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WANT SYRIAN-LED INCLUSIVE POLITICAL PROCESS: INDIA
PAGE 11



TEST RUN AT JEWAR AIRPORT

The first validation test flight for the upcoming Noida International Airport in Jewar, Uttar Pradesh, to verify if it meets safety and regulatory standards was conducted successfully on Monday. The airport, which is around 75 km from Delhi, is expected to start commercial operations from April next year.
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HASINA REMARKS CREATE TENSION: YUNUS Foreign Secys meet: Delhi flags plight of minorities, Dhaka says internal issue

India calls for constructive ties, mutual trust, raises attacks on religious sites



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with his Bangladesh counterpart Mohammad Jashim Uddin in Dhaka. ANI

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

IN THE first high-level visit by India since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government in August, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Jashim Uddin, in Dhaka on Monday and conveyed "India's concerns, especially those related to the safety and welfare of minorities". India also flagged "some regrettable incidents of attacks on cultural, religious and diplomatic properties". Referring to the alleged incidents against minorities as

"propaganda... false and misleading facts", Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary, on his part, responded that "other countries" should refrain from commenting on Dhaka's "internal matter". Misri, who also called on the Bangladesh Interim Government
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED
Message to Dhaka

THE VISIT reflects Delhi's willingness to engage with the post-Hasina reality. The message is clear: Dhaka must be responsive to Delhi's concerns, and not let strained ties impact bilateral development partnership.

Opp set to submit notice for resolution to impeach Dhankhar

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

THE UNEASY relationship that Opposition parties share with Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar is set to come to a head as the INDIA bloc parties have decided to submit a notice to move a no-confidence or impeachment resolution against him. The Opposition parties do not have the numbers in the House to ensure Dhankhar's impeachment as Vice-President but are contemplating the move "very soon" as a political signal.

Sources said MPs of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Samajwadi Party (SP)—parties that have not been attending the Congress-led protests outside Parliament on the Adani



Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar conducts proceedings, Monday. PTI

issue — have also signed the notice under Article 67(b) of the Constitution. This is the second such attempt by the Opposition parties this year. The resolution, however, should be moved with
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IN PARLIAMENT
PAGE 7

'Calm influence': Revenue Secy Sanjay Malhotra picked as next RBI Governor

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

SANJAY MALHOTRA, a 1990-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, currently Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, has been appointed as the next Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



Sanjay Malhotra, 1990-batch IAS, IIT-Kanpur, Princeton graduate; Shaktikanta Das

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Monday gave its nod for the selection of 56-year-old Malhotra as the 26th RBI Governor with effect from December 11 for a period of
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MORE REPORTS
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In Adani protests in Parliament, Cong takes gloves off, tries masks & jackets

ASAD REHMAN
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

MANICKAM TAGORE is a Congress MP from Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu; Shivaji Bandappa Kalge the party parliamentarian from Latur in Maharashtra.

On Monday, the two were
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Leader of Opposition in LS Rahul Gandhi with Congress MPs during a protest over the Adani row at Parliament. ANI

Big equestrian question lands in court: Are horses athletes or equipment?

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

IT IS "neigh" impossible to know what horses themselves think on the matter but the Delhi High Court was recently tasked with ascertaining if horses ought to be

categorised as "athletes" or "equipment", in the sport of equestrian.

The petitioner, Rajasthan Equestrian Association, wants voting rights for states, like every sport. They are locked in a long battle with the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI), which

insists that the sport is "peculiar" and cannot have a pyramidal governance framework of district and state bodies, given the infrastructure is niche, and requirements specific to horses.

The EFI says they are living beings, moody too, hence qualify
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EXPRESS RESEARCH

HOW THE CONSTITUTION OF BANGLADESH WAS ADOPTED AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF THE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Minorities, including Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and Ahmadiyyas, make up a significant portion of Bangladesh's population and are guaranteed rights under its Constitution

TECH

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EXPRESS AUDIO

India China ties, climate change at ICJ, and treating active landslide zones

In 3 Things today, first we talk about the current status of the Indo-China ties. Next, we discuss a case filed at the ICJ related to climate change and how we expect it to pan out. We also talk about a technology which is treating landslide zones in Uttarakhand.

