendered if any section of society or any individual has been directly or indirectly hurt by the observations..."

The court also made some "general" observations before closing the proceedings.

It said that "video-conferencing and live-stream of proceedings have emerged as an important outreach facility of courts to promote access to justice. At the same time, all stakeholders in the judicial system... have to be conscious of the fact that the reach of the proceedings does not extend to merely those who are physically present but also to audiences well beyond the physical precincts of the court..."

"As judges, we are conscious of the fact that each individual has a certain degree of accumulated predispositions based on our experiences of life... At the same time, it's important that every judge should be aware of their own predispositions. The heart and soul of judging is the need to be impartial and fair..." said the bench.

"...Casual observations may well reflect a certain degree of individual bias, particularly when they are likely to be perceived as being directed to a particular gender or community. Courts, therefore, have to be careful not to make comments in the course of judicial proceedings, which may be construed as being misogynistic or for that matter, prejudicial to any segment of our society".

Since the Karnataka HC is not a party to the proceedings, the bench said it desisted from making any further observations, "save and except to express our serious concern about both the reference to gender and to a segment of the community".

## RG Kar tense again as junior docs chase away ex-principal's 'lobby'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 25

TENSION RETURNED to the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata Wednesday as protesting junior doctors entered into a scuffle with a group of doctors, house staff, and interns who appeared before an internal inquiry committee investigating allegations of a "threat culture" within the institution.

A group of 51 doctors, house staff, and interns were summoned by the inquiry panel for allegedly fostering a culture of intimidation on the hospital campus.

On Wednesday, 12 of them — including senior PGT medic Ashish Pandey, belonging to the Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad and known to have ties with Sandip Ghosh, former principal — appeared before the panel.

During the hearing, the protesting junior doctors occupied the area outside the hospi-

tal superintendent's office where the 12 deposed. When they were leaving, junior doctors chanted slogans like "down with threat culture" and "down with north Bengal lobby". As the junior doctors chased the group, they were escorted out by CISF personnel.

The "north Bengal lobby" refers to a group of doctors employed in government-run hospitals and medical colleges. The doctors belonging to the group have been accused of "threatening" junior doctors of RG Kar. The doctors of the group are believed to be close associates of Ghosh.

The junior doctors also slammed the BJP, accusing it of "trying to use the movement for the petty interests of grabbing the power in the state". "We have made one thing clear. We will not allow those who have garlanded rapists in Hathras-Kathua-Unao to use our movement in the game of grabbing power," junior doctors said.

**WITHPTIINPUTS**

## In MP, BJP membership drive runs into ABVP protest

We said this should be a temple of learning, not a hotbed of politics."

Another senior ABVP member said, "There may be ideological similarities between the ABVP and BJP but that doesn't mean we will allow them to enter campuses. We protested in four other colleges when we got to know about membership drives."

Senior BJP leaders in Indore and Bhopal told *The Indian Express* that the "misunderstanding" has been resolved.

MLA Shukla said, "ABVP and BJP are the same. They did not oppose us. We resolved the issue.

Some workers may have gone inside college campuses and there may have been a misunderstanding," Randive said "The BJP membership drive in Indore was a success with 5 lakh new members".

"This incident was a misunderstanding. ABVP works inside the campus, we were outside. ABVP has its own stand. We have tried our best to tell them we will do the membership outside college campus," he told *The Indian Express*. BJP spokesperson Narendra Saluja said the ABVP will not oppose the drive. "ABVP is our student body. There is no issue now."

# EXPRESS NETWORK

## ODISHA 2 students hit by Deputy CM's escort car, hurt

**Bhubaneswar:** Two students of a primary school sustained injuries after being hit by the escort vehicle of Odisha's deputy chief minister Pravatī Parida at Mahajansahi near Gop in Puri district. The injured students are studying in class-V and Class-I. The escort vehicle of the deputy CM hit them while they were returning from school, said a police officer. The students were rushed to Gop hospital and later sent to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar. Parida visited the Gop hospital and inquired their health condition. "By God's grace the condition of the students are stable now. I have sent them to a private hospital for advanced treatment," she said. **ENS**

## UTTAR PRADESH Court acquits 6 in Sitapur murder case

**Lucknow:** A court in Sitapur sentenced a 34-year-old businessman to life imprisonment and acquitted six other accused in a triple murder case, where a 30-year-old woman and her two minor daughters were strangled to death in 2018. The medical report confirmed that one of the minor girls had been raped. In its ruling, the court criticised the police investigation, calling it "negligent." In its ruling, the court criticised the police investigation, calling it "negligent." The court noted that the investigating officer appeared to have attempted to destroy evidence instead of collecting it properly. **ENS**

## GUJARAT Protest over 'namaz on campus'

**Ahmedabad:** A day after Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal staged a protest at Ganpat University following videos of students purportedly offering namaaz on campus, the university located in Kherva, Mehsana, issued a statement Wednesday saying that the students in the video were new and unaware of the rules. Videos of students purportedly offering namaaz on the campus of the private university surfaced earlier this week following which, on Tuesday, VHP and Bajrang Dal members staged a protest by reciting Hanuman Chalisa and Ram Dhun, and sprinkled 'gau mutra' outside its gates. Videos of the protest too went viral. **ENS**

# Security officials say 'Kuki militants' intel inputs 'not substantiated', CMO btracks

Statement comes at a time when relations between CM Biren and security forces are at all-time low

**SUKRITA BARUAH  
GUWAHATI, SEPTEMBER 25**

IN AN unusual move, Manipur Security Advisor Kuldip Singh and Director General of Police Rajiv Singh issued a joint statement on Wednesday night stating that a recent intelligence input issued by the Chief Minister's Office on "over 900 Kuki militants" entering the state from Myanmar could not be substantiated on the ground.

Soon afterwards, the CMO also backtracked on its earlier input.

On September 17, an intelligence input from the CMO to the DGP, Security Advisor, Chief Secretary and Home Commissioner was "leaked" and widely circulated, spreading panic among residents of Manipur's Meitei-majority valley. It stated that "over 900 Kuki

militants, newly trained in the use of drone-based bombs, projectiles, missiles and jungle warfare, have entered Manipur from Myanmar". It went on to state that they are grouped in units of 30 and are "scattered in the periphery", and that they are "expected to launch multiple coordinated attacks on Meitei villages around September 28".

Days later, Security Advisor Singh addressed reporters on September 20 and said that security agencies, particularly the Assam Rifles, have been put on high alert in the hill districts bordering Myanmar in light of the input. He said that the matter was discussed in a Strategic Operation Group meeting chaired by him, bringing together top officials from various security agencies, including the Army, Assam Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force, Border



**CM N Biren and Manipur Security Advisor Kuldip Singh.** File

Security Force, and state police.

His statement had been criticised by Kuki-Zo groups, with the the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum saying he was amplifying "devious propaganda to defame the Kuki-Zo people and use it as a pretext to attack Kuki-Zo volunteers".

On Wednesday, the two top security officials of the state issued a "clarification", stating that "the input was verified from dif-

ferent quarters, but it could not be substantiated on ground".

"However, security forces deployed on the ground are placed on a high alert to protect the lives and properties of citizens. All communities are assured of their safety. They are advised not to believe in any rumours or unverified information," reads the statement.

Following the joint statement, the CMO also wrote to the Information and Public Relations Department as well as the security officials backtracking on its earlier input.

"Based on information gathered on movement of armed groups, this office had shared intelligence inputs... to enable the police department to use its machinery and network to develop the said information so as to determine actionability. It is now ascertained that possibility of any such misadventure by

armed groups is remote. The public need not worry further in this regard," reads the note, re-questing that the public relations department circulate the information with the public.

The *Indian Express* had last week reported on the breakdown in the relationship between Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh and the security establishment in the state, particularly the Security Advisor and the DGP.

This was the second time that intelligence inputs sent by the CMO to the top security officials had been "leaked" into public domain. Earlier, a communication sent from the CMO to them was released, which referred to an alert sent by the CMO in January on reports of the movement of "about 200 Kuki-Zo militants from Churachandpur to areas bordering Jiribam".

# Bengaluru woman's murder: Prime suspect found dead

Police say 'suicide note has confession'

**KIRAN PARASHAR & SUJIT BISOYI  
BENGALURU, BHUBANESWAR, SEPTEMBER 25**



**The victim's dismembered body was found in a refrigerator**

A 31-YEAR-OLD man who was the prime suspect in the murder of a 29-year-old woman in Bengaluru, whose body was chopped into pieces and stuffed in a fridge, was found dead in Odisha on Wednesday.

Mukhtirajan Pratap Ray, the prime suspect in the murder of Mahalakshmi, was found dead near Bhuinpur village in Odisha's Bhubaneswar district in the morning.

On Saturday, police had discovered Mahalakshmi's body stored inside a fridge at her residence in Bengaluru's Vinayaka Nagar. Police had formed special teams to nab the accused, and they eventually zeroed in on Ray as the prime suspect.

Bengaluru DCP (central) Shekhar H Tekkanavar confirmed to *The Indian Express* that Ray had committed suicide.

According to police in Odisha's Dhusuri, Roy allegedly committed suicide by hanging from a tree. Shantunu Kumar Jena, the officer-in-charge of the police station, told *The Indian Express* that they received a report about a suicide, and identified the victim as Ray.

"We received the report around 8:15 am. His body was hanging from a roadside tree near Bhuinpur (where he lived). We sent it for postmortem around 9 am and then handed it over to the family," Jena told *The Indian Express*.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Odisha's Additional Director General, Law and Order, Sanjay Kumar said the police have recovered a suicide note in which Ray purportedly admit-

ted to committing the crime.

"The Odisha Police have already registered an unnatural death case. Based on the suicide note, the Bengaluru police have confirmed he is the accused in the gruesome murder case," Kumar told *The Indian Express*.

Asked whether the Odisha police have handed over the suicide note to the Bengaluru police, Kumar said it's now a court document. "The Bengaluru police have to submit a requisition first and take permission of the court, following which we will hand over the suicide note," said Kumar.

A police officer said Ray had visited his village around 4 am with his laptop bag, and left home on a two-wheeler a while later.

Mahalakshmi and Ray, police say, worked in the same mall and had been friends since 2023. Mahalakshmi, who worked as a team leader with a costume outlet in Malleshwaram, was separated from her husband.

While police questioned several people including Mahalakshmi's husband, they found Ray missing from his Bengaluru residence.

The police then contacted his brother, who told them Ray had called him over the phone and confessed to the murder. He told the police he had asked Ray to leave the state. Police said Ray made the call to his brother from West Bengal, and that was his last location.

# 250 mm rain in 6 hrs: Mumbai brought to its knees

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25**

TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR battered Mumbai on Wednesday with several pockets of the suburbs receiving over 250 mm rain within six hours. The intense spells triggered waterlogging across several areas, leading to heavy waterlogging, traffic snarls, disruption of train services and diversion of at least 14 flights at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) updated its warning and issued a red alert in Mumbai and Thane — first for this month — which will be in place till 8.30 am, Thursday.

According to the weather bureau, heavy rain is here to stay



**A waterlogged railway station in Mumbai on Wednesday.** Deepak Joshi

with an orange warning sounded in Mumbai and Thane districts for Thursday.

IMD data showed that while heavy rain was recorded until

Wednesday morning, just 16 mm rainfall was recorded in the city and suburbs between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm.

However, by evening, rainfall

intensified and over 250 mm rainfall battered the city in the next six hours.

According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal

Corporation's (BMC) automatic weather station, between 4 pm and 10 pm, heaviest downpour was recorded in pockets like Mankhurd (276 mm), Powai (274 mm) and Ghatkopar (259 mm), while the western suburbs received maximum rain in Jogeshwari (191 mm) and Marol (176 mm).

Several areas such as Kurla, Bhandup, Mulund and Andheri subway were inundated, forcing motorists and pedestrians wade through ankle-deep level waters.

Waterlogging was reported across several key carriageways, including western and eastern express highways as well as Amarsons interchange exit at Breach Candy, resulting in traffic snarls along the newly launched coastal road.

# RSS new headquarters finally gets Delhi Urban Arts panel approval

**DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25**

THE DELHI Urban Arts Commission (DUAC) recently gave the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)'s new office in the national capital's Jhandewalan area its no-objection certificate (NOC) for completion, bringing it a step closer to inauguration.

DUAC had considered the proposal for NOC for Keshav Kunj at its meeting on August 1, but decided not to grant it due to lack of documentation, the minutes of the meeting showed. At its meeting on August 29, DUAC approved the certificate.

"The proposal for NOC for completion (Part-Tower 1 and 2) received (online) at the completion stage was scrutinised along with the documentation, drawings, photographs etc. Based on the documentation, including drawings and photographs of the complex, the proposal for NOC for Completion (Part-Tower 1 and 2) is found to be accepted,"



**The under-construction RSS office in New Delhi.** File

read the minutes of the August 29 meeting uploaded by DUAC this week.

While considering the proposal on August 1, DUAC asked the project's architect to submit additional documentation, including photos of the construction vis-a-vis the 3D view of what was approved when the project started.

Before a building is given the completion certificate by the local body, the project proponent has to get NOCs from the agencies concerned, including DUAC, and the fire department

among others.

The new RSS office in Jhandewalan is spread over two 12-storey towers with 46,999 square metres of built-up area, as per the environment clearance accorded to the project in 2018. The buildings have offices, meeting rooms, conference halls and a library.

According to the environment clearance, the projects "benefits" include "benefits to society by providing educational, social and cultural learning". "The institution will provide employment to labourers during the construction phase and employment to personnel working during the operation phase. The institutional building will also enhance the infrastructure of the area," said the environment clearance.

The project was first approved by DUAC in July 2015 and then the revised plans were cleared in July 2018, as per DUAC records. The project is being carried out by Shree Keshav Samark Samiti, a Sangh committee named after RSS founder Keshav Baliram Hegdewar.

# Body of Kerala driver missing in Shirur landslide found after 70 days

**SANATH PRASAD  
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 25**

SEVENTY DAYS after Kerala-based lorry driver Arjun first went missing following a landslide in Ankola in Karnataka's Shirur, rescuers have finally pulled out his body from Gangavali river.

Arjun, a Kozhikode native who was driving a Mercedes-Benz lorry with 40 tonnes of timber from Kerala's Kozhikode to Karnataka's Belgavi, had stopped his truck for tea when a massive landslide hit NH 66 and swept him away towards the river on July 16.

According to the disaster management officials, authorities fished out Arjun's truck around 2:30 pm on Wednesday in the spot previously indicated by a team of drone experts led by Maj Gen M. Indrabalan (retd). The body was found in the cabin of the truck.

"Subsequently, with continuous dredging, the State Disaster Response Force and the



**Authorities fished out Arjun's truck on Wednesday afternoon.** Express

National Disaster Response Force recovered bones of cattle and parts of vehicles, including tyres and a steering wheel, from the river," a district administration official said. "Then, on Wednesday, Arjun's truck was found floating on the surface of the river, following which a dinghy was drawn closer to the spot to recover the mortal remains of Arjun from the vehicle's cabin."

Wednesday's breakthrough came days after Uttara Kannada district administration de-

ployed a floating craft dredger brought in from Goa to help clear silt in the river and recover the truck.

The discovery of Arjun's body, which came on the back of mounting pressure from the Kerala government, brings the total number of deaths in the landslide to nine. An LPG tanker that had been swept away in the landslide was found in July.

Authorities are still looking for two more "missing" people. Arjun's body is currently undergoing postmortem at a government hospital in Karwar. According to government procedure, the Uttara Kannada district administration will also conduct a DNA test to confirm Arjun's identity.

For his family and friends, this marks the end of a long search. Abdul Munaf, whose Kozhikode-based company Sagar Koya Timbers owns the truck, said he "always knew" Arjun would be found in the truck's cabin.

Munaf had been camping at Shirur for the last 70 days.

# Minor boy dies, UP school director among five booked

**Hathras:** A minor boy — a student at a private school here — died under mysterious circumstances, police said on Wednesday, adding that the school director among five people have been booked in the matter.

According to the police complaint filed by the student's father, he received a call from the school administration on Monday informing him that his son had fallen ill.

When he reached the school, the authorities told him that the school director had taken his son to a hospital in his car, police said.

"In his complaint, the father alleged that he later found his son's body in the director's car. He alleged that the director and four unidentified men were responsible for his son's death," a senior police officer said on Wednesday.

The body was sent for a post-mortem examination and the report is awaited, police said. **PTI**

## PRINCIPAL HELD FOR SEXUALLY ASSAULTING, KILLING SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL STUDENT

# 'How can teachers be demons': Gujarat village in shock over minor's murder

**ADITIRAJA  
DAHOD, SEPTEMBER 25**

IT WAS a regular school day morning. Around 10.20 am on September 19, at a remote village in Gujarat's Dahod district, the six-year-old and her mother took a short walk from their home to the point where the road curved. They spotted a familiar vehicle — the principal's car.

"I waved and requested him to take my daughter along to school, like I have done several times in the past. He agreed and my daughter happily went along," the woman recalls. That was the last time she saw her daughter, the first of her two children, alive.

On September 22, police arrested the 58-year-old principal under POCSO Act charges and BNS sections related to murder and rape. Police said the accused

attempted to rape the girl on their way to the school and, when she resisted, smothered her to death.

As the evening wore on, and the family realised that the girl had not turned up, they began asking around. The search ended a few hours later, on the premises of the primary school — her body was found in the backyard, in a small space that separated the school building from its boundary wall.

The Dahod police, which investigated the case, questioned multiple people — teachers, the child's classmates, children in the village with whom she would often walk back home. No one had seen the girl in school that day.

The school — the only government primary school in the vicinity — is in a neighbouring village. Children mostly went to the school in groups — a 10-15-minute walk through a partly

paved road, flanked by corn fields. If their teachers or principal happened to pass by, they would hitch a ride. Which is why, says the mother of the six-year-old girl, she did not think twice before sending her daughter with the principal that morning.

"All through her school life, she has regularly travelled with the teachers, including the principal. We never suspected anything about his behaviour."

Since the incident, the family's mud house has seen a stream of visitors — police, political leaders, social workers, legal advisers, media persons and neighbours. To each of them, the girl's parents narrate the events of that day: how the mother and daughter, her hair oiled and neatly plaited, had left for school that morning before spotting the principal's car, how they grew worried when she did not get home, the hurried walk to

school, the frantic search, the jump over the boundary wall of the locked premises, and then, the discovery of her body.

"We picked her up in our arms and rushed her to hospital. At the PHC, they put an oxygen mask on her face. Then they referred us to the Limkheda hospital, but there, they told us our daughter had died," says her father.

According to the police, the principal kept the girl's body in the car the entire school day. Once the school emptied out, he allegedly dumped the body in the backyard and left. To throw the police off the scent, he allegedly put her bag inside her classroom and kept her slippers outside. The man has been remanded in police custody until September 27.

The girl's mother recalls her conversation with the principal that evening. "I called him up after children from our village told

me that they had not seen my daughter at school. The principal said he had dropped her at school, but did not know where she went. He hung up after that. I was surprised that he did not show any concern."

On how they zeroed in on the principal, Dahod District Superintendent of Police Rajdeepsinh Zala says, "While the principal said he had dropped the child in school and that she had even attended the morning prayers, it struck us as odd that nobody else had seen her. The school parking area is a 25x25-metre space and someone would have seen the child getting out of his car, but no one did. The teachers conducting the morning prayers said she was not present there. Her classmates as well as the mid-day meal in-charge confirmed she had not come to school that day."

Zala says technical surveillance of the principal's phone re-

vealed that he had taken "longer than usual" to cover the distance to school that morning. Besides, the accused claimed to have left the campus at 5 pm but his mobile location showed he was in the compound until after 6 pm, Zala adds.

"The autopsy report had also confirmed that the time of death was much earlier than when the body was discovered."

The family of marginal farmers is now questioning its decision to send the child to a school outside the village. "I am illiterate but what I learned from farming was enough to sustain my family. Had we not thought of educating her, she would perhaps have been alive today," says the child's grandfather.

Demanding death sentence for the accused, her father says, "What was my child's fault? How could the man just dump her body in the backyard?"

A former sarpanch says villagers have decided not to entrust their children with outsiders. "We never imagined that teachers, whom we trust to look after our children, would turn into demons. The village elders had decided not to send younger children alone to school," he says.

At the village where the school, and the principal's house, are located, residents refuse to provide directions to the home of the "one who should not be defended". Says a villager, "He can't be forgiven... The administration should run a bulldozer over his house."

The school has around 200 children and six teachers. The most senior teacher has now been handed the charge of the principal.

Five days after the incident, not many had turned up at school. One of the teachers — all of them are now witnesses in the case —

says, "It is indeed heartbreaking that an innocent child met such a tragic end. What has happened has tarnished the image of teachers. It is unpardonable."

She looks across at the parking area, where the accused had allegedly parked his vehicle, which has now been sent for forensic examination. "The car had dark film covering its windows and windscreens. We had no idea that her body was inside throughout."

Another teacher says they are trying their best not to bring up the case with the children. "We are not talking about it in school. Of course, the police were here and spoke to many children. The older children are aware of what happened but the younger ones do not understand that much," says a teacher. "They only know that one of their classmates died and the principal has been taken away."



## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# Democracy's blind eye

Suffering unleashed by Israel in Gaza and Lebanon is made possible by complicity of Great Powers



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

## SURGE AND RISK

Stock indices edge higher, even as concerns over valuations and individual trading in F&O segment persist

THE BENCHMARK INDICES are scaling new heights — on Tuesday, the BSE Sensex surpassed the 85,000 mark during trading, but ended the day lower. On Wednesday, the index closed at 85,169. Since the beginning of this year, the Sensex is up almost 18 per cent. The initial public offerings market has also been robust. As per the Economic Survey, the number of IPOs has risen from 164 in 2022-23 to 272 in 2023-24. And the momentum continues with several big companies tapping the markets. Alongside this surge in markets, the investor base continues to increase sharply. According to the Economic Survey, the number of retail investors has risen to over 9.5 crore, and there are more than 4 crore mutual fund investors in the country. In August, there were 9.61 crore SIP accounts. Foreign investors have also turned positive in recent months. After outflows in April and May, foreign portfolio investors have pumped in money. In the financial year so far, net investments by FPIs add up to Rs 81,451 crore. The US Fed cutting interest rates, and providing greater clarity on the trajectory of interest rates, has also influenced investors. However, this euphoria has been accompanied by individual investors making riskier investments.