Pune rape-murder: SC upholds HC order commuting convicts' death penalty to life

CHANDAN HAYGUNDE
PUNE, DECEMBER 9

CITING "INORDINATE delay in execution", the Supreme Court on Monday upheld the Bombay High Court (HC) order commuting the death penalty of two men — convicted of raping and murdering a 22-year-old BPO staffer in Pune in 2007 — to life imprisonment.

A bench comprising Justice Abhay S Oka, Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice Augustine George Masih dismissed the Maharashtra government's appeal challenging the HC judgment. The SC held that "keeping a convict in suspense while considering his mercy petitions by the Governor or the President for an inordinately long time will certainly cause agony to him/her. It creates adverse physical conditions and psychological stress on the convict."

While exercising its jurisdiction under Article 32 read with Article 21 of the Constitution, the SC stated that it "cannot excuse the agonising delay caused only on the basis of the gravity of the crime."

The SC also issued certain directions such as forming a dedicated cell by the home department or the prison department of the state governments and Union Territories for dealing with mercy petitions. "The dedicated cell shall be responsible for the prompt processing of the mercy petitions within the time frame laid down by the respective governments," the SC order stated.

"Justice has been denied to us. We have lost hope that daughters of this country will ever get justice. They will be savagely and brutally violated and murdered while the perpetrators continue to enjoy their life..." the brother-in-law of the 22-year-old told *The Indian Express*.

FROM PAGE ONE India, Bangladesh Foreign Secys meet

FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Chief Adviser, Muhammad Yunus, and Foreign Affairs Adviser, Mohammad Touhid Hossain, underlined India's support for a "democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive" Bangladesh. He conveyed India's willingness to build a "positive and constructive relationship" based on "mutual trust, respect and mutual sensitivity to each other's concerns and interests".

Speaking to reporters after his meeting with Misri, Jashim Uddin said people are free to practice any religion in Bangladesh. "We have also conveyed that this is our internal matter, and other countries should not comment on our internal matter. We also reminded that Bangladesh does not comment on internal issues of other countries, and others should also reciprocate that," he said. He also flagged the incidents of border firing leading to deaths, calling it "one life is too many". He emphasised the Teesta water sharing pact, and easing of visas for Bangladeshis for tourism and medical treatment in India.

The terse exchange gave an indication of the public posturing by Delhi and Dhaka on hot-button issues, reflecting the strain in bilateral ties.

Speaking to reporters in Dhaka, Misri said: "We also had the opportunity to discuss certain recent developments and issues, and I conveyed our concerns, including those related to the safety and welfare of minorities. We also discussed some regrettable incidents of attacks on cultural, religious and diplomatic properties."

During his meeting with Misri, Yunus described the India-Bangladesh relationship as "very solid" and "close". He asked India to help clear the "clouds" that have

cast a shadow over the relationship between the two neighbours in recent times, according to his office.

Yunus's office said he also raised the issue of Hasina. "Our people are concerned because she is making many statements from there. It creates tensions," he told Misri. He elaborated how students, workers and people joined hands in July-August to end Hasina's regime through the mass uprising. "Our job is to keep their dreams alive. It is a new Bangladesh," Yunus said, and briefly outlined the reform initiatives undertaken by the Interim Government.

The Ministry of External Affairs said Misri emphasised that "people are the main stakeholders" in India-Bangladesh relations, and noted that Delhi's development cooperation and multifaceted engagements with Dhaka, including in the areas of connectivity, trade, power, energy and capacity building, are all geared towards the benefit of the people of Bangladesh.

This emphasis on the "people of Bangladesh" is Delhi's nuancing of its approach, away from the previous government led by Hasina.

"Today's discussions have given both of us the opportunity to take stock of our relations, and I appreciate the opportunity to have had a frank, candid and constructive exchange of views with all my interlocutors. I emphasised that India desires a positive, constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with Bangladesh. We have always seen in the past, and we continue to see in the future, this relationship as a people-centric and people-oriented relationship, one that has the benefit of all the people as its central motivational force," Misri said.

"This is reflected on a daily basis in the development projects that have been executed on the ground in Bangladesh and that continue to be developed. It is also reflected in the mutually beneficial engagement we have on a whole set of issues ranging from trade, commerce, connectivity, power, water, energy, development cooperation, consular cooperation and cultural cooperation. There is no reason why this mutually beneficial cooperation should not continue to deliver in the interests of both our peoples," he said, indicating the strain in relations and the strategic imperatives that frame the foundation of the bilateral ties.