A study by the stock market regulator shows that the number of individual investors in the Futures and Options market has almost doubled — from 51.35 lakh in 2021-22 to 95.75 lakh in 2023-24. Nine out of 10 individual traders lost money in the F&O segment. Yet, a significant number of them continued to trade. The study estimates that during the last three financial years, 1.13 crore unique individual traders lost Rs 1.81 lakh crore in this segment. Of these, more than 1 crore traders lost Rs 2 lakh per person on average during this period. While these individual traders lost money, it was the foreign portfolio investors and the proprietary traders who made money — profits of the two categories added up to Rs 61,000 crore last year. The demographic profile of these individual investors is revealing. The proportion of young traders, those who are less than 30 years old, has increased sharply — from 31 per cent in 2022-23 to 43 per cent in 2023-24. More than three-fourths of individual traders have declared an annual income of less than Rs 5 lakh. This continuing surge in F&O trading, especially by individual investors, even as most of them have been incurring sizeable losses, has been a cause of concern for some time. In July, Sebi had released a consultation paper outlining a series of measures to impact trading in this segment.

Alongside, concerns over valuations persist. In September, the Sensex has been trading at a price to earnings ratio of around 24. In the case of the small and mid cap indices, the valuations appear more stretched. In a few weeks from now, the RBI's monetary policy committee will meet. This meeting could provide greater clarity on growth and inflation and the path of interest rates in India. The corporate results season will also provide a glimpse into the financial health of India Inc. These could shape the trajectory of markets.

## TERMS OF PROTECTION

SC judgment on sexual exploitation of minors has the right intent. But it also raises questions about guard rails

THE SUPREME COURT judgment on Monday on sexual exploitation of minors signals a necessary broadening of the conversation. In a landmark ruling, it said that viewing, possession and storage of sexually explicit materials involving minors constitute a crime under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Information Technology (IT) Act, whether or not it is shared or transmitted further. The ruling overrides a January order by the Madras High Court that had held that "mere possession" or storage of child pornography was not an offence under Section 67-B of the IT Act. But this expansion of the ambit of legal action against such exploitation also raises a question about guard rails, and about whether harsher laws are better deterrents. Does this view of the law, that equates possession with criminal intent, place the burden of proof on the accused? This raises concerns at a time when the state has been known to weaponise laws and curb freedoms, especially of the voiceless and vulnerable.

The apex court rightly says that, "Child sexual exploitation is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable, and the offence of child pornography is equally as heinous if not more, as in the latter the victimisation and exploitation of the child do not end with the initial act of abuse. It, in essence, turns the singular incident of abuse into a ripple of trauma-inducing acts where the rights and dignity of the child is continuously violated each time such material is viewed or shared". But this approach, while empathetic to victims, may not keep enough room for kinds of adolescent behaviour which require sensitive handling, not criminalisation, including online exploration of sexuality. The ruling also sidesteps the question of regulation of what it recommends be referred to as "child sexual exploitative and abuse material" (CSEAM) instead of "child pornography", and it does not recognise the possibilities of rehabilitation or the necessity of the infrastructure that is required for it. Its emphasis on mandatory reporting downplays the risk of facing apathy, victim blaming and harassment by the police.

For the judgment to really move the needle on CSEAM, a lot will depend on the implementation. As it rightly points out, awareness about consent and its limits needs to be built through sex education, in schools, colleges and at home and through access to counselling and therapy. Another important aspect remains the sensitisation of police forces to deal with such complaints, with compassion, following due process. The SC judgment has its heart in the right place, but it is imperative to ensure that its stringency is not misused to penalise rather than to protect.

## RAMEN'S STORY

In the journey of the brothly noodles — from famine food to gastronomic fare — lies the secret sauce of its success

BOWL BY BOWL, noodle soup has taken over the world. Call it ramen (as the Japanese do) or ramyeon (like the Koreans), few dishes are as popular as noodles — fresh or instant, curly or flat — in hot broth. Gussied up with toppings that range from thinly-sliced pork belly and soy-cured eggs to mushrooms and chilli oil, ramen is well on its way to shedding the "unhealthy" tag that has long dogged it in regions beyond East Asia, even levelling up to the "gourmet" category. This includes India, where ramen-focused eateries, like Bengaluru's Naru Noodle Bar, are booked out months in advance, and where, according to a recent report by the World Instant Noodle Association, more ramen is consumed than anywhere else in the world, excluding China and Indonesia.

This unprecedented popularity is driven, in part, by the sheer convenience of ramen: All that the most basic bowl requires is hot water and a packet of instant noodles (with, perhaps, ingredients like butter or bacon bits for additional texture and taste). The biggest factor driving its popularity is that it can be customised to suit every palate in the world. For each sweat-inducing bowl, like the infamous Buldak spicy ramen that was pulled off the shelves in some countries, there is another that banks on the subtle but complex flavours of kelp and bonito. When it comes to ramen, there are no rules: Foie gras and chocolate are as much in the game as classic ingredients like boiled eggs, shiitake mushrooms and scallions.

In the journey of ramen, from post-World War II famine food to the packaged noodles made for a globalised world in the 1980s and 1990s to the quintessential 21st century gastronomic fare, is the universal secret sauce: Food that adapts the quickest, sticks around the longest.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM'S licence to Israel to act with impunity in Gaza, and now Lebanon, will come back to haunt it. Israel has a right to defend itself. Many of the forces arrayed against it, including Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, are not on the side of humanity. But to call what Israel has unleashed in Gaza and Lebanon disproportionate would be a colossal understatement. It is a moral catastrophe. It is also strategically myopic. Lebanon has endured its worst day of bombing in 50 years. Tens of thousands of people are being displaced, innocent children killed. There is a shocking level of dehumanisation of civilians. This is being done with the complicity of Great Powers, including, one is ashamed to say, India.

Israel is a formidable military force. It has often been embattled, including by the October 7 attack. But has any war it has conducted since 1967 actually made it safer? Those wars have been, under the guise of creating "safe" zones, wars of expansion. One of Israel's aims is, ostensibly, to create safe zones. But this is an ironic objective since it is the expansion of Israel's illegal settlements that has, in part, created proximity. Those wars have always laid the groundwork for foes that are ideologically even more hostile than their predecessors. There is an amazing American and Israeli obsession with destroying states.

Both Hamas and Hezbollah have functioned as quasi-states (in Hamas's case, sometimes with Israeli complicity), providing political expression and welfare in part because all the great powers of the region have consistently connived to break down functioning states. The US in Libya and Iraq are two recent examples, which also had the consequence of strengthening Iran. But what does Israel expect will happen in Gaza and south Lebanon, when functioning society is destroyed, infrastructure reduced to rubble, and refugees herded to camps? Who will fill that vacuum? Israel's actions are not self-defence, they are animated by almost a will to apocalypticism, as if the chaos and destruction will create its own security.

Take the question of Iran. It is now almost as if Israel is pushing harder to get Iran to react, and create the conditions for a wider conflict.

The suffering in Gaza and Lebanon cannot be measured. But since that counts for little these days, think of the moral costs for Israel and the US. Amos Oz was not always the most reliable moral prognosticator. But his reflections five years after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (which is being dwarfed in intensity by this one) in *Slopes of Lebanon* still ring true. He wrote 'amongst the victims of the Lebanon War was the Land of Israel, small and brave, determined and righteous. It died in Lebanon perhaps precisely because in Lebanon, its back was not to the wall. It was the wall, and they, the Palestinians, had their backs pressed to the wall.' And he worried about what the war would do to Israel.

It seems to take licence for its impunity from the fact that states like Saudi Arabia and UAE are in the enemy-of-my-enemy mode, giving Israel cover. But again, there is strategic myopia. For one thing, Saudi Arabia had its own share of exacerbating violence and creating a vacuum of authority in Yemen. Those states are misreading the silence of their populations, which is, in part, produced by repression. But most importantly, any diplomatic off-ramp in this crisis has to involve Iran. Israel's aims are contradictory. Is the purpose of a show of force to get Iran to somehow negotiate and rein in Hezbollah? Is that compatible with a diplomatic strategy which actually gives Iran no off-ramp? Is any strategy viable with the complete isolation of Iran, as unpalatable as that regime might be? This is not war in service of a diplomatic objective. It is a war to sabotage any possible diplomacy.

The suffering in Gaza and Lebanon cannot be measured. But since that counts for little these days, think of the moral costs for Israel and the US. Amos Oz was not always the most reliable moral prognosticator. But his reflections five years after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (which is being dwarfed in intensity by this one) in *Slopes of Lebanon* still ring true. He wrote "amongst the victims of the Lebanon War was the Land of Israel, small and brave, determined and righteous. It died in Lebanon perhaps precisely because in Lebanon, its back was not to the wall. It was the wall, and they, the Palestinians, had their backs pressed to the wall." And he worried about what the war would do to Israel. "After Lebanon, we can no longer ignore the monster, even when it is dormant or half asleep, or when it peers out from behind the lunatic fringe." This worry about Israel might seem misplaced when Lebanon and Gaza are being reduced to rubble. But friends of Israel should care about this. The level of dehumanisation and aggression in Israeli discourse is unprecedented. Israeli democracy has been deeply corroded. It is troubling because any society that ceases to care about its own democracy and its own moral centre is hardly likely to care about anyone else.

Democracy in the US always weakens after its mendacity about its complicity in war.

Every war has also produced a strategic blow-back that weakens the US. Its lies about Iraq inaugurated the post-truth age and helped create a pervasive cynicism about liberal truth-seeking institutions. The war has strengthened its adversaries. Now its complicity has created a more polarised society, fueling both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. It has cracked down on academic freedom. It has had to subvert its own institutions. Antony Blinken ignored the finding of the US government's own agencies that Israel had blocked humanitarian aid to Gaza and misled Congress. Its prestige, power and authority are at their lowest in recent memory. And the war has reduced the plausibility of a liberal international order to rubble.

India again abstained on the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal. Its ostensible reason was the time-line was accelerated and it believes in "building bridges not furthering divides." Even Japan, the US's strongest ally, voted for the resolution. The MEA likes to project that India is this great peacemaker. With a few honourable exceptions, India's media and think tanks increasingly just parrot the MEA's self-congratulation. But across the Global South, it is an object of derision. India has to look out for its interests. But has there been any time in recent memory when India has traded in more banalities, photo-ops and false machismo for a domestic audience, even in the face of the most horrific human catastrophes and violations of international law?

Here are three democracies ushering the international order to ruin: Israel by its brutalisation of conflict, the United States by providing it complicity and cover, and India by its evasions that border on complicity. As the ground soaks more blood in Lebanon, Biden's farewell speech to the 79th UN General Assembly ended with this line "And may God protect all those who seek peace." Strange words. Were they an admission of impotence? Or a statement that God can have a day off, since there is no one seeking peace anyway, at least not in the world's democracies.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

## WHO DRAWS THE RED LINES?

Instagram Teen Accounts will shift responsibility for online safety of minors to parents



RUCHI GUPTA

THREE YEARS AFTER whistleblower Frances Haugen revealed Meta's negligence in addressing Instagram's harmful effects on teenage girls, the company has introduced Instagram Teen Accounts — a new service with built-in protections for users aged 13 to 18. These accounts limit who can contact teens and control the content they encounter, requiring parental permission for adjustments under age 16. While this is a step forward, several concerns remain.

Meta's announcement comes on the heels of legal action by 41 states and a proposal by the US surgeon general to slap warning labels on social media platforms, similar to those used for alcohol and tobacco products. There is also a growing civic movement for stricter phone-use regulations for younger users. The timing suggests that Meta might be trying to preempt further regulatory pressure and legal challenges. This raises the question if its motivations are about user safety.

This question is important because it ties into broader issues with social media platforms. By design, platforms often incentivise negative behaviours to boost engagement. The network effect keeps young users hooked, making it unlikely they will comply with restrictive features unless everyone is affected. Yet, rather than rethinking the platform, Meta has earmarked a sub-section of accounts for restrictions while shifting the responsibility for online safety onto harried parents.

This approach is problematic on two counts. For families with strong trust bonds,

these controls might be redundant. In those where trust is lacking, these controls may add to tensions between parents and children.

The assumption that parents can effectively manage their children's social media use reflects a developed-world perspective, where digital literacy among older generations is relatively high. In countries like India, where parents often seek technical support from their own children, these controls may be ineffective. Many Indian parents, especially in rural areas, also lack the familiarity with social media necessary to effectively monitor or regulate online activities. For working-class parents with time constraints, this can be an even greater challenge. This approach could then further widen the gap between tech-savvy and privileged families and those less familiar with digital tools and working-class families, creating a disparity in online safety and potentially reinforcing existing inequalities.

Already, Meta's overall enforcement of its content policies varies between Western and developing markets, with the latter receiving less robust protection. If the majority of Meta's safety resources are concentrated in Western markets, it could lead to uneven protection across regions. There is thus legitimate concern about whether Instagram's safety measures would be stringent in developed markets and permissive in developing countries.

In all this, what remains unchanged is Meta's business interest in maximising time spent on its platform. While there are default limits on Teen accounts, the time-related re-

striction is advisory. Teens get a prompt after an hour online, but there's no hard limit, once again shifting responsibility to parents. It's also up to parents to monitor for fake Teen accounts created by adults to bypass controls and contact young users. Where parents are unavailable or unable, these protections will largely go unenforced.

Instead of relying predominantly on parental controls, Meta should consider designing systems with built-in safety features that are effective regardless of parental involvement. This must include not just better content moderation and clearer age-appropriate boundaries, but a systemic rethink of features that promote positive online behaviour. These could include implementing platform-wide safety features that benefit all users, not just teens such as algorithmic changes that prioritise positive content and ethical design frameworks. These frameworks would be geared towards encouraging more personal and meaningful connections, moving away from the current emphasis on impersonal broadcasts and virality.

The real challenge is systemic. Social media platforms must be redesigned with built-in safety features that don't depend on parental oversight. Without a fundamental rethink of how these platforms function, young users — especially in vulnerable regions — will remain at risk.

The writer is the executive director of Future of India Foundation

## SEPTEMBER 26, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### ARMY TO PULL OUT

THE GOVERNMENT HAS decided to withdraw the Army from the Golden Temple complex. A final agreement has been reached between the government and five priests on the question of the control of the Golden Temple. Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi made an unscheduled broadcast to the nation on AIR and Doordarshan announcing the government's decision.

### ANDHRA MLAS HELD

FOUR LEGISLATORS WERE arrested under NSA in connection with the continuing strike

in the twin cities. They include P Ramaswamy, a former minister in the Bhaskara Rao cabinet, the Majlis leader, Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, former protem speaker, and two other Majlis leaders, Mohammed Amanullah Khan and Baqar Aga. Former CM Bhaskara Rao, has lodged a strong protest with Andhra Governor Shankar Dayal Sharma over the arrests.

### OPPOSITION UNITED

INTENSE BEHIND-THE-SCENE NEGOTIATIONS are in progress among opposition leaders in their renewed effort to bring different opposition parties under the umbrella of a "united party", distinct from a "merger" to fight

the Congress (I) in the coming Lok Sabha elections. Under the proposal, opposition parties would come under the "united party" with Lok Dal leader Charan Singh, as president.

### ASSAM ROLLS CASE

THE ELECTION COMMISSION informed the Supreme Court that it would carry out intensive revision of the electoral rolls for all constituencies in Assam in accordance with the rules under the Representation of People's Act "as far as practicable". Wherever it was not "practicable" to carry out intensive revision in any constituency or constituencies, the revision would be "summary".



"If history is any judge, past Israeli adventures in Lebanon have not ended well for the Zionist state, and there is little proof things will be different this time around. Israel has lit a fire that can consume the entire region, as hopes for a Gaza ceasefire grow dimmer by the day."  
— DAWN, PAKISTAN

# An uncertain love affair

If India-US partnership is to become a time-tested marriage, the two need to engage in wider conversations going beyond partisan interests in either country



SANJAYA BARU

A QUARTER CENTURY ago a common complaint about the bilateral relationship between India and the United States used to be that the ballast was not heavy enough to steady the ship in uncertain waters. That is no longer true. A variety of factors have stabilised the relationship to the point where disagreements no longer disrupt. The ship is steadier and on course. Even if the Indian national security advisor has to remain at sea, giving up plans to arrive at an American port.

For the first time in a quarter century, since the creation of the office of the National Security Advisor in 1998, the NSA has not accompanied the Prime Minister on a visit to the United States. Therein hangs a tale. One of the problems with the close to one score strategic partnerships that India has signed up with all manner of countries is that they do not help clarify how to handle situations like the one that the Indian NSA, Ajit Kumar Doval, finds himself in. After all, he was only pursuing India's core strategic interest in dealing with anti-national and separatist elements based overseas, including on American soil. Should a strategic partner not share such strategic interests?

The reason given for Doval staying home, according to media reports, is that he is required here to keep an eye on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir in the run up to the elections there. This does not sound convincing since, on the one hand, the all-powerful Union home minister and the experienced raksha mantri are there to do the job and, on the other, because the Union government has been claiming that the situation in Kashmir is normal and under control.

It would appear, therefore, that the NSA may have been advised to stay home to avoid any embarrassment that may be caused by the summons issued by the district court of the southern district of New York, in response to a lawsuit filed by the US-based Khalistan activist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. The summons, demanding a response from the Indian government within 21 days, has specifically named the NSA, Ajit Kumar Doval, along with the head of the Research and Analysis Wing, Samant Goel and the alleged operative, the Indian businessman Nikhil Gupta.

To add to the diplomatic embarrassment caused by the summons and its timing, White House officials and members of the US national security council chose to meet a delegation of Sikhs on the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with President Joe Biden. The delegation was assured that Sikhs in the US would be protected from any act of "transnational repression".

On the one hand the ballast in the bilateral relationship is heavy enough to tide over such diplomatic storms. On the other hand, the manner in which this issue and many others on the bilateral agenda have been handled by the Biden administration suggests that there is still a lack of clarity on what exactly both countries mean when



C R Sasikumar

they speak of a "comprehensive and global strategic partnership". It is one thing for the US to defend democratic freedoms and quite another for the White House to be commiserating with elements that seek the dismemberment of India.

This is not to defend the dubious and ham-handed operation allegedly carried out by Indian agencies on US soil. The latter have egg on their face. No one expects a mea culpa in such cases but a price is being extracted as a warning. If that price includes embarrassing the Indian NSA, so be it.

It is not just the Pannun case and US response to "Khalistani activism" that has raised questions about the scope and definition of the strategic partnership, but also a range of other issues that have come up with respect to defence equipment sales, the terms of engagement in critical and emerging technologies, policy regimes for trade and investment and so on. Differences on issues such as democracy in Bangladesh and the war in Ukraine have only added to this list.

Given the importance of the bilateral relationship it is time to set photo-ops aside and engage in some real hard-nosed conversations. It is such frank and honest conversations of the 1990s that laid the foundation for the relationship of the 2000s. None other than a longstanding critic of the US at the time, the strategic affairs guru K. Subrahmanyam, would speak his mind out to his American interlocutors, not ever being diplomatic, and give them a sense of Indian thinking.

It appears of late that a considerable part of the conversation is within echo chambers of mutual bonhomie with constant re-assurances being given, as in an uncertain love affair rather than a time-tested marriage. Both sides are responsible for this given

Given the importance of the bilateral relationship, it is time to set photo-ops aside and engage in some real hard-nosed conversations. It is such frank and honest conversations of the 1990s that laid the foundation for the relationship of the 2000s. None other than a longstanding critic of the US at the time, the strategic affairs guru K. Subrahmanyam, would speak his mind out to his American interlocutors, not ever being diplomatic, and give them a sense of Indian thinking.

some fundamental differences on a range of issues, including how they view relations with Russia and China.

It is not clear what Prime Minister Modi expects from his repeated, high profile love-ins with the Indian diaspora, apart from ego gratification, but the fact remains that whichever way they vote in US elections is not going to make a fundamental difference to the bilateral relationship. Perhaps Donald Trump would be more exuberant in expressing his friendship towards India but, as we have seen from his first term, that would not make much difference to policy. Kamala Harris may be more concerned about human rights, civil liberties and religious freedom in India but her trade, investment, defence export policies as well as her approach to China and Russia are unlikely to be very different from Biden's.

If indeed the India-US partnership is "comprehensive, global and strategic", and not just transactional — with India buying US defence equipment and US turning a blind eye to Indian misgovernance — then the two need to engage in wider and meaningful conversations, going beyond the partisan interests of one political party or another in either country.

As for Prime Minister Modi and his party, they have to manage the growing dissonance between the government's foreign policy and the attitude of the "Sangh Parivar", as manifesting on social media. While foreign affairs analysts from think tanks and in media sing one tune, "Modi bhakts" on social media are mouthing an altogether different one.

The writer was Member, National Security Advisory Board of India, 1999-2001 and media advisor to Prime Minister of India, 2004-08

# The job lags and gaps

Meeting future job requirements calls for substantial educational and skilling reforms



C RANGARAJAN AND M SURESH BABU

DATA ON EMPLOYMENT growth in India reveals contrasting trends. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI's) Capital, Labour, Energy Materials, Services (KLEMS) data reports a 6 per cent increase in job growth for FY24, a significant rise from the 3.2 per cent growth in FY23. However, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) offers a less optimistic view: The unemployment rate climbed to 9.2 per cent in June 2024 from 7 per cent in May, with the annual rate for FY24 at 8 per cent. According to Citigroup Research, India needs to create about 1.2 crore jobs every year over the next decade to absorb the number of new entrants to the labour market. However, with a 7 per cent growth rate, the country can generate around 80-90 lakh jobs annually, a deficit of around 30-40 lakh jobs. As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the unemployment rate in urban areas decreased from 6.8 per cent to 6.7 per cent between January to March 2023 and January to March 2024 for persons 15 years and above. Labour force participation rate in urban areas has increased from 48.5 per cent to 50.2 per cent from January to March 2023 and January to March 2024 for persons aged 15 years and above. Given the disparate trends in employment growth from different agencies, it is important that the National Statistical Commission address data discrepancies by improving data quality, improving co-ordination between agencies and increasing transparency in reporting. In fact, much of the difference is due to the differing definitions of employment used.

The incommensurate pace of employment generation is due to two major factors. First, imperfections in labour markets create rigidities resulting in persistent shortages and excesses. Apart from the institutional factors, which influence wage setting, there are several irritants in the operation of the labour market of which the "skill gap" is important. There are two kinds of skill gaps. One, when job seekers, despite acquiring qualifications, fall short of skills due to poor training. Second, when there is a complete lack of skill training. In India, both gaps co-exist. Compounding skill gaps is the non-availability of jobs that meet the aspirations of job seekers — the aspirational gap. The growing demand for jobs in the IT sector and the increasing presence of migrant manual labour in the southern states are examples of aspirational gaps. We need to find solutions to bridge all these gaps for the smooth functioning of labour markets and absorb new additions to the workforce.