During the Foreign Office Consultations, the MEA said, both sides held "comprehensive discussions on a wide range of issues covering political and security matters, border management, trade, commerce and connectivity, cooperation in water, power and energy sectors, development cooperation, consular, cultural and people-to-people ties".

They also exchanged views on sub-regional, regional and multilateral issues, and agreed to enhance consultations and cooperation to advance regional integration, including under the BIMSTEC framework, it said.

The MEA said Misri's visit will "help in sustaining bilateral engagement between India and Bangladesh with a view to addressing concerns as well as advancing the substantive issues in the relationship".

Framing the discussions and its importance, Misri said consul-

Malhotra is next RBI Governor

three years.

The second term of current RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das is slated to end on December 10.

Sources said what worked in his favour was his "calm influence" and "intellectual acumen", two attributes that couldn't be more relevant than today. "He's not known for giving jerky inputs," said the source.

"Since the political changes in Bangladesh in August this year, there has, of course, been contact between our leaderships. The Prime Minister was the first world leader to greet the Chief Adviser on his assumption of office. The two of them had a very cordial telephone conversation thereafter, and the Chief Adviser also accepted the PM's invitation to speak at the third Voice of the Global South Summit that was held in August this year. Since then, the External Affairs Minister and the Foreign Affairs Adviser have also been in touch. They met each other on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September this year, and my visit follows those interactions and is the first Foreign Secretary-level structured engagement between the two sides following those developments," he said.

"To that end, therefore, I have underlined today India's desire to work closely with the Interim Government of Bangladesh... a constructive approach on all these issues by the Bangladesh authorities, and we look forward to moving the relationship forward in a positive, forward-looking and constructive direction," he said.

Ties between the two countries came under strain after Hasina was forced to flee to India following a massive anti-government protest in August. The relations deteriorated further in recent weeks over reports of attacks on Hindus and the arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das.

Intelligence (DRI).

As the Ex-Officio Secretary of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, Malhotra's mild demeanor, especially during disagreements between states and Centre in the Council's proceedings, were often appreciated by Ministers.

During his stint as a young IAS officer (1996-1998), Malhotra served as District Collector and District Magistrate in Chittoargarh. Later, in his posting with the Central government, Malhotra worked as Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power (2020-21). He then joined as the Chairman and Managing Director of Rural Electrification Corporation, following which he was appointed as Financial Services Secretary from February-October 2022 and, subsequently, as Revenue Secretary.

A Rajasthan-cadre officer, Malhotra comes with over three-decades of experience in the areas of power, finance and taxation, information technology and mines. As Principal Secretary, in-charge of Energy Department in Rajasthan, Malhotra was seen to be instrumental in appointment of distribution franchisees in four towns, introduction of PPP in transmission and innovations in metering, billing and collection. As Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Power, he dealt with transmission, distribution, reforms and restructuring and was involved in reforms, policy initiatives and privatisation of distribution utilities of union territories.

HC sets aside death penalty to man for murder of 4 of family in 1997

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court Monday set aside the death penalty awarded by a lower court to the key accused in the murder of four members of a family, including two children, 27 years ago in Pune.

A bench of Justices Bharati H Dangle and Manjusha A Deshpande dismissed a plea by

the state government seeking confirmation of the death sentence granted by a Pune court to Bhagwat Bajirao Kale in 2021 holding "no case was made out for confirming the death penalty". The HC found that Kale "does not deserve the death sentence," and allowed his appeal against the Pune court order.

During his meeting with Misri, Yunus described the India-Bangladesh relationship as "very solid" and "close". He asked India to help clear the "clouds" that have

Opp set to submit notice

at least 14 days' notice. The Winter Session of Parliament ends on December 20.

According to 67(b), "a Vice-President may be removed from his office by a resolution of the Council of States passed by the majority of all the then members of the Council and agreed to by the House of the People; but no resolution for the purpose of this clause shall be moved unless at least fourteen days' notice has been given of the intention to move the resolution."

A senior Opposition leader told *The Indian Express*, "Leave aside technicalities (like 14 days' notice), leave aside the fact that we don't have the numbers... a message has to go to the BJP they cannot ruin Parliament like this. We are fighting to save Parliament democracy." Asked when the Opposition was planning to submit the notice, another senior leader said "very soon".