Second, is the incongruence between growth in output and labour absorption due to technological changes resulting in the decline of employment elasticity. The substitution of labour by machines has a long history with innovations often resulting in simultaneous increases in output and

employment. However, earlier inventions were machines, and tools to reduce physical labour. These "mechanical muscles", deemed stronger and tireless compared to human muscles, increased production and productivity. The emergence of AI, or mechanical minds, raises another question: Will the demand for human brain labour fall? Idea creators and professionals who can apply new technologies will thrive. However, there's a distinct possibility of the middle management being downsized. Mechanical muscles pushed horses out of the economy, while mechanical minds can do the same to humans unless we equip the workforce to cope with the change.

Meeting future job requirements calls for substantial educational and skilling reforms. Educational institutions today are struggling to meet industry needs, leading many young Indians to pursue multiple degrees from lower-quality institutions. This has led to higher unemployment rates among highly educated youth. Despite enrolment rates going up, the quality of education has lagged behind requirements, exacerbating the employability crisis. The need for skill development after graduation is a sad commentary on our education system.

A balance between economic growth and employment growth can be achieved by pursuing a two-pronged strategy. First, concerted attempts need to be made to push industrialisation in sectors that absorb more labour. These sectors normally have strong inter-sectoral linkages and the ability to cater to the domestic market. Food processing and products, textiles and apparel have high labour absorption, and linkages with agriculture and other sectors within manufacturing, but might lag in terms of international competitiveness to penetrate global markets. Second, international competitiveness needs to be improved in technology-intensive sectors. They have higher technology adoption rates, increased research and development and the ability to cater to global markets. These include chemicals and chemical products, pharmaceuticals, medicinal, chemical and botanical products, motor vehicles, computers, electronic and optical products and manufacture of electrical equipment. Pursuing this strategy requires a sectoral approach and differentiated incentive system for employment generation and capital investments.

As of now, there is very little space to increase either the price of capital or lower the price of labour. In fact, the scope for altering technological choices concerning the production of any industrial output is limited. This is not only in matters of new technology. Even older technologies are becoming increasingly less labour-intensive. Smart factories are becoming more common. We need a good combination of relatively labour-intensive sectors and those that are contingent on high technology. A comprehensive policy framework focussing on sectors needs to be evolved to tackle the question of employment generation. The cardinal principle of such a framework should also be to enhance growth rates, as growth per se is important for generating jobs.

Rangarajan is former chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and former governor, Reserve Bank of India. Suresh Babu is director, MIDS, Chennai

# Fortifying the basic structure

Simultaneous elections are feasible. They will strengthen democracy



JANAY JAIN

WITH THE UNION Cabinet accepting the report prepared by the High-Level Committee advocating for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, the argument over "One Nation One Election" (ONOE) has taken centre stage again. Some have taken the view that simultaneous elections would benefit the citizenry at large, others argue that it would serve as an assault on the basic structure of the Indian Constitution.

Before we delve into these arguments, it might be beneficial to appreciate that India was never a stranger to holding simultaneous elections. In fact, our democratic journey began with this very idea. The first general election saw us voting simultaneously for both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. This practice continued in 1957 with the second general elections wherein several assemblies (Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Mysore, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal) were dissolved to align with national polls, ensuring synchronicity.

It was unfortunate that this harmonious electoral cycle was short-lived. The first blow came in July 1959, when then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dismissed the Kerala government led by E M S Namboodiripad. The second blow was struck by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as she prematurely dissolved the fourth Lok Sabha and called for general elections 15 months ahead of schedule. Thereafter, the situation further deteriorated

as central governments led by Congress unceremoniously utilised Article 356 of the Constitution to topple state assemblies it did not find favour with. On a side note, it was unfortunate that such a course was adopted on at least 50 occasions and all of this struck a blow to simultaneous elections.

The disadvantages of this fragmented approach were apparent to all. For instance, in 1962, the Election Commission of India in its Report on the General Elections emphasised that "it is obviously desirable that the duplication of effort and expense should, if possible, be avoided". This sentiment was echoed by the Commission in its 1983 Annual Report where it stressed the need to conduct simultaneous elections for parliamentary and assembly constituencies. The Law Commission in its 170th Report went a step further as it not only advocated simultaneous elections but also pinned the blame on the misuse of Article 356.

Given this background, the question arises: What are the benefits of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies? First and foremost, voters will only need to visit polling stations once to elect both their national and state representatives.

Second, the logistical burden on authorities would be greatly reduced: Election authorities can deploy polling personnel, build polling stations, divert security forces and make other arrangements only once. Moreover, even the preparation of an electoral

roll, which in itself is a Herculean exercise, would only need to be done once. To translate this into numbers, it was estimated in 2015 that the cost of holding elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was pegged at almost Rs 4,500 crore and in the 14th Lok Sabha, over 1,349 mobile companies of the Central Armed Police Forces were deployed.

Third, at a time when the Opposition's favourite political argument is that elections in India don't have a level playing field, simultaneous elections would benefit these political parties by ensuring that their campaign expenses remain limited.

Fourth, ONOE would alleviate the policy paralysis that occurs due to frequent impositions of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Each time the MCC is imposed, governance comes to a standstill as new schemes or projects cannot be announced or implemented. Simultaneous polls would significantly reduce these periods of administrative limbo.

It appears that for years even those who were amenable to the idea of ONOE dismissed it as a noble but unfeasible reform. However, the report of the High-Level Committee, which comprised a former President of India, former Leader of Opposition, distinguished bureaucrats and constitutional experts, has provided a concrete roadmap for implementation. The success of this report not only lies in the manner in which it was prepared but also in the

fact that it provided an answer to the various exigencies that could arise. For instance, it outlines the course of action to be adopted in case of a hung assembly.

Predictably, as soon as the High-Level Committee's report was published and the Cabinet accepted it, a set of compulsive contrarians emerged to criticise it as an assault on democracy. In their haste to oppose, they conveniently overlooked the fact that India was not alien to simultaneous elections and that numerous government panels, even during Congress rule, had recommended such an approach. Detractors of ONOE also argued that the course adopted by the Cabinet was contrary to a number of judgments of the Supreme Court wherein it was held that "free and fair elections" are the hallmark of the basic structure of the Constitution. On the contrary, with ONOE strengthening our democracy, the basic structure of the Constitution is far from threatened — it is fortified.

As we stand at a crossroads — the ONOE proposal will be brought before Parliament — two options lie ahead of us. We can either resign ourselves to the disadvantages of separate elections or we can take a step forward by shedding our partisan views and acting in national interest.

The writer is an advocate at the Bombay High Court

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BAD PRECEDENT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'In cold blood' (IE, September 25). Uttar Pradesh has set a disturbing precedent with its pattern of encounter killings. This bypassing of due process seems to have enhanced the chief minister's public image and even yielded political dividends. No wonder, other states are following UP's lead. However, such extrajudicial killings are a blatant travesty of justice, violating the principles enshrined in our legal framework, and need to be addressed urgently. Such measures also point to a broader systemic failure, where the judiciary is unable to deliver timely and effective justice. Moreover, they expose the dangerous level of political interference in institutions that are meant to operate independently and uphold the law.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'In cold blood' (IE, September 25). The encounter killing of the prime accused in the sexual assault of two minors at Badlapur by the Maharashtra police has set a dangerous example. Police encounters should have no place in a democracy. Criminals, undoubtedly, merit deterrent legal action. But the police agenda cannot be to get rid of them. Even the worst criminal has the

right to a fair trial. The incident needs to be probed thoroughly, not in the least to fix responsibility for the security lapse.

SS Paul, Nadia

### FOR A GREEN INDIA

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Clean up sans teeth' (IE, September 25). India's pollution problem is deteriorating by the day as a result of its massive population, increasing urbanisation and consumerism, and people's changing lifestyles. Our country leads the list of the world's 20 most polluted cities. Air pollution alone is projected to kill more than 22 lakh people per year. Enforcement remains a significant challenge in minimising excessive noise pollution in urban areas. Despite extensive river cleaning efforts, 70 per cent of our surface water is rated unsuitable for human consumption. If our pollution control boards are understaffed, how will we monitor and control these problems? These agencies also require sufficient domain-level experts to provide scientific and technical support, and research to anticipate risks. All our Pollution Control Boards have to be made robust and efficient.

Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru

Minority Affairs Ministry seen as 'ministry of Muslims affairs' in Cong rule: Rijju

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

UNION MINISTER of Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijju Wednesday alleged that the Minority Affairs Ministry was thought to be "ministry of Muslim affairs" during the Congress regime as it created a "Muslim vote bank."

Talking about PM Narendra Modi-led central government's achievements in the first 100 days of its third term, Rijju said, "The work done by the Minority Affairs Ministry has to reach people. I have been to places recently, and people till now thought that it was the ministry of Muslim affairs. During the Congress tenure, they created the Muslim vote bank. That's why they only spoke of Muslims. But now we are working for six communities... It was wrong earlier, it harmed the Muslims."

"We have started community-wise targeted programmes. So, everyone knows we are working for Parsis, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Sikhs and Muslims," he said, adding that "people should know the Modi government has done more for minorities than previous governments." He claimed that during the Congress governments, "only a Muslim could become a chairperson for National Commission for Minorities. That had hampered the ministry's objective because Muslims remained poor. Why? Because they were treated as a vote bank."

"We changed the perception and people know there are six minority communities in India and all schemes are benefiting all six minority communities," he said.

SC bail to Baghel's ex-deputy secretary: 'How long can you keep a person in jail'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE SUPREME Court Wednesday granted bail to suspended IAS officer Saumya Chaurasia, who was deputy secretary to Chhattisgarh's former chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, in a money laundering case linked to an alleged coal levy scam, while noting that she had already spent a year and nine months in prison and the charges were yet to be framed.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan said she will remain suspended from service till further orders. "Without expressing any opinion on merits, and with a view to give an opportunity of elaborate hearing to the parties on the next date, we direct that petitioner be released on interim bail, subject to furnishing of bail bonds to the satisfaction of trial court," the court ordered.

Justice Bhuyan also questioned the ED's conviction rate and how long an accused can be kept in prison without charges being framed. "Without charges being framed, how long can you keep a person in jail? Sentence is seven years. What is the rate of conviction in PMLA cases? In Parliament they said only in 41 cases there has been conviction... then? You keep a person in jail for years," the judge told the law officer representing the Enforcement Directorate.

The bench also noted that some of the co-accused in the case had already got bail and that the High Court had said that charges



Former CM of Chhattisgarh Bhupesh Baghel

BAGHEL WRITES TO CJI ALLEGING MISUSE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES

Raipur: Congress leader and former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday wrote a letter to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud requesting a high-level judicial inquiry into the functioning of central and state agencies. He alleged that the ED has made grave allegations against him and people close to him over the last four years as part of a political conspiracy to defame him and end his political career.

could not be framed as non-bailable warrants against some of the accused could not be executed.

The ED had arrested Chaurasia on December 2, 2022 over allegations or existence of a cartel involving senior bureaucrats, businessmen, politicians and middlemen, which was allegedly extorting a levy of Rs 25 per tonne for coal transported in Chhattisgarh.

The ED alleged that the proceeds of the crime were used for "investing in benami assets and bribing officials."

Former CM Gehlot should be questioned in phone tapping case, says his ex-OSD

HAMZAKHAN  
JAIPUR, SEPTEMBER 25

FORMER RAJASTHAN Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot should be questioned in connection with the phone tapping case being probed by Delhi Police, his former Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Lokesh Sharma, who is an accused in the case, said Wednesday.

After being questioned for more than five hours by the Crime Branch of Delhi Police, Sharma told reporters, "As usual, there was a long list of questions but the main question of the puzzle has been where did I get the audio clips from. So today I revealed it to the Crime Branch and gave them a seven-page written statement.



Ashok Gehlot was CM when the FIR was filed in 2021

In it, I have stated, with evidence, that around 6.30-7 pm on July 16, 2020, the then CM Ashok Gehlot called me and gave me a pen drive, which had audio clips, and told me to circulate it in the media."

"Now Ashok Gehlot should be questioned. Because I have said in writing that further questioning

should be done from Ashok Gehlot as to how he got these audio clips recorded. Was it legal or illegal, was the interception (of calls) done while following all the rules and regulations or what was the intention behind it. This can be answered by Ashok Gehlot himself," Sharma said.

This was the first time Sharma was questioned by Delhi Police after his allegations against Gehlot on April 24 this year. He had then alleged that during the 2020 political crisis in the state, Gehlot had personally shared recordings of phone calls with him and asked him to "circulate them in the media." This was a shift from his earlier stance that he got the clips from social media and circulated them among journalists. Sharma had also alleged that the phones

of party rebels, including Sachin Pilot, and their movements were tracked at Gehlot's behest.

On Wednesday, Sharma said, "Earlier I used to give statements I was instructed to give. I was last questioned in October 2023 when there was a Congress government (in Rajasthan) and Gehlot was CM and I was his OSD. So, whenever I left for questioning by Delhi Police, I was instructed to tell them that I received these audio clips via social media and that's what I used to do," he said. "But now the entire blame is being put on me, that I got the phones tapped. I clearly said I have nothing to do with the phone tapping case and that I had merely shared the contents of the pen drive with the media. Since I was his OSD and handled his media and IT, it was my responsibility

to follow the CM's orders."

Sharma has been named in an FIR lodged in Delhi in March 2021 on the complaint of Union Minister and BJP leader Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. In the FIR, Sharma and others have been accused of criminal conspiracy and "unlawfully intercepting telegraphic signals (telephonic conversation)". In 2020, the leak of three audio clips allegedly involving one Gajendra Singh - alleged to be Shekhawat - a middleman Sanjay Jain, and then Congress MLAs Bhanwarlal Sharma and Vishvendra Singh had led to a political crisis in Rajasthan. In the tapes, they were allegedly heard planning to topple the Gehlot government. Subsequently, Pilot, the then Deputy CM, led a rebellion of 19 Congress MLAs.

SC orders YouTuber's release after TN govt revokes his detention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE SUPREME Court Wednesday ordered "forthwith" release of well-known YouTuber Savukku Shankar who was detained just after his release under the Tamil Nadu Goondas Act.

The top court's order came after the Tamil Nadu government apprised it of the state having revoked his detention order following the opinion of an advisory board on the issue.

"Acting on the opinion of the Advisory Board, the state has revoked the order of detention today... In view of the aforesaid, the detenu Shankar alias Savukku Shankar shall be released forthwith, if not required in any other case," the bench ordered while disposing of his plea. Shankar (48) was arrested by the Coimbatore Police on May 4 for alleged derogatory statements about women police personnel and some Madras High Court judges.

NGT to Govt: Can star rating be implemented for passenger vehicles?

NIKHIL GHANEKAR  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE NATIONAL Green Tribunal's (NGT) principal bench has sought responses from the union government on a plea seeking implementation of a star rating system for all passenger vehicles based on their fuel efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions.

The plea was filed before the Tribunal by Agra-based paediatric surgeon Dr Sanjay Kulshrestha through non-profit organisation 'Tsunami on roads', on grounds that the current efforts of the government, though sincere, are falling short in addressing air pollution woes.

The NGT's principal bench headed by chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava heard the matter last Friday and the order was made public on Wednesday. The bench sought responses from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Ministry

of Heavy Industries.

"In this original application, the applicant is seeking implementation of a star rating system for all passenger vehicles based on fuel efficiency and CO2 emission. The said prayer has been made based on the plea that vehicular pollution is the most important contributory factor in air pollution and as per the Ministry of Earth Sciences, vehicular pollution is responsible for 40% of such air pollution," the order noted.

Dr Kulshrestha's plea said that with air pollution going from bad to worse, despite sincere efforts of the government, there was a need to enforce more emission restrictions on vehicular pollution like the star rating system.

Although the Centre had brought out fuel efficiency norms, there is no star rating or green labelling system for vehicles in the country yet. The plea said that in most developed countries it is a legal requirement to display a label on all light vehicles under 3.5 tonnes, to display fuel consumption on the windscreen.

House panel on Waqf Bill: 1.25 crore submissions, foreign hand, says BJP MP

ASAD REHMAN & LALMANI VERMA  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

BJP MP Nishikant ODubey, a member of the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, has written to panel chairperson Jagdambika Pal raising "serious concerns about the massive number of submissions" received on the issue and seeking an investigation, including into "the geographical origin" of the submissions, by the Union Home Ministry.

Dubey alleged that "fundamentalist groups", "individuals like Zakir Naik", or "foreign powers like the ISI (Pakistan) or China or their proxies" may be involved given that "1.25 crore submissions have been received". If such forces were involved, Dubey said, it would be an attempt "to manipulate our legislative process", "an attack on the very foundations of our parliamentary system" and "must be treated as a national security issue".

The Joint Committee on the waqf Bill, which was introduced in the last Parliament Session and proposes sweeping changes in how waqfs are governed and regulated, has had 12 meetings so far, with the last one on September 20. The stakeholders called for consultations include the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Union Ministries of Housing and Urban Affairs, Archaeological Survey of India, Zakat Foundation of India, and several state waqf boards.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, the AIMPLB said that as part of a campaign by it inviting representations from people, "5 crore" had sent their opinion to the parliamentary committee. The board has maintained a complete record of the emails sent, AIMPLB spokesperson S Q R Ilyas said, adding that while over 3.7 crore emails have been sent to the committee via a QR code generated by it, other 1.3 crore opinions were sent via other mediums such as post and courier.



BJP MP Nishikant Dubey

In case the Joint Committee wanted copies of these emails, the AIMPLB was prepared to submit them as proof of the correspondence sent. Ilyas said.

In his letter to Pal, Dubey wrote: "This unprecedented volume (of submissions) not only sets a global record for legislative submissions, but it also invites scrutiny over the motivations and sources... it is vital that the committee addresses these concerns head-on to ensure the integrity and independence of our legislative process."

He said that the first issue that requires "immediate attention" is the geographical origin of these submissions. "It is crucial to determine how many came from within India and how many were received from international sources," Dubey wrote, adding that "it is statistically improbable that such an overwhelming response could emerge organically from within India alone."

Saying that "the content of a large portion of these submissions is identical or contains minor variations", Dubey wrote, "a larger and more serious issue is the possible involvement of Islamic fundamentalist organizations".

He went on to name Islamic preacher Zakir Naik "and his ilk", calling them "inimical to our vibrant democracy", and suggested "the involvement of foreign actors such as Pakistan's ISI, China, and radical organizations like Jama'at-e-Islami Bangladesh and the Taliban". "If foreign intelligence agencies are behind this flood of submissions, it would constitute an unprecedented attack on Indian sovereignty and a deliberate attempt to compromise the independence of Parliament," Dubey wrote.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY**  
OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. NER-BSB0SnT-OT-21-2024  
"Open Tenders" through Online (E-Tendering) are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom) Varanasi/North Eastern Railway for and behalf of the President of India for the following works:-  
SI No.-1, Tender Notice No. and Description of Work: NER-BSB0SnT-OT-21-2024, Name of Work: Provision of Computer based Large Format Display System in Control office and Augmentation of Data Logger network in Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway. Details: Approx. Value (Rs.): ₹ 1,54,75,232.99, Earnest Money (Rs.): ₹ 2,27,400/-, Cost of Tender Form (Rs.): ₹ 00.00, Completion Period: 06 Months, Tender Closing date & Time: 15-10-2024, up to 15:00 Hrs.  
(1) Tender Online will be submitted up to 15:00 hrs. on date 15-10-2024.  
(2) For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the official website of Indian Railways i.e. [www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in) Divl. Rly. Manager (S&T) Varanasi  
CPR/Signal-45

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**  
See Section 82 Cr. P. C.  
Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Rakesh @ Sunny S/o Jaswant Singh, R/o 275/16, Gulab Bagh, Uttam Nagar Delhi**, have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **Case/FIR No. 303/2014 dt. 26.06.2014 U/s 302/307/120B/34 IPC & FIR. 491/2015 dt. 30.09.2015 U/s 307/120B IPC & 25/27 Arms Act.**, has been registered at **P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, **Rakesh @ Sunny** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Rakesh @ Sunny** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).  
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused, **Rakesh @ Sunny under Case/FIR. No. 303/2014 dt. 26.06.2014 U/s 302/307/120B/34 IPC & FIR. 491/2015 dt. 30.09.2015 U/s 307/120B IPC & 25/27 Arms Act.**, registered at **P.S. Subzi Mandi Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **19.11.2024**.  
By Order  
**Virender Kumar Kharta, ASJ,**  
Room No.266, Tis Hazri Court, Delhi  
DP/12679/N/2024

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड  
ई-निविदा सं० 01/  
ईएमटीसी-प्र०/24-25/AMC आमंत्रण सूचना निविदा विशिष्ट सं० CD-86 के अन्तर्गत ए० एबीबी इंडिया लि० से क्रय किये फाइबर ऑप्टिक टर्मिनल उपकरणों यथा 27 नग (SDH & PDH) एवं 01 नग NMS की मरम्मत एवं अनुरक्षण हेतु दो वर्ष तक वार्षिक अनुरक्षण अनुबंध सम्पादित करने हेतु अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत अनुतरंग एवं दूरसंचार मण्डल-प्रथम, लखनऊ के द्वारा ई-निविदा सं० 01/ ईएमटीसी-प्र०/24-25/AMC आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) पर दिनांक 25.09.2024 को अपलोड किया गया है। उक्त कार्य की अनुमानित लागत 16.81 लाख (जीएसटी सहित), धरोहर धनराशि ₹00 17000.00, निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क ₹00 590.00 (जीएसटी सहित) अप्रतिदेय निर्धारित है। ऑनलाइन ई-निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 26.10.2024 को 14:00 बजे तक एवं भाग-1 खुलने की नियत तिथि तद्विनांक 26.10.2024 को 14:30 बजे तक है। उक्त वर्णित ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित सम्पूर्ण ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण तथा अन्य नियम एवं शर्तें [www.etender.up.nic.in](http://www.etender.up.nic.in) एवं [www.upptcl.org](http://www.upptcl.org) पर उपलब्ध है। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता का बिना कोई कारण बताये ई-निविदा को अस्वीकार / विभाजित करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। निर्धारित तिथि के विस्तार तथा शुद्धि पत्र से सम्बन्धित सूचना यदि कोई होगी मात्र वेबसाइट पर डाली जाएगी, अतः स्वयं को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त वेब साईट को नियमित देखते रहना चाहिए। "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये" अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत अनुतरंग एवं दूरसंचार मण्डल-प्रथम कम्परा नं० 311-314, पारेषण भवन, विभूति खण्ड-2, गोमतीनगर, लखनऊ-226010 पत्रांक : 2177/EMTC-I(L)/ Advertisement दिनांक : 25/09/2024

Why has proposal to notify Dhanauri wetland as Ramsar site not been sent to Centre, NGT asks UP

NIKHIL GHANEKAR  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE NGT principal bench Wednesday ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to clear water hyacinth from the Dhanauri wetlands and sought to know why the state authorities have not yet sent a proposal to notify the wetland as a Ramsar site.

The bench headed by chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava asked the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government to be prepared by the next hearing with answers on why Dhanauri's Ramsar site proposal is yet to be forwarded to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The bench made the observations and passed directions while hearing an ongoing petition seeking notification of Dhanauri wetlands as a Ramsar site, by Greater Noida resident and bird-watcher Anand Arya. The petition pointed out that notification of the wetland as a Ramsar site was laid down as a condition in the environmental clearance granted to Jewar Airport site, which is located under 20 kms distance from the wetland. Under the international Ramsar convention treaty of 1971 signed in Iran, wetlands that meet certain criteria on ecological and biodiversity grounds are chosen for special conservation measures.

ADMISSION TO IIT, DHANBAD

Fee deadline missed by minutes due to 'tech glitch', UP youth knocks on SC door

NIRBHAY THAKUR  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

"ROTI CHAAHE aadhi khaao lo, lekin apne bachho ko zaroor padhana (Even if you eat only half a meal, you must educate your children)," says Rajendra Kumar (45), the father of Atul Kumar (18) who recently cleared JEE (Advanced), which meant he would get an electrical engineering seat at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Dhanbad.

When Atul saw his results in the competitive exam on June 9 on his older brother's laptop, little did he realise that the road to his making it to an IIT would be full of hurdles.

Just three minutes before the deadline of 5 pm on June 24 to confirm his admission, the server of the portal stopped responding, claims Atul, sitting in his three-room house in Titora village in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district. The fee of Rs 17,500 could not be submitted and he lost his seat. Rajendra is a daily wage labourer at a transformer factory in Meerut and a part-time tailor. He earns Rs 10,000-12,000 a month.

"After we missed the deadline by a few seconds, we called IIT Dhanbad...

Even the coaching institute where Atul studied tried reaching out to the (IIT Dhanbad) authorities," claimed Rajendra, adding that they got no relief. The family then approached the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, the Jharkhand Legal Services Authority and the Madras High Court in a bid to save Atul's hard-earned seat. Eventually, they approached the Supreme Court.

Atul and his family initially sought help from the Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority as he had appeared for the exam at a centre in that state. He was advised to move the Madras High Court as it was IIT Madras that had conducted the exam. The High Court, in turn, directed him to move the Supreme Court.

Students and teachers at the GAIL Utkarsh Super 100 coaching centre in Kanpur, where Atul had studied for 11 months, also provided guidance to the family. "We are fortunate that our case came to the attention of Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud," said Rajendra. "Three years ago, the CJI did something wonderful... we are hopeful that he will rule in our favour too."

He was referring to a Supreme Court decision in 2021 (Prince Jaibir Singh vs.

Union of India), when a bench led by Justice Chandrachud allowed a Dalit student to take admission in IIT Bombay despite a delay in paying the admission fee. It was the coaching institute who informed the family about this instance.

Coincidentally, lawyers Amol Chitale and Pragya Baghel, who are representing Atul, also represented Jaibir Singh. When they went to the Supreme Court, Atul told a bench of CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Tuesday that it was in his final attempt that he had cleared JEE Advanced, and unless the top court clears the decks for his admission, he would lose his seat.

The bench then made an observation that gave the family some hope. "Bearing in mind the social background of the petitioner and the hardship which he has undergone, we are of the view that this is a fit and proper case for the issuance of notice to explore whether something can be done for protecting the admission of the petitioner," said the three-judge bench on September 24 while listing the matter for September 30.

Atul, the youngest of four brothers, is not the first from his family to make it to IIT.

**नगर निगम, प्रयागराज।**  
**ई-निविदा सूचना**  
मा. मुख्यमंत्री नगर सृजन योजनांतर्गत नगर निगम, प्रयागराज में निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु डुअल बिड ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की जाती है, विस्तृत विवरण निविदा प्रपत्र वेबसाइट में उपलब्ध रहेगा। निविदा प्रपत्र उत्तर प्रदेश की ई-प्रक्रयोरमेंट की वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> से प्राप्त एवं देखे जा सकते हैं। निविदा के साथ मांग की गयी जमानत की धनराशि एफ०डी०आर०/सी०डी०आर० की स्कैन कॉपी के रूप में संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा, जो मुख्य अभियन्ता (वि/या), नगर निगम, प्रयागराज के नाम प्लेड होगा। बिना जमानत की धनराशि के निविदा अवैध मानी जायेगी। निविदा प्रकाशन के निर्धारित तिथि तक निविदा शुल्क की धनराशि नगर निगम, प्रयागराज के इण्डस्ट्रियल बैंक, सिविल लाइन्स, प्रयागराज शाखा में टेन्डर कॉस्ट खाता संख्या-100116210130 व IFSCCode-INDB0000124 में जमा करना होगा। जिसकी रसीद तथा जमानत धनराशि का सी०डी०आर०/एफ०डी०आर० की स्कैन कॉपी निविदा के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा। उक्त की अनुपस्थिति में निविदा अवैध मानी जायेगी। बिना किसी कारण बताये निविदा स्वीकृत / अस्वीकृत करने का अधिकार नगर आयुक्त महोदय को सुरक्षित होगा। निविदा खोले जाने की तिथि को किसी कारणवश अवकाश होने पर निविदा तिथि अगला कार्य-दिवस मानी जायेगी।

क्र०सं०	कार्य/वाहन का विवरण	निविदा फार्म का मूल्य	धरोहर की धनराशि
1	हवेलिया में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 10,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 1,72,900.00
2	कनिहार में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 2,74,600.00
3	सोनेटी में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 10,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 1,46,700.00
4	झूसी कोहनवा में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 10,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 1,10,900.00
5	झूसी आजाद नगर में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 2,22,600.00
6	अंदावा में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 3,65,600.00
7	छननाग में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 5,30,800.00
8	अमरसापुर में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 2,22,600.00
9	कटका में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 3,65,600.00
10	मलवा बुजुर्ग में स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्य।	₹ 15,000.00 + 18% जी०एस०टी०	₹ 4,17,600.00

नोट:- नियम व शर्तों का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध रहेगा।  
हस्ता./-  
मुख्य अभियन्ता (वि/या)  
नगर निगम, प्रयागराज।  
RO no. 3214



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## Two years of Project Cheetah: Status report and the road ahead

NIKHIL GHANEKAR  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

PROJECT CHEETAH, which saw the introduction of the African sub-species of the big cat in India, completed two years on September 17. The ambitious project has two overarching objectives. First, to establish a stable, breeding population of cheetahs in central India. Two, to use cheetahs as an umbrella species to restore open natural ecosystems such as scrubs, savannahs, grasslands, and degraded forests.

**EXPLAINED CONSERVATION**

Two years on, Project Cheetah has seen marginal success. Many challenges remain, as well as questions regarding its long-term outlook.

### 24 cheetahs survive

The project began with the intercontinental translocation of African cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. The

translocation took place in two batches of eight and 12 cheetahs.

These cheetahs were initially kept in soft-release bomas — small enclosures inside the national park to get them adapted to the local environment. Although confined to an area of roughly 1 sq km, the cheetahs hunted live prey inside these bomas. While some cheetahs were subsequently released in the wild, they were eventually brought back into the enclosures. Mating within the translocated cohort of cheetahs led to the birth of 17 cubs.

Of the 20 translocated cheetahs, eight have died due to a variety of reasons, from attacks during mating to septicaemia caused by tick infestation under the cheetahs' radio collars. Of the 17 cubs, five have perished. Currently, 24 cheetahs (12 adults and 12 cubs) survive.

The next batch of 6-8 African cheetahs are supposed to be translocated to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, also in Madhya Pradesh.



Cheetah with her cubs in Kuno National Park. Project Cheetah Annual Report 2023-24

### Cheetahs still not in wild

The project has seen marginal success, mainly on two fronts. First, with respect to the successful breeding of the African cheetahs in a new climate and ecology and the

survival of 12 out of the 17 cubs born. Second, Pawan and Veera, who were released into the wild last December, spent a considerable amount of time in a free range, and travelled far north of Kuno, even entering Rajasthan.

However, the project faced a significant setback in August this year when Pawan was found dead due to suspected drowning (the autopsy report has not yet been made public). After this incident, all 24 surviving cheetahs were put in enclosures. This has raised questions about the cheetahs' capabilities to establish their own habitat in the wild. Authorities say more cheetahs will be released after the monsoon.

Conservation scientists, however, have criticised the delay in releasing the cheetahs into the wild and questioned the lack of transparency in the matter. Ravi Chellam, a Bengaluru-based wildlife biologist and conservation scientist, cited a Namibian policy which states that large wild carnivores should not be kept in captivity for more than three months. Beyond this period, the carnivore should either be euthanised or held in

captivity permanently.

Barring Veera, who is now in an enclosure, and the now-dead Pawan, all the other cheetahs have been in enclosures for more than a year now. This is contrary to the government's own plan which said the cheetahs would be released in the wild after a 4-5 week quarantine period, followed by a 1-2 month acclimatisation period, according to Chellam.

### Problem of inadequate prey

A deficit in the prey base is one of the biggest challenges faced by the project. The project's latest annual report has found that the density of *chital*, the primary prey for cheetahs (and leopards), has declined from 23.43 animals per sq km in 2021 to 17.5 animals per sq km in 2024. The current population of *chital* in Kuno National Park is about 6,700.

This is far less than the numbers required to sustain the 91 leopards and 12 adult cheetahs in the park. The leopard population would need about 23,600 prey animals and cheetahs about 3,120 prey animals annually. According to Chellam, the lack of prey re-

ffects poorly on the project management, given that in 2022, Kuno was specifically chosen due to its prey density. He said, "What has happened to drastically change the ground situation in such a short period of time?"

### Road ahead

Experience from the project so far has shown that the free-ranging cheetahs often ventured far and wide, crossing state boundaries or entering human habitats. This has brought interstate landscape conservation plans under the spotlight.

Authorities aim to conserve the interstate Kuno-Gandhi Sagar landscape, which includes several forest patches outside sanctuaries, parks and tiger reserves, spread over parts of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The step has been spelt out as the way forward to establish a population of 60-70 cheetahs in the region.

However, this landscape's conservation would be a Herculean task as it would involve restoring the habitats adequately and minimising the risks to cheetahs before they can populate the space.

**EXPLAINED GLOBAL**

## WHY SRI LANKA'S NEW PRESIDENT HAS DISSOLVED COUNTRY'S PARLIAMENT

A DAY after assuming office, Sri Lanka's President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Tuesday dissolved Parliament and announced a snap election on November 14.

Dissanayake had indicated during the campaign that upon coming to power, he would seek a fresh mandate to pursue his policies. There is "no point continuing with a Parliament that is not in line with what the people want," he had said, according to media reports.

### Political situation

Sri Lanka's 225-member Parliament has a term of five years. The previous election took place in August 2020, which means the now-dissolved Parliament was supposed to be in place until August 2025.

However, the socialist National People's Power (NPP) alliance led by Dissanayake and his Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party, had just three seats in this Parliament. This is because until 2022, the NPP largely remained on the fringes of Sri Lankan politics.

The meteoric rise of the NPP, exemplified by the mandate received by Dissanayake in Saturday's presidential election, came on the back of the mass protests that rocked Sri Lanka in 2022. The NPP led the street agitation against years of economic mismanagement and corruption — protests that forced the powerful Rajapaksa family from power and compelled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country.

Ranil Wickremesinghe, who became President in July 2022, was backed in Parliament by the Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party.

In the backdrop of this situation, it was always likely that if he were to come to power, Dissanayake would dissolve Parliament and call fresh elections, in which the NPP would likely make major gains.

### Sri Lankan system

Technically, the President and Prime



President Dissanayake with PM Amarasuriya on Tuesday. Reuters

Minister can be from different political parties. But in reality, ever since the President was given executive powers in 1978, the two offices have been closely aligned. This is because for all practical purposes, the Prime Minister acts as deputy to the President in Sri Lanka.

The President is both the head of state and head of government, as well as the commander-in-chief of the Sri Lankan armed forces, and the head of the Union cabinet. The President has the power to dissolve Parliament. The President is directly elected for a six-year term.

The Prime Minister is the most senior member of Parliament and the Union cabinet, and the chief adviser to the President. The PM is also the first in line to succeed the President. Wickremesinghe was PM when Gotabaya was President.

### What happens now

Hours before Dissanayake took oath as President on Monday, Dinesh Gunawardene resigned as Prime Minister. On Tuesday, Dissanayake appointed Harini Amarasuriya, one of the three NPP members of Parliament, as Prime Minister. Amarasuriya will head the Union cabinet, which will act as the interim government until elections take place in November. A new PM will be appointed after that.

ARJUN SENGUPTA

**EXPLAINED POLITICS**

## Clause 6 of Assam Accord

CM meets AASU leaders on implementing 52 recommendations of Justice Biplab Sarma committee on safeguards for 'Assamese people' in Assam Accord, but 15 major issues remain in Centre's domain

SUKRITA BARUAH  
GUWAHATI, SEPTEMBER 25

AFTER A meeting with representatives of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Wednesday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma set the ball rolling for the implementation of 52 recommendations of the Justice Biplab Sarma Committee regarding Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, as announced by the Assam government earlier this month.

This comes more than four years after the Centre-appointed high-level committee finalised its report in February 2020.

Notably, 15 key recommendations of the committee will not be implemented for the time being. These, the chief minister said, will require Constitutional amendments to be implemented. "We will take up these matters with the Centre at the right forum," he posted on X on Wednesday.

### What is Clause 6 of Assam Accord? What is the Biplab Sarma committee report?

The historic Assam Accord was a Memorandum of Settlement between the Rajiv Gandhi-led Union government and the leadership of the Assam Movement, primarily the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which was signed in 1985. The accord ended the six-year long agitation in Assam against the entry of Bangladeshi migrants into the state. Clause 6 of the accord states that "Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people."

In July 2019, the Union Home Ministry constituted a 14-member committee chaired by retired Assam High Court Justice Biplab Kumar Sarma, and comprising judges, retired bureaucrats, writers, AASU leaders and journalists, to suggest ways to implement the clause. Among the key questions before the committee was a definition of "the Assamese people" eligible for the "safeguards" under Clause 6. The committee finalised its report in February 2020. But instead of it being received by the Union Home Ministry, which had constituted the committee, the report was received by then Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal of the BJP. In August 2020, four committee members released the confidential report in the public domain. Among the key recommendations made



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma after the meeting with representatives of AASU on Wednesday. Sreengrabh/X/@himantabiswa

by the committee was that the definition of "Assamese people", for the purpose of implementing Clause 6, should include "Indigenous Tribals", "Other Indigenous Communities of Assam", "Indian citizens residing in the territory of Assam on or before January 1, 1951" and their descendants, and "Indigenous Assamese" people. Based on this, the committee made several recommendations for reservations for "Assamese people", including in Parliament, the state Assembly, local bodies, and jobs.

### What recommendations of the report will the Assam government implement?

Chief Minister Sarma said that the state government has accepted 1951 as the "cut-off date" for the specific recommendations of the report. He said, however, that this definition of "Assamese people" is confined to only the context of the report's recommendations.

Following a meeting with the AASU on Wednesday, he said that the 67 broad recommendations made by the report can be divided into three broad categories: 40 which come under the exclusive domain of the state government, 12 which will require the concurrence of the Centre, and 15 which are in the exclusive domain of the Centre. The 52 recommendations in the first two categories will be implemented by April 2025, for which the state government will submit a roadmap to AASU by October 25 this year.

These 52 recommendations largely deal with safeguards on language, land, and cultural heritage. Some key recommendations include:

**LAND**  
■ Creating Revenue Circles where only "Assamese people" can own and possess land, and transfer of such land in these areas

are limited to them alone;

■ Launching a time-bound, three year programme to allot land titles to "Assamese people" who have occupied a certain piece of land for decades, but are without possession of land documents;

■ Carrying out a special survey of *char* areas (riverine regions along the Brahmaputra), and for newly created *chars* to be treated as government land, in which river erosion-affected people should get priority in allotment;

**LANGUAGE**  
■ Keeping Assamese as the official language throughout the state as per the 1960 Assam Official Language Act "with provisions for use of local languages" in the Barak Valley, Hill districts, and the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District;

■ Making it compulsory for all state government acts, rules, orders, etc. to be issued in Assamese along with English;

■ Constituting an Autonomous Language and Literature Academy/Council of Assam to preserve and promote all indigenous languages of Assam;

■ Making Assamese a compulsory subject up to class VIII or class X in all English medium schools, both under the state board and CBSE;

**CULTURAL HERITAGE**  
■ Establishing an autonomous authority for the development of *sattras* (neo-Vaishnavite monasteries), which will, among other things, provide financial assistance to them; and

■ Creating multipurpose cultural complexes in each district to "uplift" the cultural heritage of all ethnic groups.

Chief Minister Sarma said that the autonomous councils of Assam's Sixth

Schedule Areas — namely the Bodoland Territorial Council, the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council and the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council — will decide whether to implement the 52 recommendations. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution provides autonomous tribal councils in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram certain legislative and judicial autonomy.

### Which are the recommendations that the Assam government has left out?

Some of the most sensitive recommendations by the committee, however, do not find mention in the 52 points listed by the state government. Assam Congress president Bhupen Borah recently referred to these as the "soul" of the committee's report.

Among them are the introduction of an Inner Line Permit for entry into Assam as is in place in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram, as well as numerous reservations for "Assamese people". The latter include 80-100% reservation in Assam's seats in Parliament, and the same proportion reserved in the state Assembly and local bodies; 80-100% reservation in Assam government jobs; and 70-100% reservations in vacancies arising in undertakings run in partnership between the Assam government and private companies. There was also a recommendation for the creation of an Upper House (the Legislative Council of Assam) which would be completely reserved for the "Assamese people".

The BJP's political opponents have questioned where the Centre featured in discussions regarding the implementation of the committee's recommendations. Former AASU general secretary Lurinjyoti Gogoi, who was a member of the committee, questioned whether the Union Home Ministry even accepted the report.

"The Home Ministry has still not accepted the report... Until it accepts the report, the recommendations do not have any legal or constitutional value... the fundamental points here are those on political representation," he said.

However, Chief Minister Sarma has said that the Assam government will appeal to the Centre to have talks with AASU, and work towards the implementation of the remaining 15 recommendations.

"Our aim is that we should not let those recommendations which are attainable lie by the wayside because of those which are difficult and may take time," he had said earlier this month.

**THIS WORD MEANS | INTEGRAL HUMANISM**

## Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism, 'basic philosophy' of the BJP

YASHEE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

WEDNESDAY MARKED the 108th birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968), whose philosophy is among the most important guiding principles of the BJP.

Upadhyaya was a *pracharak* of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and a founder leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), a party that existed from 1951 to 1977, when it merged with the Janata Party. In 1980, former members of the BJS left Janata and formed the BJP.

Upadhyaya, who was fondly referred to as "Panditji" by his associates and followers, was among the tallest thinkers of India's right wing. In 1964-65, Upadhyaya propounded his main political and social idea, Integral Humanism, which, according to the BJP's constitution, is the party's "basic philosophy".

The doctrine of Integral Humanism was born from Upadhyaya's desire to have "uniquely Indian" ideas guide the journey

of the newly independent nation, as opposed to the many Western 'isms'.

### Upadhyaya's philosophy

At its core, Integral Humanism is about unity and harmony among the various components that make up an individual, and among individuals and society as a whole. Integral Humanism sees an individual as made up of body, mind, intelligence, and soul, and considers the development and fulfillment of each as important.

A cornerstone of Integral Humanism is the concept of the four *purusharthas*, or areas of human effort — *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*. "It is important to note that Panditji always emphasised that he did not invent these concepts; he drew upon the wisdom of ancient Indian philosophy to formulate his doctrine," BJP leader Dr Sanjay Paswan, who served as Minister in the government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, told *The Indian Express*.

### Context of philosophy



Deendayal Upadhyaya lights the lamp at a Jana Sangh meeting. Express Archive

As independent India contemplated its future and the path ahead for the nation, there was a feeling among some patriots that it should be guided by indigenous systems of thought, instead of popular

Western political philosophies.

On April 22, 1965, Upadhyaya said in a lecture in Mumbai (then Bombay): "Among the various isms that affected the West, the principal ones were nationalism, democracy, and socialism... Every now and then, apart from these, the ideals of world peace and world unity were also advocated. All these are good ideals... But by itself, each stands opposed to the rest in practice. Nationalism poses a threat to world peace. Democracy and capitalism join hands to give a free reign to exploitation. Socialism replaced capitalism and brought with it an end to democracy and individual freedom."

Thus, these ideals were far from perfect, and Bharat, with its rich history of political thought, should not ape them blindly, he said.

### The four purusharthas

Upadhyaya described the difference in Indian and Western ways of thinking thus: "The first characteristic of Bharatiya culture is that it looks upon life as an integrated whole... The confusion in the West arises

primarily from its tendency to think of life in sections and then to attempt to put them together by patchwork."

While many believe that Indian philosophy is overtly focused on the soul, the Bharatiya way of thought gives equal importance to the body, mind, intelligence, and the soul — and at the level of the individual, all four must be nourished for a truly meaningful life, he said.

In terms of policymaking and public life, he spoke of the four *purusharthas*: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*.

"*Purushartha* means effort which befit a man. The longings for *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* are inborn in man, and the satisfaction of these gives him joy (*ananda*). Of these four efforts too, we have thought in an integrated way.

"*Artha* includes what are known as political and economic policies. According to the ancients, it used to include Justice and Punishment as well as Economics. *Kama* relates to the satisfaction of various natural desires. *Dharma* includes all those rules,

fundamental principles and ethical codes, in accordance with which all the activities in respect of *Artha* and *Kama* are to be carried out, and all the goals thereof to be achieved. This alone will ensure progress in an integrated and harmonious manner, and lead ultimately to *Moksha*," Upadhyaya said in Mumbai on April 23, 1965.

### Deendayal and BJP

The BJP says on its website that "all these Indian thoughts should not be issues of sermons but of politics. The policies of the country should be made on their basis."

Dr Paswan said that for India to truly become a *Shivsha* Guru, it has to take the lead in the sphere of thoughts and ideas — where Upadhyaya's contributions are especially important. "Bharat may survive on vote bank politics but will thrive only through thought bank politics. Hence, we need to make sure that our institutions are guided by the basis of the wisdom contained in our ancient texts, which Pandit Upadhyaya so ably distilled."

# 16 THE WORLD

**TOP OF THE WORLD**



**Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses the UNGA on Tuesday. Reuters**

**UNITED NATIONS**  
**Iran 'ready to resolve nuclear standoff'**

United Nations: Iran is ready to end its nuclear standoff with the West, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian told the UNGA on Tuesday, while calling for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine through dialogue. Iran's clerical establishment hopes to see an easing of US sanctions. "We are ready to engage with participants of the 2015 nuclear deal. If the deal's commitments are implemented fully and in good faith, dialogue on other issues can follow," Pezeshkian said.

REUTERS

**UNITED STATES**  
**Explosion at courthouse in California**

California: Authorities were responding on Wednesday to a reported explosion at the Santa Maria Courthouse in California, according to the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office amid reports that a suspect was in custody. It was not immediately clear if there were any injuries. "Santa Maria Courthouse: report of an explosion. Please avoid the area. Scene has not been deemed safe. More info to follow," the sheriff's office said in a post on X. The suspect was in custody, the news outlet reported.

REUTERS

**SINGAPORE**  
**4 Indian-origin men booked for abusing cops**

Singapore: Four men of Indian origin were on Wednesday charged with causing public nuisance and using abusive language against a police officer in Singapore's Little India. A nearly two-minute video of the four abusing the police officer at a crime scene cordoned off to investigate an alleged murder on Sunday morning in Little India, was uploaded on the Facebook page ROADS.sg, Channel News Asia reported. The incident took place in the back lane of Sam Leong Road in Little India, where an alleged murder had taken place.

PTI

**THAILAND**  
**Same-sex marriages to start from Jan**

Bangkok: Thailand's landmark marriage equality bill was officially written into law Tuesday, allowing same-sex couples to legally wed. The law was published in the Royal Gazette after endorsement by King Maha Vajiralongkorn, and will come into effect in 120 days. This means LGBTQ+ couples will be able to register their marriage in January 2025, making Thailand the third place in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to allow same-sex marriage. Thailand has a reputation for acceptance and inclusivity but struggled for decades to pass a marriage equality law. AP

**WASHINGTON, ALLIES WORKING TO AVERT WAR: BLINKEN**

## Israel expands airstrikes on Lebanon, prepares for possible ground invasion

REUTERS  
BEIRUT, JERUSALEM, SEPT 25

ISRAEL'S MILITARY chief said Wednesday that air strikes in Lebanon would continue in order to destroy Hezbollah infrastructure and to prepare the way for a possible ground operation by Israeli forces.

Even as he spoke, sources said the United States had started a diplomatic push to stop the fighting in both Gaza and Lebanon, and that proposals were being hammered out at the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Israel on Wednesday widened its airstrikes in Lebanon and shot down a missile that the Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement said it had aimed at the headquarters of the Mossad intelligence agency near Israel's biggest city, Tel Aviv.

"You hear the jets overhead; we have been striking all day," General Herzi Halevi told Israeli troops on the border with Lebanon, according to a statement from the military.

"This is both to prepare the ground for your possible entry and to continue degrading Hezbollah." World leaders expressed concern that the conflict was escalating rapidly as the death toll in Lebanon rose and thousands fled their homes.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington and its allies were working tirelessly to avoid a full-blown war between Israel and Hezbollah. Two Lebanese officials, two Western diplomats, a source familiar with Hezbollah's thinking and a source briefed on the talks, all of whom declined to be named, said Washington was leading a new diplomatic push that for the first time covered both conflicts - in Gaza and Lebanon.



Smoke billows over southern Lebanon following an Israeli strike on Wednesday. Reuters

## Israel's goals may prove elusive despite heavy blows on Hezbollah

JOSEPH KRAUSS  
JERUSALEM, SEPTEMBER 25

ISRAEL SAYS its objective is to secure the border with Lebanon so that tens of thousands of people who fled under Hezbollah fire nearly a year ago can return to their homes.

But it's far from clear that its recent operations — as tactically successful as they were — will bring that about. "No one either in or out of the defense establishment has any clue as to how to translate these brilliant operational achievements into political benefit, into a real victory that will stop the war in the north," columnist Nadav Eyal wrote in Israel's

Yediot Ahronot newspaper. "As long as Hezbollah retains any firepower, the northern border will not be able to return to normal."

Hezbollah's response to the past week's escalation has seemed meagre. The hundreds of rockets and drones it has fired into northern Israel have caused few casualties and only scattered damage.

But experts say it can weather Israeli strikes and is likely holding its most potent weapons in reserve.

With Hezbollah, Israel has so far adopted narrow objectives — not the disarmament or defeat of the militant group, but a new arrangement in which militants

retreat from the border and halt attacks. But that may not be possible without a ground invasion.

Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant boasted that Monday's strikes alone had taken out tens of thousands of rockets and missiles.

Hezbollah has acknowledged the blows, but even if Gallant is correct, it has considerable resources. "The rocket unit is still active, Hezbollah has absorbed the initial shock, and the battle has only begun," said Qassim Qassir, a former Hezbollah member who wrote a book on it. "Hezbollah has only used a small part of its capabilities." AP

## All-out war is possible but not inevitable: Biden

New York: US President Joe Biden said on Wednesday an all-out war was possible in the Middle East but there was also the possibility of a settlement in Israel's conflicts in Gaza and with the Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

"An all-out war is possible, but I think there's also the opportunity - we're still in play to have a settlement that can fundamentally change the whole region," Biden said.

Biden has been working to calm tensions as the nearly year-long war between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas in the Gaza Strip now threatens to engulf Lebanon.

Israel widened its airstrikes in Lebanon on Wednesday and shot down a missile Hezbollah said it fired at the Mossad spy agency near Tel Aviv. REUTERS

## Evacuees will return to north, says Netanyahu

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday repeated a vow to return the tens of thousands of Israelis evacuated from northern border areas to their homes and said the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement was being hit harder than it could imagine. "I can't go into detail about everything we do, but I can tell you one thing: We are determined to return our residents in the north safely to their homes," he said in a brief video message. REUTERS

## Russia may use nukes if attacked: Putin warns West

## Putin warns West Says a nuclear power supporting attack on Russia can be considered aggressor

REUTERS  
MOSCOW, SEPTEMBER 25

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR Putin said on Wednesday that Russia could use nuclear weapons if it was attacked by any state and that any conventional attack on Russia that was supported by a nuclear power would be considered to be a joint attack.

Putin, opening a meeting of Russia's Security Council attended by top officials, said that proposals had been made to change Russia's nuclear doctrine and said he would like to underscore one of the proposed key changes.

"It is proposed that aggression against Russia by any non-nuclear state, but with the participation or support of a nuclear state, be considered as their joint attack on the Russian Federation," Putin said.

"The conditions for Russia's transition to the use of nuclear weapons are also clearly fixed," Putin said, adding that Moscow would consider such a move if it detected the start of a massive launch of missiles, aircraft, or drones against it.

Russia, Putin said, also reserved the right to use nuclear weapons if it or Belarus were the subject of aggression, including by conventional weapons.

Putin said the clarifications were carefully calibrated and commensurate with the modern military threats facing Russia.

Meanwhile, Russia said on Wednesday it had captured two



President Vladimir Putin at Russia's Security Council meeting, Wednesday. Reuters

more villages in Ukraine and was attacking in the town of Vuhledar, a longtime Ukrainian stronghold. Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had taken the villages of Hostre and Hryhorivka, whose capture Reuters could not independently confirm.

State news agency RIA cited the Russian-installed head of Donetsk region, Denis Pushilin, as saying that fighting was taking place inside Vuhledar, which had a pre-war population of 14,000.

The Ukrainian governor of the region, Vadym Filashkin, said Russia's troops had not reached the outskirts of Vuhledar but its reconnaissance groups were operating. "Our defenders are trying to knock them out. The town has not been captured," he said.

Asked about reports that Russian forces had encircled Vuhledar, a fortified mining town that has anchored Ukrainian defences in the southern Donetsk region since the start of the war in 2022, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "The dynamic is positive."

**TRUMP RALLY SHOOTING**

## Security lapses were 'preventable': Probe

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 25

MULTIPLE SECRET Service failures ahead of the July rally for former president Donald Trump where a gunman opened fire were "foreseeable, preventable, and directly related to the events resulting in the assassination attempt that day," according to a bipartisan Senate investigation released on Wednesday.

The report found the Secret Service was notified about an individual on the roof of the building around two minutes before shooter Thomas Matthew Crooks opened fire at Trump.

Investigators found that there was no clear chain of command among the Secret Service and other security agencies and no plan for coverage of the building where the shooter climbed up to fire the shots.

Officials were operating on multiple, separate radio channels, leading to missed communications, and an inexperienced drone operator was stuck on a help line after his equipment wasn't working correctly.

The report found the Secret Service was notified about an individual on the roof of the building around two minutes before shooter Thomas Matthew Crooks opened fire at Trump.



## WILDFIRES IN ECUADOR

A wildfire near Ecuador's capital Quito on Tuesday. The inferno has filled the city with smoke and threatened homes amid Ecuador's worst drought in over 60 years. Reuters

## Pressure on Starmer as Labour conference votes against cuts

REUTERS  
LONDON, SEPTEMBER 25

MEMBERS OF Britain's Labour party narrowly voted against the government's decision to limit winter fuel payments to the elderly on Wednesday, a symbolic move piling pressure on Prime Minister Keir Starmer who has

backed the cuts to help stabilise the economy.

Starmer has stood by the cuts to payments to help the elderly cover fuel bills, saying short-term pain was necessary to spur economic growth.

But Labour delegates at the conference voted against the government with a show of hands at the conference in Liverpool fol-



UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer

lowing an impassioned speech by Sharon Graham, head of the Unite union, one of Britain's biggest.

To a standing ovation, Graham

said she did not understand "how our new Labour government can cut the winter fuel allowance for pensioners but leave the super rich untouched".

"This is not what people voted for, it is the wrong decision and it needs to be reversed," she said.

Starmer says he was forced to make tough decisions, after the previous Conservative govern-

ment left a £22 billion black hole in public finances — a charge the Conservatives deny.

But the row over the cuts cast a pall over the conference and looks set to continue to be a point of conflict between some British unions, traditional backers of Labour, and a government focused on reining in spending to meet its fiscal targets.

## China conducts rare ICBM test, launches it into Pacific Ocean

LAURIE CHEN & BEN BLANCHARD  
BEIJING, TAIPEI, SEPTEMBER 25

China said on Wednesday it had successfully conducted a rare launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean, a move likely to raise international concerns about the country's nuclear build-up.

The ICBM, carrying a dummy warhead, was launched by the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force at 8:44 a.m. Beijing time (0044 GMT) on Wednesday and "fell into expected sea areas," the Chinese defence ministry said in a statement, adding that it was a "routine arrangement in our annual training plan" and not directed at any country or target.

China "informed the countries concerned in advance," according to a separate Xinhua report, which did not clarify the path of the missile or where in the "high seas of the Pacific Ocean" it fell.

The launch "effectively tested the performance of weapons and equipment and the training level of the troops, and achieved the expected goal," Xinhua reported.

A Japan Coast Guard official said it had received a navigation



The ICBM was launched into the Pacific Ocean. File

warning from China on Monday for "space debris" in three zones in South China Sea and the Pacific north of the Philippines' Luzon island, and in the South Pacific, on Wednesday.

The official declined to confirm whether it was related to the reported missile launch.

It is rare for China to fire long-range missiles into the sea as it prefers to test them unannounced in isolated provinces such as Inner Mongolia, analysts said. The PLA Rocket Force, which oversees the country's conventional and nuclear missiles, has been tasked with modernising China's nuclear forces in the face of developments such as improved U.S. missile defences, better surveillance capabilities, and strengthened alliances. REUTERS

**IN 2010, COUNTRY'S LONGEST-SERVING BISHOP ADMITTED TO SEXUALLY ABUSING NEPHEW FOR 13 YEARS**

## Belgium's legacy of abuse clouds Pope trip as survivors seek reparations

NICOLE WINFIELD & RAF CASERT  
VATICAN CITY, SEPTEMBER 25

FRESH OFF a four-nation tour of Asia, where he saw record-setting crowds and vibrant church communities, Pope Francis travels to Belgium this week as the country again confronts its appalling legacy of clergy sex abuse and institutional cover-up.

He will receive a sobering welcome: Abuse survivors have penned an open letter to Francis, asking him to launch a universal system of church reparations and assume responsibility for the wreckage that abuse has wrought

on their lives.

Another unpleasant welcome has come from Belgium's parliament, which spent the past year hearing victims recount harrowing stories of predator priests and the pope announced a follow-on investigation. The scope? How Belgian judicial and law enforcement authorities bungled a massive 2010 criminal investigation into the church's sex crimes.

None of this was foreseen when Belgian King Philippe and Queen Mathilde met with Francis in the Vatican Apostolic Palace on September 14, 2023 and invited him to visit to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the founding of Belgium's two Catholic uni-



Pope Francis arrives for a weekly general audience at the Vatican on Wednesday. Reuters

versities. "Clearly the pope is aware of the difficulty, and that for years there has been suffering in Belgium, and certainly we can expect a reference in this sense," Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said. Revelations of Belgium's horrific abuse scandal have dribbled out in bits over a quarter-century, punctuated by the bombshell year in 2010, when the country's longest-serving bishop, Bruges Bishop Roger Vangheluwe, was allowed to resign without punishment, after admitting he had sexually abused his nephew for 13 years.

Two months later, Belgian police staged what were then unprecedented raids on Belgian

church offices, the home of the country's recently retired Archbishop Godfried Danneels and even the crypt of a prelate — a violation the Vatican decried at the time as "deplorable."

Danneels, a longtime friend of Francis, was caught on tape trying to persuade Vangheluwe's nephew to keep quiet until the bishop retired. And finally, in September 2010, the church released a 200-page report compiled by child psychiatrist Peter Adriaenssens who said 507 people had come forward with stories of being molested by priests, including when they were as young as two. He identified at least 13 suicides by victims and at-

tempts by six more.

And despite everything that was known and already in the public domain, the scandal reared its head in a shocking new way last year, when a four-episode Flemish documentary, "Godvergeten" (Godforsaken) aired on public broadcaster VRT in the weeks surrounding the royal visit to the Vatican.

For the first time, Belgian victims told their stories on camera one after another, showing Flemish viewers in their living rooms the scope of the scandal in their community, the depravity of the crimes and their systematic cover-up by the Catholic hierarchy. AP

DUTIES NOT ENOUGH, SAYS OFFICIAL

Clean energy: Hit by China's predatory pricing, India 'exploring ties with West'

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA & AGGAM WALIA NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

INDIA'S CLEAN energy manufacturing is feeling the impact of Chinese predatory pricing, which is affecting the country's ability to promote its ambitious domestic manufacturing under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, a government official told The Indian Express on Wednesday.



Earlier this month, the ministry announced plans to extend the ALMM order to solar cells from April 2026. The PLI scheme for high-efficiency PV modules, with a total budgetary outlay of Rs 24,000 crore across two tranches, also incentivises solar cell production.

Meanwhile, the Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) PLI scheme, which aims to incentivise 50 gigawatt hours (GWh) of battery manufacturing, has already allocated 40 GWh, including 20 GWh to Ola Electric, 15 GWh to Reliance Industries, and 5 GWh to Rajesh Exports.

To push clean energy transition, India joins US-led Minerals Security Finance Network

Securing critical minerals in focus amid an overwhelming dependence on China for rare earths

ANIL SASI NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

INDIA IS now formally a part of the Minerals Security Finance Network, a US-led initiative aiming to strengthen cooperation among members to secure supply chains for critical minerals.

EXPLAINED Catalysing investments

IN JUNE 2023, India had been inducted into the Minerals Security Partnership, a US-led collaboration of these 14 countries that aimed to catalyse public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally.

conversion of a large part of public and private transport to electric vehicles. This, alongside a concerted electronics manufacturing and semiconductor push, underlines the need to secure the supply of critical minerals.

'Hyundai, Swiggy IPOs get Sebi nod'

New Delhi: Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, and food and grocery delivery major Swiggy have received capital markets regulator Sebi's approval to float initial public offerings (IPOs), people familiar with the development said on Wednesday.

Illicit market in 5 key Indian industries:

Textiles and Apparel with an illicit market size of Rs 4,03,915 crore in 2022-23 accounts for over 50% of the total illicit market, as per FICCI CASCADE report



BRIEFLY

Make in India led to rise in exports: PM Modi

New Delhi: On the 10th anniversary of his government's flagship scheme 'Make in India', Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that it has led to a rise in exports in different sectors, building capacities and strengthening economy.

Sensex ends above record 85,000 level

Mumbai: Sensex closed above the 85,000 level for the first time while Nifty scaled the 26,000 peak at close on Wednesday as fag-end buying in banking and power shares helped stock markets recoup early losses.

ADB retains India's growth forecast at 7%

New Delhi: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday retained India's growth forecast for the current fiscal at 7 per cent saying better farm output and higher government spending will boost economic activity.

Govt housing likely to be excluded from new retail inflation measure

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

EMPLOYER-PROVIDED dwellings such as government accommodations are likely to get excluded from the new methodology to measure retail inflation rate in India, sources said.



At present, a total of 13,368 dwelling units of different types, covering 310 towns, are in the sample for collection of rent data for inflation. House rent index is compiled for two categories of dwellings: rented dwellings (includes employer provided dwellings) and owner occupied/self-owned dwellings.

The need to revise housing index was also part of the suggestions given by forecasters and economists at the interaction organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) on Tuesday in Mumbai.

Overall, the housing segment in retail inflation carries a weight of 10.07 per cent in the CPI. Government-provided dwellings are a subset of the housing segment. Rural inflation does not have any weightage for housing and thus, the entire weight is attributable for urban areas.

The Ministry also discussed the need for emphasis on the spatial dimension of GDP by disaggregating it in terms like urban /rural, district domestic product etc. The discussions also focused on the need to reduce discrepancy in estimation of GDP from two approaches along with noting the need for better coverage of services in the revised series of CPI.

'Gold loan segment to hit ₹10L cr this fiscal'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25

ORGANISED GOLD loans by banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are set to exceed Rs 10,00,000 crore in the current financial year (FY25) and hit the Rs 15,00,000 crore mark by March 2027, according to a report.



driven by agriculture loans backed by gold jewellery, which grew at a CAGR of 26 per cent during FY20-FY24, while their retail gold loans grew by 32 per cent on a lower base.

While banks remain dominant driven by their gold jewellery-backed agriculture loans, at the same time, NBFCs hold the pole position in retail gold loans and are expected to expand at 17-19 per cent in FY25, rating firm ICRA said.

loan business expanded at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25 per cent over the period FY20-FY24, driven by banks, which expanded these loans at a higher CAGR of 26 per cent, while the NBFCs expanded theirs at 18 per cent during the same period.

FM urges AIB to adopt client-centric approach

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) should continue to focus on a client-centric approach and facilitate low-income countries to avail financial resources through technical assistance.

During a meeting with AIIB President Jin Liqueun ahead of the 9th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors in Samarkand (Uzbekistan), she appreciated AIIB's rapid growth in a short span of nine years.

"The Union Finance Minister suggested that @AIIB. Official should continue strengthening its client-centric approach and facilitate member countries, particularly Low-Income Countries to avail financial resources through technical assistance and other non-financial services," the Finance Ministry said in a post on X.

Hospitalisation claims up 11% in FY24; kidney, heart procedures top list

HITESH VYAS MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25

AVERAGE HOSPITALISATION claim size in the country saw a sharp jump of 11.35 per cent to Rs 70,558 in FY24, from Rs 62,548 crore in the previous fiscal year, says a report.

ney transplant costs have doubled, from Rs 5-8 lakh in 2018 to Rs 10-15 lakh in 2024, with expectations of it surpassing Rs 20 lakh by 2030.

The largest claim related to heart disease — specifically for a cardiac procedure — filed in the past year exceeded Rs 1.1 crore, while the biggest kidney disease-related claim topped Rs 24 lakh.

In terms of kidney-related diseases, Delhi NCR had the highest proportion of claims. Kochi, Secunderabad, and Bengaluru also reported kidney health claims above the national average.

GoM for GST cut on educational items, hike for high-value apparel

PRIYANSH VERMA & PRASANTA SAHU NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE GROUP of Ministers (GoM) on GST rate rationalisation is understood to be in favour of reducing the tax rate on many items including "education materials" to 5 per cent from 12 per cent to provide relief to large sections of people.

also reached an understanding on a proposal to raise the rates of many textile and apparel items beyond a threshold price of Rs 1,000 from 5 per cent now to 12 per cent or 18 per cent. The move, according to the source, would help in achieving "revenue neutrality" by raising the weighted average GST rate.

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD. E-Tender Notice

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LIMITED NOTICE INVITING BIDS

Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED Tenders are invited from reputed contractors registered in AA class with RRVNPL and Central/State Govt. Department and their undertakings and registered in GST department for the NIT No. 07/2024-25 at S. No. 01 to 11 under Executive Engineer (Civil), RVPNL, Ajmer /Mertacity /Sikar and NIT No. 08/2024-25 at S. No. 01 to 07 under Executive Engineer (Civil), RVPNL, Ajmer /Mertacity /Sikar. All details of above NIB are available on website https://energy.rajjasthan.gov.in/rvrvpn & https://sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in or https://eprocc.rajjasthan.gov.in.

## Classifieds

### PERSONAL

It is for general information that I, Uma Shanker Chamoli, S/o-Goverdhan Prasad Chamoli, R/O-1203, Tower No.-02, Oxichirj Avenue, Nihsa Scottish Garden, Ahinsa Khand-2, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, -201014, declare that the name of my father has been wrongly written as Govardhan Prasad Chamoli in my passport. No.-Z3152106 the correct name of my father is Goverdhan Prasad Chamoli, which may be amended accordingly.

0040751227-4

It is for general information that I, Gurjit Singh, S/o-Manjeet Singh, R/O-C-5, Upper Ground Floor, Hazara Park, Shiv Puri, Krishna-Nagar, Delhi-110051, declare that name of mine and my minor daughter Ajooni Kaur Age-14 Years has been wrongly written as Gurjeet Singh and Azooni Kaur in my minor daughter School Record Guru Harkishan Public school, New Delhi Society. The actual name of mine and my minor daughter are Gurjit Singh and Ajooni Kaur respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

0040751227-7

It is for general information that I, SHALINI SINHA W/O PRAKASH RANJAN R/O H.No.-313, Third Floor, Ward No. 4, Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SHALINI RANJAN in my minor daughter's namely SAMRIDHDI RANJAN, aged 13 years in her school record. The actual name of mine is SHALINI SINHA, which may be amended accordingly.

0040751150-1

I, hitherto known as JOGINDER SINGH alias JOGINDRA SINGH, S/O-SHER SINGH, R/O-H.No.-495, VILLAGE-JOURI KALAN, JORIKALAN, JANAUULA, GURGAON, HARYANA-122503, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JOGINDER SINGH. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

0040751237-9

I, Vandana Gupta, w/o Rakesh Kumar Gupta, residing at H.No.32, Gali-No.9, Block No.-H, Vedic Marg, Bharat Colony, Kheri Road, Faridabad, Haryana-121002, hereby state that in my son Shubham Gupta's 10th-class result, Roll-No-2115426, year-2015, CBSE-board, my name was incorrectly written as Sandhya Gupta, whereas my correct name is Vandana Gupta. I hereby affirm that Vandana Gupta and Sandhya Gupta are the same person.

0040751231-10

I, VIKASH KUMAR, S/O SUBHASH GUPTA H.NO-20/185, NA-4 BASTI, GALLI, NO-4, BAHADURGARH HARYANA-124507, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VIKASH.

0040751173-1

I, VEER BHADUR SINGH, F/O-PRASHANT SINGH, R/O-D-132, NEW ASHOK NAGAR, DELHI-110096, inform that my Son's name wrongly written in school records, (PRASHANT) interested of correct name PRASHANT SINGH, for all future purposes.

0040751237-7

I, TIRLOK CHANDRA S/O JAGAT NARAIN R/O L-180 SHASTRI NAGAR DELHI-110052, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO TIRLOK CHAND.

0040751231-1

I, TARVINDER SINGH, S/O CHHABIL SINGH AHUJA, R/O-8/22, 2ND AND 3RD-FLOOR, EAST PATEL-NAGAR, PATEL-NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008, have changed my name to TARVINDER SINGH AHUJA, for all, future purposes.

0040751237-2

I, Surjeet Kumar, S/o-Lal Chand Chhabra, R/O-B-4, Gali, No.1, Jagatpuri Krishna Nagar, East-Delhi Delhi-110051, have changed the name of my minor daughter Divyanshi Aged-15 Years and she shall hereafter be known as Divyanshi Chhabra.

0040751227-6

I, Surbhi Aggarwal, W/O-Saurabh Aggarwal, R/O-102, Ground floor, Arjun-Nagar Safdarjung-Enclave, Delhi-110029, Have Change my name, From Surbhi Aggarwal to Surbhi Aggarwal, For All, Future Purposes

0040751246-7

I, Sobha Devi, mother of, Raj Kumar Gupta, Presently residing at Village+PO-Araria RS, Dist-Araria (Bihar) Pin-854312, have changed my name, from Sobha Devi to Shobha Devi, Vide-Affidavit, dated-25.09.2024.

0040751241-11

I, Shamsul Khan, S/O Mohd Takee, H.No-A-243, A-Block, Gali, No-07, Shri Ram Colony, Rajeev Nagar, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to SAMSUL HUSSAIN. Permanently

0040751246-4

I, SUSHEELA, W/O-RAVINDER GUPTA, R/O-H.No. 17/15, SHAKTI-NAGAR, NEAR-NAGIA PARK, MALKAGANJ S.O., NORTH DELHI, DELHI-110007, declare that name of mine has been wrongly-written as SUSHEELA GUPTA in my minor son UJWAL GUPTA aged-14 years in his school records. The actual-name of mine is SUSHEELA, which may be amended accordingly.

0040751246-6

I, SUNDER LAL BIJALWAN, son of, KASHI RAM, Presently, residing at, VILL-GAMRI, MARGAON, CHINYALISAUR, MARGAON, UTT ARKASHI, UTTARAKHAND-263153, have changed my name from SUNDER LAL BIJALWAN to SUNDER LAL. Vide-affidavit dated-25.09.2024

0040751241-10

I, SHABANA BAGUM, W/O ISHRAT ALI KHAN, R/O VILLAGE-KOSMA, P.O-KOSMA, MAINPURI, MAINPURI, UTTAR PRADESH PIN-205119, have changed my name to SHABANA KHAN Permanently

0040751227-2

I, Rukhsana, W/o Firoz Alam, R/O B-192, Munge Ram-Park, Phase-1 Budh-Vihar, North West-Delhi, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Rukhsana, for all Purposes.

0040751173-2

I, Ramesh Bammil, S/O Harbans Lal Bammil, R/O-B-154, Top Floor, Ashok Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110052, have changed my name to Ramesh Chander Bammil.

0040751242-6

I, Rajwanti Devi W/o JAGBIR SINGH MALIK, a legally the mother of Army No.-14831079M, Rank-NK, Name: ARVIND SINGH, R/O-VPO-Pipli Khera, Tehsil-Ganaur, District-Sonapat (Haryana) 131039, declare that I have changed my name and DOB from Rajwanti Devi, DOB:01-07-1963 (existing name and DOB as per NOK records/service documents) to Raj Bala, DOB:01-01-1958 (proposed/adopted correct name and DOB) vide affidavit No:52AA 736957 dt.:24.09.2024 in the Notary at Haryana

0040751170-1

I, Rajiv Nayyar, R/o Ravishan Nayyar R/o Flat No.901, Tower -T-10, RPS Savana, Sector-88, Faridabad (Haryana), have changed my name to Rajeev Nayyar.

0040751246-5

I, RAJESH KUMAR RATHOR, S/O HAKIM SINGH, R/O 23 2ND FLOOR, POCKET-6 SECTOR-22, ROHINI DELHI-110086, have changed my name to RAJESH KUMAR RATHOUR

0040751240-3

I, Puran Singh Thakur, S/O-Kamal Singh Thakur, H.No.6105/4, Steer-Ravi Dass Nabi-Karim Park-Ganj Swami Ram Tirath-Nagar S.O-Central, Delhi 110055, have changed my name to Puran Singh

0040751237-1

I, PARVEEN BANO MOHD SHAMIM, W/O-MOHD RIZWAN, residing at K-441, Gali No-4 K BLOCK GAUTAM VIHAR GHARI, MENDU DELHI-110053, have changed my name to SHAMA PARVEEN, for all, future purpose.

0040751173-6

I, Mukkaram S/o Mohammad Aslam Khan, R/O-2/3, First Floor, Vishwakarma Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Md. Mukarram.

0040751240-8

I, PARMEELA W/o Army No.14831079M, Rank-NK, Name: Arvind Singh, R/O-VPO-Pipli Khera, Tehsil-Ganaur, District-Sonapat (Haryana) 131039, declare that I have changed my name from PARMEELA (existing name of spouse as per NOK records/service documents) to PARMILA DEVI

0040751170-3

I, Mohammed Rustam Ansari, S/o-Mohd Asgar Ali, R/O, H.No.-127, Street No-8, Maujpur, Delhi-110053, have changed my name, from Mohammed Rustam Ansari to Mohd Rustam Ansari, for all, future purposes.

0040751227-5

I, Mahima Kumar, D/o Sh. Sushil Kumar, R/O-57/9, Behind Aryan Hospital, Rattan Garden, Gurugram, Haryana-122001, have changed my name Mahima to Mahima Kumar for all Future Purposes.

0040751237-4

I, Mahesh Chand S/O Prabhu Dayal R/O H NO-K-2/926, Sangam Vihar, South Delhi, Delhi-110062, Have Changed My Name To Mahesh Chander.

0040751231-7

I, MOHD SAGIR S/o Sajid Khan, R/O-House No.6, Gali No.12 A-2 Block West, Sant Nagar Burari Delhi-110084 have changed my name to SAGIR KHAN

0040751241-2

I, MAHENDRA KUMAR SONAWAT, S/O DEVENDRA KUMAR SONAWAT, R/O-E-943 3RD FLOOR, PITAMPURA DELHI-110034, have changed my name to MAHENDRA SONAWAT.

0040751240-4

I, Kriti Wason, D/O Sarbjeet Singh Wason, R/O-2405, 2nd Floor E-Block, Omaxe City Sector-18, Sonapat Haryana-131001, have changed my name to Kriti Kaur Wason.

0040751231-3

I, JAGBIR SINGH MALIK S/O Moji Ram; am legally the father of Army No.-14831079M, Rank-NK, Name: ARVIND SINGH, R/O-VPO-Pipli Khera, Tehsil-Ganaur, District-Sonapat (Haryana) 131039, declare that I have changed my name and DOB from Jagbir Singh Malik, DOB:01-07-1958 (existing name and DOB as per NOK records/service documents) to Jagbir Singh, DOB:01-01-1960 (proposed/adopted correct name and DOB) vide affidavit No:52AA 736957 dt.:24.09.2024 in the Notary at Haryana.

0040751170-2

I, Rajimol, K.G, D/o Kunjumon R/O F-42 Radhey Mohan Drive Mehrauli Delhi-30 have changed my name to Rajimol.

0040751246-1

I, ISHRAT ALI, S/O ISHRAQ ALI KHAN R/O VILLAGE-KOSMA, P.O-KOSMA, MAINPURI, MAINPURI, UTTAR PRADESH PIN-205119, have changed my name ISHRAT ALI KHAN to Permanently.

0040751231-3

I, Inderjeet Singh, S/O HARCHARAN SINGH R/o, H.No-19/302, Basti Sarai-Rohilla, Sarai-Rohilla, Onkar-Nagar, Delhi-110035, have changed my minor daughter's name JAPLEEN SOUNDH to JAPLEEN KAUR. Aged-14-years.

0040751241-1

I, Hitherto known as Vishember, S/o Panna Lal, R/O-399, Mahalaxmi Enclave, Krawal Nagar, North-East-Delhi, Delhi-110094, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Udai Veer Singh.

0040751227-8

I, Himanshi Bansal, D/O-Sunil Kumar Jain, R/O-KD-187, Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034, inform that my father name has been wrongly Written in my educational certificate Sunil Bansal instead of Sunil Kumar Jain.

0040751242-4

I, Gunjan, W/o-Sandeep Gahlot, R/O 248/9A, Chandan Vihar, West Sant Nagar, Burari, Delhi-110084, have changed my name to Geetanjali.

0040751242-2

I, GEETIKA, W/o Gaurav Kumar Gupta, R/O-B-21, Pocket 2, Kendriya Vihar-2, Sector-82, Noida-201305, GB Nagar, have changed my name to Geetika Gupta for all purposes.

0040751237-6

I, Mohd Shafaq Ansari, S/o-Mohd Abdul Quym r/o-B-11/25, gali no-6, kabir nagar Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Shafaq Ansari

0040751240-7

I, GAURAV S/O Mukat Lal Gupta, R/O-B-21, Pocket-2, Kendriya Vihar-2, Sector-82, Noida-201305, GB Nagar, have changed my name, to Gaurav Kumar Gupta for all purposes.

0040751237-5

I, DEVENDRA SONAWAT, S/O-JOGRAJ SONAWAT, R/O-OPP. RAMDEV MANDIR, GOUTAM CHOWK, GANGSAHAR, BIKANER RAJASTHAN-334401 have changed my name to DEVENDRA KUMAR SONAWAT.

0040751240-6

I, DEEPIKA W/O VIMAL JEET R/O 818 A, HUDDA COLONY SEC-03 BALLABGARH FARIDABAD HARYANA-121004, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DEEPIKA ABBHI

0040751231-4

I, Chandan Narone, S/o-Damodar Narone, R/O-67 Shital malik-road Bilasi town Deoghar, Jharkhand-814112 have changed my name to Chandan Kumar Narone permanently.

0040751227-1

I, Baid Ashish Ravindra Kumar/ Ashish R Baid, S/o-Ravindra Baid R/o, Flat, no-95, Shree Awas Apartment, Sector-18B, Ashish Ravindra Baid, Dwarka, New Delhi-110078, Have changed my name to Ashish Ravindra Baid, for all purposes.

0040751173-3

I, Babita, W/o-Manoj Kumar, R/O-179, Janta flats, near GTB hospital, GTB Enclave, Delhi-110093, I have changed my son name from BHAVISHYA to BHAVISHYA TOMAR for all purposes.

0040751242-1

I, BINAY KUMAR BURMAN/ VINAY KUMAR/ VINAY BURMAN, S/O BAIJNATH PRASAD, residing at, A-68, UPPAR GROUND, PANDAV NAGAR, DELHI-110092, have changed my name to VINAY KUMAR BURMAN, for all, future purpose.

0040751173-5

I, BHAWNA W/O-SH.SANDEEP KUMAR R/O-PILOT, NO-136, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, LEFT SIDE, K.H.NO-33/12/1, NEAR NIRANKARI CHAUK, AMBERHAI VILLAGE, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-110075, inform that BHAWNA MALIK and BHAWNA, both names are same person. My correct name is BHAWNA, for all, future purposes.

0040751237-8

I, BALJIT SINGH BHASIN, S/O MAHENDRA SINGH, H.NO-15, CHITRA-VIHAR, NIRMAN VIHAR, DELHI-110092, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME BALJIT SINGH BHASIN TO BALJEET SINGH BHASIN, ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

0040751231-6

I, Arafat S/o Mohammad Zaki R/o-1457, Gali Nawab Sahib, Farash Khana, Delhi-110006 have changed my name to Arafat Zaki permanently.

0040751246-3

I, Anita Singh, W/o-Bhupindra Singh, R/O-C-14, Gamma-1, Greater Noida U.P., have changed my minor daughter's name, from Harshita to Harshita Sinsinwar, for all future purposes

0040751240-9

I, Abhimanyu S/O Anil Kumar, R/O M-51, 1st floor, Kalika ji, New Delhi 110019, Have changed my name to Abhimanyu Bhagat, for all purposes.

0040751173-4

I, ASHOK KUMAR MAHTO, S/O-DEV NARAYAN MAHTO, R/O-28-A, KHIZRABAD, NEW FRIENDS COLONY, NEW DELHI-110025, inform that in my son's (RAJ KUMAR) school records my name Ashok Kumar and his mother name BEENA wrongly written. My current name ASHOK KUMAR MAHTO and his mother name BEENA DEVI, which may be amended accordingly.

0040751237-3

I, Suman Bala W/o Sh. Jaivinder Singh R/o A-214/7, Johri Nagar, Bahadurgarh, Distt. Jhajjar, Haryana have changed my name to Suman Tanwar for all purposes.

0040751151-4

I, ASHA RANI W/O NAVEEN KUMAR R/O A-69, HARI VIHAR OOP METRO PILLAR- NO-820, DWARKA DELHI-110078, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHA DEVI

0040751231-5

I, ARBIND BABU, S/O RAM DASS, R/O A-3/190, 3RD FLOOR, SECTOR-28 ROHINI DELHI-110042, have changed my name to ARVIND BABU.

0040751240-2

I, AMARJIT SINGH S/O SARDAR WASAN SINGH R/O OTR-24, GURDWARA MATA SUNDRI ROAD, DARYA GANJ DELHI-110002, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO AMARJEET SINGH

0040751231-2

I, AISHVERYA SHANDILYA, S/O-NARAYNA SHARMA, R/O FLAT, NO.904, MAIA MARVEL PRAKASH VIR, SHASTRI-ROAD, RAJNAGAR-EXTENSION, NEAR PIPELISHWAR MAHADEV MANDIR, RAJ NAGAR EXTENSION, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201017, have changed the name of my minor son AAVYUKT SHANDILYA aged 04-years and he shall hereafter be known as ANIRUDDH SHANDILYA.

0040751231-9

I, Vaidehi Nautiyal D/o Pramod Nautiyal, R/O-House, No-22, Type-3, Jai Vihar, Lajpat Nagar, Delhi-110024, have changed my name to Vaidehi Nautiyal, Permanently

0040751224-1

I, Vaibhavi Sharma Saraswat D/o Shiv Swaroop Sharma, R/O-T1-1184, ACE-Golfshire, Sector-150, Noida, Knowledge Park-I, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201310, have changed my name to Vaibhavi Sharma, Permanently

0040751224-2

I, Sunita W/o Ashok Kumar Saini R/O 33-A, Shyam Colony, Near Shiv Mandir, Budh Vihar, Delhi-110086 have changed my name from Sunita to Sunita Saini permanently

0040751221-2

I, Siddhant Sakhuja S/o Sanjay Kumar Sakhuja, R/O-H-18, GF, Green Park Main, New Delhi-110016, declare that Siddhant Sakhuja and Siddhant Sakhuja both are one and same person.

0040751167-1

I, Shailesh Kumar S/o Janardhan Bhagat R/O B-1/319, 320 Main Road New Kondli, Mayur Vihar, Phase -3, Delhi-110096 Want to Change My son name in School Record as Suyash to Suyash Kushwaha.

0070926037-1

I, Satish Kharbanda Alias Satish Kumar S/o Banarsi Das R/O House No-22/55-56, Patel Nagar, Delhi-110008 have changed my name from Satish kharbanda Alias Satish Kumar to Satish Kumar for all purposes.

0070926036-1

I, Sarla Devi Tanwal W/o Prem Singh Tanwal, R/O B/4/3 Safdarjung Enclave Delhi 110029, have changed my name to Sarashwati Devi Tanwal for all future purposes.

0040751165-1

I, SHRI SATENDRA KUMAR S/O CHHOTI LAL DUBEY R/O MOHALLA INDRANAGAR, KASBA AND TEHSIL CHHIBRAMAU, DISTT.-KANNAUJ, U.P.-209721, confirm That I got married to MANOJ, and my wife name has been wrongly mentioned as BABY DUBEY in my Office record. I declare that BABY DUBEY & MANOJ both names belong to one and same person.

0070926018-1

I, Rakhi W/o Hukam Singh, R/O-House, No-97-98, Gali, No-4, Sai complex part-A, Near-Armist hospital, Faridabad-121002, have changed my name Rekha Rani to Rakhi, for All future purposes.

0040751213-1

I, RITU SHARMA, W/O ABHINAV SHARMA, R/O HOUSE NUMBER 5 NAGLA ORDER, SARDHANA, MEERUT, UTTAR PRADESH-250342, have changed my name to REETOO PANDEY for all future purposes.

0070925988-1

I, Preeti Chauhan W/o Arun Kumar R/O 53-B, New Mig Flats, Mayur Vihar-3, Delhi-110096 have changed my name to Preeti Indora for all purposes.

0040751199-1

I, JAI KISHAN GOEL S/O CHANDER BHAN R/O 140, Rajdhani Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 have changed my name from JAI KISHAN DASS TO JAI KISHAN GOEL for all future purposes.

0040751171-1

I, Husna D/o Md.Tehseen, R/O 6840, Gali 18 Wali, Ahata Kidara, Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi-110006, have changed my name from Husna to Husna Parveen.

0040751157-1

I, Guarav S/O Ajeesh Singh 2054, Sect-4B, Akash Ganga Society, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad-201012, have changed my name to Guarav Singh.

0070926014-1

I, Geetanjali D/o Virendra Singh W/o Jag Parvesh R/O H.No.122, Phase-1, A1 Block, Samta Enclave, Qutub Vihar, Delhi-110071 have changed my name to Geetanjali Singh for all purposes.

0040751190-1

I, GYANESH S/O RAJESH KUMAR RATHOUR, R/O-23 2ND FLOOR, POCKET-6 SECTOR-22, ROHINI DELHI-110086, have changed my name to GYANESH RATHOUR.

0040751240-1

I, CHANDRESH KUMAR SINGH S/O Dan Bahadur Singh, R/O F-1142, 7th Avenue, Gaur City-1, Noida Extension, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar-201308, have changed my name from CHANDRESH KUMAR SINGH to CHANDRESH SINGH. Henceforth, I would be known by the name of CHANDRESH SINGH for all future purposes.

0070925981-1

I, Farheen W/o Khurram Siddiqui R/O-2233, Kucha Chelan, Darya Ganj Central Delhi 110002 have changed my name to Farheen Siddiqui permanently

0040751246-2

I, Droan Dutt Sharma S/o Ravi Dutt Sharma R/o 294 SFS Flats, Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009 do hereby declare that both the names i.e. Droan Dutt & Droan Dutt Sharma are one and is of the same person.

0070926033-1

I, Ashok Kumar S/o Kabul Singh R/O 33-A, Shyam Colony, Near Shiv Mandir, Budh Vihar, Delhi-110086 have changed my name from Ashok Kumar to Ashok Kumar Saini permanently

0040751221-1

I, ANU SHAHI, W/O VIJAY KUMAR KAMTI, R/O MM 101 FL NO. GF 01, DLF, ANKUR VIHAR, LONI DEHAT, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201102, have changed my name to ANU KAMTI for all future purposes.

0070925986-1

I, Shailesh W/o-Prem Pal Singh R/O-B-8/45, Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Shailesh Rajput for all purposes.

0040751174-1

I, Rajni Mittal W/o Sh. Anil Kumar R/O A-29, Gali No.22, Mahendra Park

Tender Enquiry No. 327/SS-II(D) Dy.CE/Substation Design/ TS Organization, C-1, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Manufacture, Testing, Supply & Delivery of 194 nos. 66kV Potential Transformers. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification, please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 26.09.24 (09:00AM onwards).

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. (Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001) Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2018SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in Contact No. 96461-22185

Tender Enquiry No. 325/SS(D)-377/RDSS/Spares Dated: 25.09.2024 Dy. CE/Substation (Design) TS Organization, C-1, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Manufacturing, Testing, Supply and Delivery of 415V, 11 Circuit, AC Distribution Boards and 220V/100AH DC Distribution Boards. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://gem.gov.in (Tender ID: GEM/2024/B/5423900) from 25.09.2024 (11:00 AM onwards).

Police Station E. Division Amritsar City Advertisement According to Sormenas, PPR 23.18 Topic:- Identification of dead body of unknown person Appearance:- Age about 35 years, Height 5 feet 5 inches, complexion wheatish, wear green half sleeved t-shirt, black lower (pajama), white and brown coloured toe slippers, bandaged around right wrist.

Station House Officer PS E Division, Amritsar 97811-30205 Incharge Police Post Galiara: - 97811-30219 City Control Room (Amritsar) : 97811-30666

UPSIDA कायदा व न्याय प्रणाली (सिटी), निगम संचालन-प्रदान 3090 राज्य आर्थिक विकास प्राधिकरण (सिटी) website: https://onlineupsidc.com अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION SETTING UP OF ROOFTOP SOLAR PLANTS Notice Inviting Tender EL/50/1/22 (24-25) Dt.20-09-2024

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. (Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001) Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2018SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in Contact No. 96461-22185

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE The Deputy Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/Const./TKJ, Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites by established and reliable tenderers open e-tender under Single Packet System on the prescribed form for the following work:

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

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Rahishu@Rahish, S/o: Nasir, R/o: Jhuggi No. H-3/1303, Jahangirpuri, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 867/2021, U/s 25/54/59 A. Act, P.S.: Mahendra Park, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Rahishu@Rahish, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Rahishu@Rahish, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Rahishu@Rahish, of FIR No. 867/2021, U/s 25/54/59 A. Act, P.S.: Mahendra Park, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 08.11.2024

WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRING WORKS

Electrical Department (Construction); E-Tender Notice No. EL/C/ADI/TRD/38/2024-25; (1) Name of work with its location: Preventative maintenance and repair/overhaul of 8-Wheeler Tower wagons & Wagon Mounted Rail Crane under construction unit of Ahmedabad for 3 years; (2) Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 2,17,04,353.92/-; (3) Earnest money to be deposited: As specified on IREPS portal; (4) Date & time of submission and opening of bid: As specified on IREPS portal; (5) Tender fees: As specified on IREPS portal; (6) Completion Period of work: 36 Months; (7) Website particular and Notice board where details of tender can be seen & address of the office: www.ireps.gov.in

योजना एवं विकास विभाग कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय स्थानीय क्षेत्र अभियंत्रण संगठन, कार्य प्रमण्डल-01, वेगूसराय निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या-06/2024-25

(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. कार्यों की विवरणी (योजना / शीर्ष / मद का नाम) :- बिहार शिक्षा परियोजना

Table with 7 columns: S. No., NIT Clause no., Subject, Earlier, Revised, and other details for various construction projects like Construction of 4 ACR in GPS, Construction of 4 ACR in UMS, etc.

पशु एवं मत्स्य संसाधन विभाग पशुपालन सूचना एवं प्रसार कार्यालय, बिहार ऑफ पोली रोड, पटना- 800001 निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

सोनपुर (सारण) में पशुधन मेला 2024, जो दिनांक 13 नवम्बर, 2024 से प्रारंभ होकर दिनांक 14 दिसम्बर, 2024 तक चलेगा, के अवसर पर पशुपालन सूचना एवं प्रसार कार्यालय, बिहार, पटना द्वारा संस्थापित किये जाने वाले स्टॉल के निर्माण के लिए अनुभवी / ख्याति प्राप्त प्रतिष्ठानों से अलग-अलग लिफाफे में तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय मुहरबंद निविदाएं प्रकाशन से 21वें दिन के 05:00 बजे अपराह्न तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। प्राप्त निविदाओं को अंतिम तिथि के अगले दिन 11:00 बजे पूर्वाह्न में विभाग के द्वारा गणित स्थानीय कर्म समिति के समक्ष अग्रहस्तहारी के कार्यालय कक्ष में खोली जायेगी। निविदा खोलने के समय प्रतिष्ठान के अधिकृत प्रतिनिधि भी उपस्थित रह सकते हैं।

Office The Principal Government Polytechnic Asthawan, Nalanda-803107 Email Id- gp.nalanda@gmail.com Website- gp.asthawannalanda.org.in CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

Table with 5 columns: S. No., NIT Clause no., Subject, Earlier, Revised. Details of corrigendum for Government Polytechnic Asthawan, Nalanda.

बिहार सरकार शिक्षा विभाग (उच्च शिक्षा) बिहार-राष्ट्रभाषा-परिषद्, पटना-800004 अल्पकालीन निविदा

परिषद् द्वारा प्रकाशित होने वाले पुस्तकों, शोध त्रैमासिक पत्रिका एवं अन्य सामग्रियों की छपाई तथा संस्करण समाप्त पुस्तकों के पुनर्मुद्रण हेतु नीचे अंकित विवरणी के अनुसार ऑफसेट छपाई के दर हेतु मुहरबंद निविदा आमंत्रित किया जा रहा है :- (1) फिल्म एवं रिटच, प्रति, फर्मा (08 पेजी) (2) कम्पोजिंग (प्रति फर्मा 08 पेजी) (3) प्रिंटिंग एवं CTP एवं PS प्लेट मेकिंग प्रति फर्मा (08 पेजी) (4) कवर ऑफसेट प्रिंटिंग प्रति कलर (5) स्तर प्रति पुस्तक (6) CTP एवं PS प्लेट (पैपर) प्रति पृष्ठ (7) कवर CTP एवं PS प्लेट (8) कवर डिजाइन (9) कवर का रकनेनिंग प्लानिंग प्रति कलर (10) लेमिनेशन (12) प्रति पृष्ठ कम्पोजिंग एवं छपाई।

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Office of the Executive Engineer Project South, South Zone Office Complex, 9th Main, 9th Cross, Jayanagara 2nd Block, Bengaluru - 560011 Contact No: 080-22975713 Email: eeprojectsouth@gmail.com

Tender Corrigendum Notification

Sub:- This office Corrigendum in the Invitation for Tenders called through KPPP e-Portal. Ref:- This Office Tender Corrigendum Notification No: EEP(S)/kppp/e-portal/7/2024-25/Call-2, Date: 19-09-2024.

In the Invitation for Tenders for Providing Security Guards to BBMP Schools and Colleges of South and RR Nagar Zone on outsource basis (Call-2) issued by this office dated: 19-09-2024 vide No: EEP(S)/e-portal/kppp/7/2024-25/Call-2 invited through KPPP e-portal few changes have been made in the Tender as per the details given below due to various reasons. The Corrigendum details are as follows:

Table with 4 columns: SI No, Particulars, Details as Published, Amended details. Details of tender corrigendum for security guards.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project South

कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला-कोण्डागांव, छत्तीसगढ़ (आदिवासी विकास शाखा)

क्रमांक/आंविं/डी.एम.एफ./गोदना प्रशि./3264/2024-25 कोण्डागांव, दिनांक 24/09/2024

रूचि की अभिव्यक्ति कौशल उन्नयन हेतु गोदना (टैटू) प्रशिक्षण हेतु प्रशिक्षक का चयन विषयान्वत जिला खनिज न्याय निधि के कौशल उन्नयन कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत परम्परागत व आधुनिक टैटू (गोदना) कला से जुड़े पुरतनी युवा कलाकारों, तृतीय लिंग समुदाय, पुरुष एवं महिलाओं को टैटू कला की समृद्ध जानकारी देने व इन्हें रोजगारोन्मुखी कार्यक्रम से जोड़ने कुल 10 डिप्लोमाहितियों हेतु 15 दिवसीय टैटू (गोदना) प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया जाना है। इस हेतु इच्छुक टैटू (गोदना) कला प्रशिक्षकों से निम्नानुसार प्रस्ताव आमंत्रित की जाती है, इच्छुक प्रशिक्षकों को निम्नलिखित अंक गणना आधारित मूल्यांकन के उपरान्त ही चयनित या निरस्त किया जा सकेगा :-

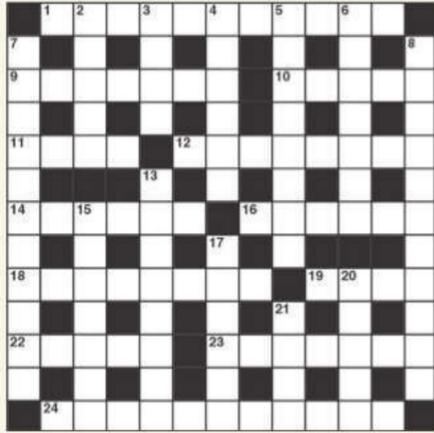
Haryana Public Service Commission Bays No. 1 -10, Block -B, Sector -4, Panchkula Announcement

It is hereby announced for the general information of the candidates who have qualified for the Subject Knowledge Tests for the posts mentioned below, that the Commission has decided to conduct the Subject Knowledge Test, as per schedule given below:-

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Post & Department, Advt. No., Date & Time of Test. Details of Haryana Public Service Commission exam schedule.

The candidates are advised to download their Admit Cards from the link provided on the Commission's website i.e. http://hpsc.gov.in with effect from 28.09.2024 onwards. It is further mentioned that all the candidates who have qualified for the Subject Knowledge Tests for the above mentioned posts are being provisionally allowed to appear in the Test, subject to the fulfillment of all eligibility conditions as per advertisement. Notes: 1. Candidates are directed to download the admit card and take print of the same on A-4 size paper so that their photos & other particulars can easily be seen/verified. Candidates having small size Admit Cards with unclear photos/signatures will not be allowed to enter the Examination centre. 2. The candidates are advised to read all the instructions on the Admit Card very carefully.

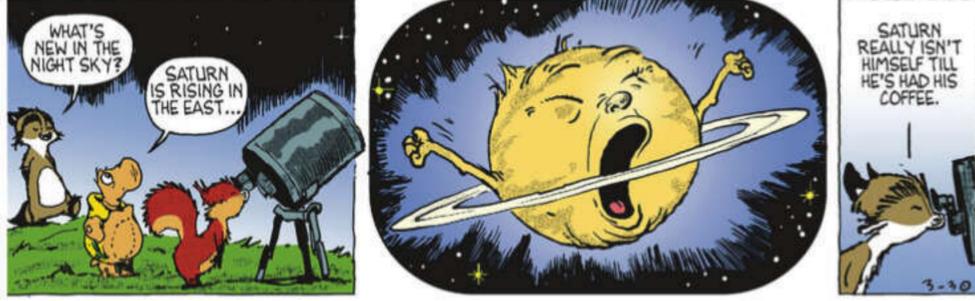
CROSSWORD 5479



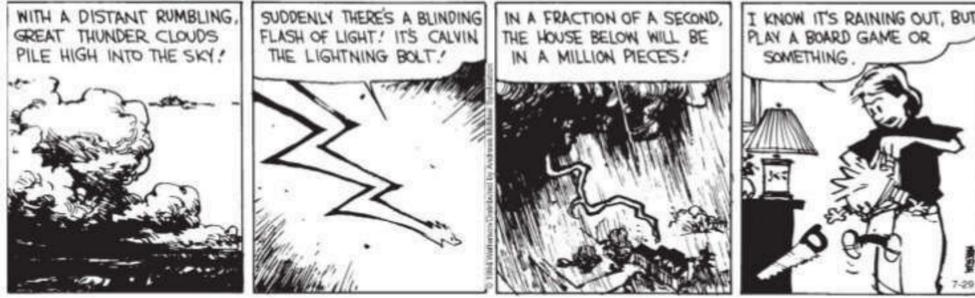
- ACROSS
1 One's suit reserved for the ship's officers (11)
9 Get expert treatment (7)
10 Big vessel in sea or tank (5)
11 Little creatures among those left standing (4)
12 With fashion, price is not extreme (8)
14 Note more money for cook (6)
16 Is he the sort to laze? Unlikely! (6)
18 It goes round; in fact shoots round (8)
19 Allow to go for nothing (4)
22 Noah went round to one capital place (5)
23 Rosalind's lover is in Florida (7)
24 Landlord collects mail and printed matter (11)
DOWN
2 Turnabout in the vessel (1-4)
3 Put to flight right away (4)
4 It has been used poetically before this time (6)
5 Expires, broken by a wager and disease (8)
6 Copper on trial is composed in dock (7)
7 Will their occupants oversleep? (5,6)
8 The highest bidder doesn't leave anything behind (5,3,3)
13 His praises are sung in the services (8)
15 Increase the loan (7)
17 It may be rude to make a digression (6)
20 Place where thy fight cartels (5)
21 Slight legato effect (4)

Solutions Crossword 5479 Across: 1 Caters, 4 Stipends, 9 Admirer, 10 Register, 12 Nero, 13 Donor, 14 Pews, 17 Shooting star, 20 Thermometers, 23 Olaf, 24 Edwin, 25 Magi, 28 Smashing, 29 Garden, 30 Prisoner, 31 Depose Down: 1 Clannish, 2 Tomorrow, 3 Rare, 5 The worst of it, 6 Pain, 7 Nether, 8 Stress, 11 Country dance, 15 Itchy, 16 Cadet, 18 Yes and no, 19 Assignee, 21 Gossip, 22 Malawi, 26 Shoo, 27 Lake

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

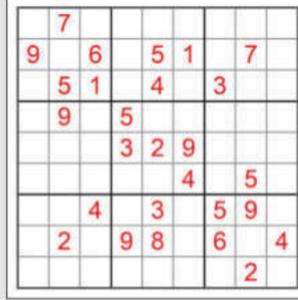
Never as a \_\_\_ what you can ask as a favour. - John Churton Collins (5,\_,\_)

LVAIR, EINOCM, TTLIA, EOTTGH. Grids for jumbled words.

Answer: Never claim as a right what you can ask as a favour. - John Churton Collins

SUDOKU 5725

Difficulty Level 3s Instructions To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5724



भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान भोपाल Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice Tender No : Re T.No.128/2024-25/SEQ

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED e-TENDER NOTICE The TGTRANSCO invites online Bids on e-procurement platform for supply of the following Equipment.

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, सभाग प्रथम जोधपुर

UJVN Limited H.O.: "UJJAWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, मंडल क्रमांक: 1. रायपुर (छ.प्र.)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA DEPARTMENT OF SPACE INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION ISRO TELEMETRY TRACKING AND COMMAND NETWORK (ISTRAC), CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP

महाराष्ट्र शासन क्रीडा व युवक सेवा संचालनालय, महाराष्ट्र राज्य

ई निविदा सूचना क्रीडा व युवक सेवा संचालनालय, महाराष्ट्र राज्य अंतर्गत शिवछत्रपती क्रीडासंकुलातील फिटनेस सेंटरसाठी आधुनिक जॉम साहित्य खरेदी करण्यासाठी राज्यातील परवानाधारक / नोंदणीकृत, मान्यताप्राप्त, अनुभवी उत्पादक/वितरक यंत्रेकडून दोन लिफाफा व खुल्या स्पर्धात्मक पध्दतीने ऑनलाईन ई निविदा मागविण्यात येत आहे.

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION OF INDIA (A Govt. of India Undertaking) G.T. Road, Kanpur-209217

JEJURI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, JEJURI E-Tender Notice No. 1924 for 2024-25 JMC invites e-Tender for the work of Jejuri Water Supply Scheme at Tal. Purandar

RAJASTHAN STATE HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY, JAIPUR GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN Email: hs.rsha@rajasthan.gov.in Tel: +91-141-2223547

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि० ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना (2024-25) विद्युत जानपद पारोषण मण्डल, आगरा

DAY TODAY BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Events that take place soon will provide you with an opportunity to rebuild bridges and find solutions to intractable partnership problems. LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) You may have come to suspect that you are unlikely to get a fair deal whatever the circumstances.

OFFICE OF THE RAJASTHAN STATE HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY, JAIPUR Government of Rajasthan No. F.7 (15/RSHA/WB/T-II/EPCC-04/D-1056 Date: 20.09.2024

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD (POWER WING) CORRIGENDUM-I (CANCELLATION) The tender notice against E-NIT No:- 01/OMD/2024-25 Dated: 21.08.2024 (Work for Mtc. of Non-residential buildings at 220 KV Sub-station BBMB, Delhi) is hereby CANCELLED due to non-receipt of EMD amount of 1 firm out of 3 firms as per terms & conditions.

RAJASTHAN STATE HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY, JAIPUR (Govt. of Rajasthan) Short-Term Notice Inviting Bid (21/2024-25) Bids for collection of user fee on "Bhawi-Pipar-Khimsar (SH-86C) Length Km.97.00m

MAHILA ARTHIK VIKAS MAHAMANDAL, GRIHA NIRMAN BHAWAN (MHADA), Mezzanine Floor, Kalanagar, Bandra (East)-400051

कार्यालय अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमंडल, गोड्डा। शुद्धि-पत्र अल्पकालीन ई०-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं० 16/2024-25/RWD/EE/GODDA दिनांक 19.09.2024

**BRIEFLY**

## India round of MotoGP postponed to 2026

**New Delhi:** The Indian round of the MotoGP championship was on Wednesday postponed to 2026 with the organisers citing "operational circumstances" as the reason behind another delay. The Indian Grand Prix was earlier scheduled to be held in September but was deferred to March 2025. Now, it can only be held in the early stages of 2026. "The FIM, IRTA and Dorna Sports confirm that the Indian Grand Prix will be included on the 2026 FIM MotoGP calendar, moving to become a reserve event for 2025," MotoGP said in a statement. Operational circumstances have obliged the event to be delayed from its initial slot near the start of the 2025 calendar. **PTI**

## AFC U20: India beat Mongolia 4-1

**Laos:** India outclassed Mongolia 4-1 to begin their campaign in the AFC U20 Asian Cup qualifiers on a winning note here on Wednesday. The teams were locked 1-1 at half time, but India stepped up the assault in the second half to leave Mongolia's defence in tatters. Kelvin Singh Taorem (20'), Manglenthang Kipgen (51', 54'), and Korou Singh Thingujam (85') were the goal-scorers for India. Temulen Uuganbat (45th) struck the solitary goal for Mongolia. Iran and hosts Laos are the two other teams in the Group G. **PTI**

## Srikanth in second round of Macau Open

**Macau:** Star shuttler Kidambi Srikanth, along with compatriots Ayush Shetty and Tasnim Mir, advanced to the second round of the singles event at the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament on Wednesday. In his first competition since recovering from an injury sustained in May, sixth seed Srikanth, a silver medallist at the 2021 World Championships, outclassed Israel's Daniil Dubovenko 21-14, 21-15, while Ayush, the 2023 World Junior Championships bronze medallist, also had a strong start, defeating fellow Indian Alap Mishra 21-13, 21-5 in another men's singles opening-round match. **PTI**

## World Cup winner Varane retires

**Madrid:** France's World Cup-winning defender Raphael Varane announced his retirement from football at the age of 31 on Wednesday, bringing down the curtain on his successful career after suffering a serious knee injury. Varane made 93 appearances for France from 2013-22, playing a key role in their victory at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, as well as their runners-up finish four years later in Qatar. Varane began his club career at Ligue 1 side Lens, before joining Real Madrid in 2011, where he played 360 times and won three La Liga titles and four Champions League trophies in a trophy-laden spell. He joined Manchester United in 2021, making 95 appearances in all competitions for the English side and helping them win the League Cup in 2023 and FA Cup in 2024, before moving to Serie A club Como in July where he suffered a knee injury on his debut. **REUTERS**

# Kuldeep eyes Green signal for homecoming

With Green Park set to offer a low and slow pitch, left-arm wrist spinner will have to vie with Axar Patel for the third spinner's role

**PRATYUSH RAJ**  
KANPUR, SEPTEMBER 25

EARLIER THIS year, during a podcast with Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav took the off-spinner by surprise when he revealed his age. "You are 29, I can't believe this," Ashwin laughed.

Kuldeep will turn 30 in less than three months, but since his Test debut in 2017, has played only 12 Tests. His childhood coach Kapil Pandey is hopeful that he will finally see his ward bowling in a Test at Green Park, the venue where it all started for the wrist-spinner. "It's his bad luck that he has only played 12 Tests in seven years. Hopefully, he will get a chance to play his 13th in Kanpur," Pandey told *The Indian Express*.

Kuldeep's stop-start career has been one of the curious occurrences in Indian cricket.

In 2019, after taking a five-wicket haul in Sydney, Kuldeep was touted as "India's lead spinner in overseas Tests" by then head coach Ravi Shastri. However, a few years later, loss of form and a career-threatening knee injury put his career at a crossroads. Someone like Kuldeep, back from the wilderness, needed backing and support; that has not always been the case.

At Chattogram in 2022, Kuldeep bagged an eight-wicket haul and scored a crucial 40 in the first innings, during which he put on crucial 92 runs for the eighth wicket with Ashwin. However, the player-of-the-match performance was not enough for Kuldeep to keep his spot in the next match, as the team management included Jaydev Unadkat in the eleven. Kuldeep had shed the perception that he doesn't have that fizz in his bowling and was too slow to beat batsmen.

"He was told to work on his bowling speed and batting. He did it both but the next match, he got dropped. From that point whenever he is not picked, I only laugh," said Pandey. "I have seen that struggle very closely. The way he was treated was unfortunate but he told me specifically that 'My dip and drift will be my answer.'"

Earlier this year during the five-match Test series against England, Kuldeep roared back after missing the first Test and picked 19 wickets, including a five-wicket haul and a player of the match performance at Dharamsala. However, six months later, when India played their next Test, against Bangladesh in Chennai, Kuldeep didn't make the playing XI.

### Toss-up between Axar, Kuldeep

The question remains whether Kuldeep will get a chance to play a Test in front of family and friends. India's first training session on Wednesday indicated that if the team plans to go with three spinners, Kuldeep might be facing a stiff challenge from Axar Patel.

Axar was bowling in tandem with Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja in the nets, while at the far end, Kuldeep was doing the basic fielding drills with Sarfaraz Khan and Dhruv Jurel. He did come on to bowl but by that time, India's premier batsmen Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Yashvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill had left the



Since his Test debut in 2017, Kuldeep Yadav has played only 12 Tests. *Sportspics for BCCI*

nets. Kuldeep bowled an extensive spell to his Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant.

Jadeja's presence in the team might help Kuldeep pip Axar in the battle for the third spinner role. Although Axar's stock in white-ball formats has gone up in recent times, when it comes to Test cricket he is considered a 'slightly' inferior version of Jadeja.

Pandey, who will be at Green Park with Kuldeep's family and a few trainees of his academy, wants Gautam Gambhir and his coaching staff to watch Zak Crawley's dismissal in Dharamsala before taking a final call on the playing XI for Kanpur.

"It obviously depends upon the team management about what combination they want to play. But I feel Kuldeep must play in

all home Test matches. He has that X factor," said his coach.

"In Dharamsala, the pitch was absolutely flat. But the way he cleaned up Zak Crawley should be enough for the team management to play him in every Test match," added Pandey. As far as the bigger picture is concerned, India is looking to secure qualification for the third World Test Championship final in a row. After the two-match series against Bangladesh, they will play three Tests at home against New Zealand, followed by a five-match away series in Australia. India would love to have Kuldeep in good rhythm and an on-song left-arm wrist spinner would be a key weapon against the best oppositions.

# Kohli struggles against Bumrah and Axar, Bangla face Shakib conundrum

**PRATYUSH RAJ**  
KANPUR, SEPTEMBER 25

UNDER THE scorching sun at Kanpur's Green Park Stadium, Jasprit Bumrah bowled around 15 deliveries to Virat Kohli in the nets and 'got him out' four times.

Kohli looked comfortable on the first three balls, before Bumrah cranked it up and got one to hit the pads and shouted "saamne laga hai (You are plumb)." Kohli acknowledged.

Next ball, Kohli played his trademark cover drive, which got the groundsmen, local police and a handful of journalists in the stands go berserk. Bumrah walked back, and bowled at the fourth stump line but this time the length was shortened and Kohli edged it.

### Clueless Kohli

Bumrah then moved his line of attack to the middle and leg stumps and outfoxed Kohli twice in a row. Both times the ball lobbed after the inside edge hit the pads. Bumrah smiled at Kohli and teased him "Aakhiri wala toh short leg ka catch tha (The short leg could have caught the last one)." Kohli smiled before moving to the parallel net, where the spin trio Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel were bowling.

In recent times, Kohli's struggles against spinners have become well known. In Chennai, he was dismissed by off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz for 17, which was the 18th time since 2021 that Kohli got out to spinners.

He was struggling against the Indian spin trio in the Kanpur nets as well, especially the two left-arm spinners. Kohli constantly tried to play inside-out against Jadeja, but missed three times in a row and looked agitated. However, the eye-catching moment was Axar cleaning up the master batsman through the gate.

That was the last ball Kohli played in the nets before making way for Shubman Gill.

### Shakib fit and available

Twice in the morning during Bangladesh's practice session, Shakib Al Hasan padded up and faced the local spinners for five to seven minutes. Both times, he walked off furiously towards the Bangladesh dressing room.

Shakib bowled only 21 overs in Chennai, going wicketless, and scored 32 and 25 in Bangladesh's 280-run loss. He was intro-



Virat Kohli at the nets in Kanpur. *PTI*

**At the moment, I haven't heard from my physio or from anyone. He is still eligible for selection. I'm sure that he also thinks that he can perform better. We all know what he's capable of.**

**CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHE**  
ON SHAKIB'S AVAILABILITY

duced in the 53rd over of India's first innings. Murali Kartik, on air, had said that Shakib had told him about discomfort on his spinning finger and shoulder.

However, Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe on Wednesday downplayed concerns around Shakib's fitness after the finger injury sustained in Chennai.

"At the moment, I haven't heard from my physio or from anyone. He is still eligible for selection," Hathurusinghe told reporters. When asked whether he was upset with Shakib's performance in Chennai, Hathurusinghe said: "I'm not. I'm upset not about his performance but our overall performance. We could have done better."

"I'm sure that he also thinks that he can perform better. We all know what he's capable of. I think he batted really well in the second innings. He couldn't go on. Not because of a lack of pride. It's the sheer quality of the opposition."

# IPL Player Auctions: BCCI likely to allow five retentions

**DEVENDRA PANDEY**  
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 25

THE BOARD of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is likely to allow the IPL franchise to retain five players with no right to match option available at the upcoming IPL auction. Retaining five players means, it opens the door for Mumbai Indians to retain their core which includes Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya.

In a recent meeting at its headquarters, BCCI had a discussion with all the 10 team owners about the player retentions. And a majority of them wanted to retain 5-6 players as it would give them continuity.

And it is understood that after weighing in their request the BCCI has adhered to the request as it believes retaining up to five players will also ensure the franchises' brand value is also protected.

Ahead of the 2022 season, when franchises were allowed to retain a maximum of four players, the obligation was to not retain more than three Indian players and two overseas players. However, there is no clarity this as of now as to how many overseas players can be retained by each franchise.

### Big calls for MI

With five players likely to be retained, all eyes are on Mumbai Indians now. While their core has remained the same over the



MI would be able to retain Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya (in pic). *PTI*

past decade, after an underwhelming season this year under Pandya's captaincy it would be interesting to see how they line up their retainers.

The BCCI is yet to firm up the retention costs for the upcoming auction.

In 2022, when Mumbai retained four players, Rohit got the highest pay bracket at Rs 16 crore followed by Bumrah (Rs 12 cr), Suryakumar (Rs 8 cr) and Kieron Pollard (Rs 6 cr). This time, with the stocks of Bumrah and Suryakumar raising, it would be interesting to see the price at which they are retained, provided they get into an agreement with the players.

With the BCCI deciding on the number of retentions, the upcoming player auctions will

be a big one. During the meeting, a majority of the franchises which are part of the tournament since its inception, wanted the big auctions to take place in a four or five year cycle. Citing continuity they wanted the BCCI to delay the big player auctions by a year as they were not keen on losing key talents they had invested in. The last two big player auctions were held in a four-year cycle (2018 and 2022).

Kolkata Knight Riders co-owner Shah Rukh Khan was among those who were in favour of not having big auctions this year. Apart from KKR, Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans were also pushing for the big auctions to be postponed.

**COURT INTERVENTION**

# How India's young defender Anwar is playing in the ISL despite ban

**ANIL DIAS**  
SEPTEMBER 25

INDIA DEFENDER Anwar Ali didn't have a dream start to his Indian Super League (ISL) season as East Bengal lost to Kerala Blasters on Sunday, but the smile on his face said it all — he was just happy to be on the football field.

After all, he's had a tumultuous time since July when he decided to end his loan spell with Mohun Bagan.

### What did Anwar do?

So basically, Anwar was a Delhi FC player but was on a long, four-year loan spell at Mohun Bagan SG.

On July 8, he issued a notice of termination to Bagan, citing Article 10.1.d of FIFA's new regulations on the status and transfer of players (RSTP) that "a loan agreement may be concluded for a minimum duration of the time between two registration periods and a maximum duration of one year."

"As per the above regulations, any contract and agreement regarding my loan transfer for a period longer than one year



Anwar Ali (right) made his ISL debut for East Bengal on Sunday. *Sportspics for ISL*

stands invalid. It is also pertinent to note that the loan agreement does not contain a termination clause which in itself makes the agreement invalid," Anwar had said.

### What do AIFF rules say?

That's where the problem lies. The AIFF has not yet implemented the new FIFA rules. It has till June 2025 to adopt the changes, and for now, are counting on its own Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP) for domestic players. "A contract between a professional player and a club may only be terminated upon expiry of the term of the contract or by mutual agreement," states Article 15 of the AIFF in its Regulation for RSTP rulebook.

### What did Anwar want?

Anwar requested the federation to transfer his registration back to Delhi FC. Being a top Indian player, he didn't want to be on loan for so long. "At this stage in my career, I am not comfortable being a professional on loan for such a long period as it is hampering my career prospects. Therefore, I have asked Delhi FC to reintegrate me and discuss my permanent transfer options within this

transfer window so that I do not lose out on any opportunity to earn my livelihood to the best of my capabilities," Anwar had written to AIFF's registrations department.

### How did Bagan react?

The termination notice naturally took aback Bagan who told the defender to join training with the senior team ahead of the ISL season. Anwar responded by telling the club he was "open to discussing a permanent transfer to Bagan" but with the club unwilling to get into negotiations for a permanent transfer since there were three years left on the original loan agreement, Anwar reportedly agreed terms with rivals East Bengal. The AIFF then referred the dispute to its player status committee.

### What did the Player Status Committee rule?

The AIFF Players' Status Committee found the termination of the contract with Bagan 'without a just cause' after Bagan maintained

that the move was illegal. A week later, the PSC granted the NOC to Anwar to sign with East Bengal FC, but he was warned to proceed at his own risk pending the final order. The following day, East Bengal registered Anwar on a five-year deal. In their final decision on September 9, the PSC slapped East Bengal and Delhi FC with a two-window transfer ban, while Anwar, East Bengal, and Delhi FC were ordered to pay a compensation of Rs 12.9 crore to Mohun Bagan.

### So how did Anwar play against Kerala Blasters?

On September 13, the Delhi High Court intervened and quashed the PSC's order over a lack of detailed reasoning to the aggrieved parties and asked the PSC to revisit the proceedings. Two days later, Anwar was given the NOC to play for East Bengal in the ISL.

### Is the saga over?

Not quite. Anwar received the NOC, but it's just a temporary relief. His future will be determined by a fresh verdict by the PSC expected by the end of the month.



# NADA serves retired Vinesh notice for whereabouts failure



Vinesh Phogat at Haryana's Anoopgarh village on Wednesday. X/@Phogat\_Vinesh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
SEPTEMBER 25

WRESTLER VINESH Phogat, who retired from wrestling last month, has been served with a whereabouts failure notice after the anti-doping sleuths did not find her at her pre-disclosed location on the date of sample collection earlier this month.

The National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) officials reportedly reached Vinesh's home in Kharkhoda, Haryana, on September 9. However, she was not available to provide her dope sample. Consequently, the anti-doping watchdog served her a notice and sought an explanation within 14 days.

It is learnt that this is the first time she has been handed a notice for alleged whereabouts failure. Consequently, even if she ac-

cepts the failure, Vinesh is unlikely to be sanctioned. According to anti-doping rules, an athlete must record three whereabouts failures within 12 months for the NADA to charge her.

"You are hereby given a formal notice to notify you about apparent failure to comply with the whereabouts requirements of the ADR, and to invite you to make any comments before we come to a final decision on the matter," the NADA notice read, according to PTI.

"A Dope Control Officer (DCO) was sent to test you on that day at that time and place. However, he was unable to locate you for testing as you were not available at the given location."

Vinesh had announced retirement from wrestling after the Paris Olympics, where she reached the final of the 50 kg freestyle com-

**The anti-doping watchdog served her a notice and sought an explanation within 14 days. It is learnt that this is the first time she has been handed a notice for alleged whereabouts failure. Consequently, even if she accepts the failure, Vinesh is unlikely to be sanctioned**

petition but was disqualified on the morning of her gold medal bout for being overweight by 100 grams.

Despite her announcement, Vinesh continues to feature on NADA's Registered

Testing Pool (RTP) and is hence required to provide details about her availability for a dope test. Failure to be present at the stated time, date and location leads to a whereabouts failure.

Vinesh was one of the three wrestlers who led the protest against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. While Sakshi Malik had announced retirement last year at the peak of the demonstrations, Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Bajrang Punia, too, finds himself on the anti-doping web for allegedly declining to provide a sample. He has contested the provisional suspension NADA has imposed on him.

Vinesh and Bajrang joined the Congress Party last month. Vinesh is contesting the Haryana Assembly election from the Julana constituency.

# Somdev slams AITA: 'System should enable dreams, not crush them'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
SEPTEMBER 25

FORMER PLAYER Somdev Devvarman, who has taken the All India Tennis Association (AITA) to court, said that the sport has fallen to an unprecedented low and the system crushes dreams of aspiring players instead of enabling them.

After Somdev and doubles player Purav Raja filed a petition to stay the upcoming AITA election, the Delhi High Court sought the governing body's stand on the matter but refused to stay the election process. However, Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav issued a notice to the sports body as well as the Centre, and directed that the result of the polls, which are scheduled to be held on September 28, must not be announced.

"Accountability and transparency are essential for Indian tennis to rise from the unprecedented low it has currently fallen to," Somdev - who has been as high as No 62 in the men's singles world rankings - said in a social media post. "The conduct of the federation is in direct conflict with the law of the land: it does not follow the sports code, it flouts the judgments of courts and its administrators choose to ignore the most basic guidelines for sports governance while fighting over the spoils that the players have achieved."

Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, appearing for the petitioners, had argued that AITA was conducting the election in a "clandestine manner" as there was "nothing on the website." Mehra had submitted that AITA's conduct was in flagrant violation of the Sports Code as well as the decisions passed by the high court.

"Firstly, the age and tenure restrictions. You can't have a member running for office who is above the age of 70. No matter the post or office and not only restricted to the President, registrar and secretary, but all elected posts are violating tenure and cooling-off period. You need a minimum 25 percent eminent sportspersons of outstanding merit both in the general assembly of the body as well as the executive committee and these have to be elected through the athlete commission of the body," Mehra had told *The Indian Express*.

Somdev's statement on X added that despite the system and not because of it. "A system that was corrupt, insensitive and incompetent. But does every little boy and girl out there, who picks up a racquet and dares to dream, have to fight the same fight? The system should enable dreams, not crush them. We owe it to the sport that has given us all that we have to make a difference. We owe it to the future, we owe it to India," he said.

# From planning kid's birthday to Olympiad gold

Harika Dronavalli was away from her two-year-old daughter for weeks, helping India win a historic double title in Budapest

NIHAL KOSHIE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

GRANDMASTER HARIKA Dronavalli was seated on dais in the middle of the felicitation function for the gold-medal winning chess Olympiad teams, when she heard her two-year-old daughter Hanvika call out for her from the audience. Not wanting to disturb the flow of her teammate Divya Deshmukh, who was speaking at that point, Harika gestured to her grandmother, Sudeshna Devi, 77, to distract Hanvika but it didn't work.

And so Harika got off the stage, carried her daughter in her arms and walked towards the end of the packed hall during the felicitation organised by the All India Chess Federation.

Harika has been away from her daughter for over three weeks, helping India win a historic double-gold in Budapest - Open and Women's event - at the Chess Olympiad. The 33-year-old veteran, who played the top board for the women's team, said she wasn't worried how Hanvika would cope because she got the best possible care: her sister, mother, and grandmother forming the support system back home in Guntur.

"I was never worried when I was away from her, because I know she was in much safer hands than me. No one can take care of her better than my parents, grandmom and sister. They will take extra care because they know I am not there. There have been times when I haven't spoken to her for weeks because you can get emotional talking to your daughter. It is difficult," Harika said.

When Harika beat Azerbaijan's Gunay Mammadzada in the final round for a crucial win, she clasped her face in her hands and cried. Those were tears of relief and joy she says. Harika debuted at the Chess Olympiad in 2004 and it took her two decades to be part of a gold-medal winning team. In 2022, when the women's team won bronze, she was expecting her child and could not play a crucial game because the doctor had advised her against sitting for too long.

"I guess my wait for gold has been the longest among players I know. Over the years I never understood why this (chess Olympiad) is not being cracked. Last time it was during my pregnancy and after that I somehow started doubting if this would happen (India winning gold). I am an emotional person and after I became a mom I have started openly showing emotion even more," Harika said.

She wasn't expected to be part of the Olympiad squad this time around. But coach and team captain Abhijit Kunte wanted either one of the veterans, Harika or Koneru Humpy to play. Humpy opted out because of 'personal reasons', Kunte said. "Harika asked me to give her a day to think about it," he recalled.

Harika, however, was busy planning Hanvika's second birthday. The family was set to travel to Bali and she wanted to plan the entire trip on her own. "On August 9 I got back to India from another tournament and



Chess Olympiad champion D Gukesh shows his medal to the daughter of fellow gold winner Harika Dronavalli during a felicitation function in New Delhi. Anil Sharma

## FUTURE PERFECT

Chess Olympiad champion D Gukesh shows his medal to the daughter of fellow gold winner Harika Dronavalli during a felicitation function in New Delhi. Anil Sharma

on August 24 we had to be in Bali. I had to make the family trip perfect because I am a perfectionist. I didn't get enough time to prepare for the Olympiad and I was feeling guilty about it. But I am happy I held my ground (at the Olympiad)".

Other than her daughter's birthday, Harika had other things on her mind too. Her mother and grandmother both had scheduled knee surgeries which had to be put on hold. Since the Chess Olympiad box has now been ticked Harika can focus on the homefront again.

## Catching them young

Hanvika has already been exposed to the game of chess, but Harika is not obsessed with her daughter following in her footsteps.

"So we do take up a chessboard. She knows pieces. She understands," Harika said. "But as a two-year-old, you never know whether she will display her skills or not. As a mother, I'm trying to inculcate sports into her interests. But in this generation, kids know what they want early on. I can't decide for her. I just would love it if

she could choose any sport, even if it's success or failure. I think sport teaches a lot... taking setbacks or how to handle failures. It makes you more mature at a very early age and disciplined. So I believe that it can help a lot in life."

Now that she has tasted gold-medal winning success, Harika is still mulling about her Olympiad future. The joy of victory and the felicitations, including meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is too fresh in her mind to make a big decision immediately.

"I really don't know. I think it's too many emotions right now going on. It's just a good feeling to finish in a gold medal team. Maybe... I don't know what will happen in the future after two years, what will be the situation. But right now if you ask me my feelings, I'm like, okay. I think enough... too much stress. And maybe I can concentrate on my individual game rather than playing all this (team events) This is my mental state right now. But I don't want to be like, a hundred percent sure, and then come back and play because I really don't know what will happen after two years."

## AICF announces reward of Rs 3.2 cr

New Delhi: The All India Chess Federation announced a whopping Rs 3.2 crore in rewards for the historic 45th Olympiad-winning Indian teams during a felicitation ceremony here on Wednesday. AICF president Nitin Narang made the announcement during the event.

Each player from the winning teams will receive Rs 25 lakh, while the coaches of the men's and women's teams, Abhijeet Kunte and Srinath Narayanan, will be rewarded with Rs 15 lakh each.

Grandmaster Dibyendu Barua, head of the Indian delegation, will receive Rs 10 lakh, and the assistant coaches will be rewarded Rs 7.5 lakh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier on Wednesday personally congratulated the champions, praising their dedication and impact on Indian sports. PTI

## Gujrathi forgoes title defence to meet PM

New Delhi: Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi has decided against defending his crown at the 10th Vugar Gashimov Memorial Chess Super Tournament in Azerbaijan for an audience with Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Wednesday.

Gujrathi had won the Azerbaijan event last year after outperforming compatriot Arjun Erigaisi.

Gujrathi took to 'X', formerly twitter, to inform that he reached Baku for the event but decided to return to India to meet Modi on learning about the felicitation function.

"I reached Baku and I got to know our Hon'ble PM wants to felicitate the Indian team. I was overjoyed when I heard this and I wanted to be a part of it. It's amazing at how such short notice he is taking out time for us," Gujrathi wrote. PTI

## SLOW-COURT PROBLEM

# For India's Next Gen to thrive, more hours needed in slower conditions

SHIVANI NAIK  
SEPTEMBER 25

■ At his absolute peak in 2017, Kidambi Srikanth was denied a charge at the World title, stopped by Korean Son Wan-ho in quarters, after the Indian just couldn't get his attacking game going in slow Glaswegian conditions.

■ 13-year-old girl prodigy Tanvi Patri, playing at Thailand last December on a sluggish slow court, was caught on the baseline with flat tosses by her opponent - as the older, powerful Thai could hit through the thick air, but the Indian is yet to gain strength.

■ India's contemporary finest Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty, cannot always leverage their power hitting in slow conditions. If opponents find it easy to retrieve their smashes and counter, they often run into walls costing them serious titles.

WHAT'S COMMON to them all? India's talented shuttlers, stroke-makers, dragged down (literally) by slow courts, once they play at varied arenas around the world.

Asian stadia - with their throbbing live audience and compulsorily switched-on air-conditioners - tend to offer faster favourable conditions. That explains India's success in

Indonesia, Thailand, and even China. But Europe in autumn or winters barely needs the blasting air, and the windless, slow stillness often proves to be the bane of Indians. As do larger events like Olympics and Worlds, which invariably are held in mammoth, sterile arenas that make conditions slower.

It's not uniformly debilitating for Indians, though slow courts were kryptonite for Srikanth, easily the country's finest fast court specialist.

On the other hand PV Sindhu, with her blazing power heft and work-rate till 2019, was largely conditions-agnostic, an all-courts beast. Saina Nehwal, with her anticipation and limitations in court coverage but sturdy power smash, actually benefitted from slow courts. Both had un-Indian power.

HS Prannoy is just way too brainy and skilled with versatile tactics, to not adapt, so he could tame these conditions, winning in Malaysia and a Worlds medal in Europe. Lakshya Sen is aided in his dashing defense on courts where the shuttle isn't whizzing around madly, but muscular opponents like Viktor Axelsen and Lee Zii Jia can just as easily hit through him, and wrap up matters closing out sets and matches in a blink.

But on the whole, going forward, Indian



Priyanshu Rajawat (L) and Ashmita Chaliha, Indian badminton's next gen. File



shuttlers need to be consciously prepared for slow courts. That's where big titles are invariably lost and won.

It might be the start of the European swing in badminton when October rolls in. But before the sporting action returns to Asia for the elite, and does its India-hopping from Lucknow to Guwahati to Cuttack for the mid-shuttlers in winter, there's a forward-planning organisational mull for every venue hosting badminton in the country. Are Indian

shuttlers not getting enough slow court conditions at home to prepare them for the international grind?

Hosting logistics are gargantuan by themselves. And for organisers of everything from the Super 750 India Open in Delhi right to the smaller cities hosting domestic junior rankings, the wider question of tweaking conditions to test and fortify Indian shuttlers for tough conditions isn't high on priority. But without hours on slow courts at home,

Indians will struggle abroad.

The entire aerodynamic science of shuttle speeds and drift and slow courts are anyway hugely difficult to contrive. But given it's winters, serious thought needs to be given to preparing venues that can start bolstering Indians' slow-court games.

This is an important turning for Priyanshu Rajawat, who's literally tuning into Srikanth Part Two - sensational strokeplay and hair-pulling frustrating errors, when his stick smashes don't fetch him immediate points. Son Wan-ho back in 2017 could play the ponderous defensive metronome style, and drive Srikanth crazy. Priyanshu now, has the even more classical Kunlavut Vitidsarn and hypnotic ennu of Kodai Naraoka, to contend with, in coming years.

Indians love stroke-making, and like indulgent wordsmiths, are in love with their own shots. You can't fault them, because it's beautiful badminton to watch. Sadly for them, opponents don't vibe along with this sentiment. And on slow courts, it's often the endless dull retrieving, as you can see the delight of a magnificently constructed follow-up at the net post a smash from Rajawat, get casually returned by the defensively sturdy opponents, and his eyes dim like a low-volt-

age bulb as the rally stretches on.

That same frustration of why the smashes aren't getting them points - like haunted Srikanth - also stalks a Treasa Jolly or Tanisha Crasto, who are slowly learning just how difficult it can be against opponents with reasonably good defense, if power-hitting is your go-to. You can see the slow court ghost actually paling Ashmita Chaliha's visage, another super stroke-maker humbled by these testing conditions.

India's upcoming juniors, growing up on a staple of fast conditions at home, praised for their lovely strokes, will need to be better trained to accept this sobering reality.

Axelsen has reigned supreme, but the next generation Europeans - Brian Yang, Julien Carraggi and the French armada, alongwith that Chinese Mjolinir-wielding Li Shifeng, will render slow courts even more treacherous. Shifeng is one-dimensional, but that one dimension, on sluggish courts, is deadly enough.

The best Indians can do is put in the court mileage and work on foot speed to not get caught, when their strokes don't yield instant returns. You need to be ready to play that one extra stroke - or even a dozen more. Slow courts are brutal on beautiful games.