"This government is murdering Parliament," said TMC's Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Sagarika Ghose. "They are scared because they do not have the answers to issues affecting common people. The BJP and the government are misusing high constitutional offices and making them subservient to executive power. The Opposition does not have the numbers in the RS, but this is a fight against all those who want to ruin our Parliamentary system. At stake is the integrity of our parliamentary democracy and the constitutional rights of every representative of the people."

The INDIA bloc parties together have 103 members in the House plus the support of Independent MP Kapil Sibal. The Opposition parties, which have been accusing Dhankhar of partisanship for some time, have been mulling submitting a notice for bringing an impeachment resolution since the last session.

They were also upset over Dhankhar naming Congress MP Abhishek Singhvi last week in the context of recovery of what he called a "wad of currency notes from the seat allotted to him".

Sources in the Opposition bloc said the opportunity given by the Chair to some of the ruling party members to raise the issue of alleged Congress links with a forum that is said to have received funds

Question in court: Are horses athletes or equipment?

as athletes. And the upkeep of stable and training infrastructure by the current electorate of rider clubs requires crores in investment, so anyone spending that amount deserves a vote.

Neither side mercifully has demanded voting rights for equines.

But the Rajasthan association contends "horses are just horses", whose hiring / transportation reimbursements get lumped with boats / yachts in the National Sports Code, and hence must be treated as equipment.

The court has been seized of the bigger battle and the matter remains subservient while submissions have been made. The fraternity is zapped, terming it all "absurd, nonsensical, illogical and bizarre".

Of course, the horse is a living athlete. But is it really?

Raghuvendra Singh Dundlod, the Rajasthan petitioner, contends that taxes are excused when horses are brought into the country, just like for cycles, yachts, rifles — all sports equipment. "No other country considers it an athlete. They are definitely equipment, but because it's a live being, you must feed it," he says.

A keen rider himself and promoter of indigenous horses, Dundlod, whose father was a cavalryman, demands to know

why no winning horse has ever been felicitated, if it indeed is an athlete.

"There's no medal or Arjuna award for a horse and no one saying, 'let's bring a horse a rosette, and say you have done well', like for athletes. I've never seen horses being felicitated after medals," he says. He harks back when a winning horse was draped in a celebratory jhool (horse rug) in Rajasthan.

Dundlod adds that equestrian allows a horse to be replaced once in competition, if it goes lame. "If a human athlete falls ill, they can't be replaced like equipment is," he stresses.

"They can say whatever, it is very much an athlete," says EFI general secretary Col Jaiver Singh, who insists that Para 16 of the National Sports Code clearly spells out the merits of exemptions granted for being a "peculiar sport".

"It is a peculiar sport because horses are live beings who need to be fed, given water, massaged, picked after, cleaned, taken for a walk. It's not an F-1 car that sits waiting in a garage."

He is dismayed at the suggestion that horses haven't gotten their due. "There's a victory lap, but horses need rest! They are taken good care of and pampered. An Arjuna would be taking it too far. But a lot of dog units and mules in service are hon-

Cong takes gloves off, tries masks & jackets

star performers as the Congress pumped up the drama around its protests over the Gautam Adani issue in Parliament. Tagore wore a Narendra Modi mask and Kalge one depicting Gautam Adani as, in a "spontaneous" decision, Rahul Gandhi interviewed them on the House premises over their "special relationship" — in what a Congress MP described as "a moment of creativity by all three of them".

The masks were the latest addition to the techniques the Congress has deployed in the Winter Session to highlight its campaign alleging favouritism towards the Adani Group under the Modi government. The party decided to turn to these after the first week of Winter Session was wiped out, with repeated adjournments meaning it could not raise the issue inside the House.

So last Monday began with the government and Opposition reaching an agreement to not stall proceedings in the House. The Congress was also urged by its own members and alliance partners, who wanted to raise other concerns in the House, to not be obstinate about the Adani issue.

A meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Strategy Group held the same day decided "to come up with new ways to highlight the Adani issue". "We were told by Rahul ji to come up with ideas. Since then, we have come up with different ways to make the protest more eye-catching," said a Congress MP, who was part of that meet. "This way, we are not stalling the House, and also bringing attention to an issue which we feel must reach the people."

On Tuesday and Wednesday last week, Congress leaders and MPs of other INDIA bloc parties came to the House bearing a big black banner reading: "Modi-Adani are one".

On Thursday, they wore black jackets with a sticker affixed: "Modi Adani ek hai, Adani safe hai (Modi-Adani are one, Adani is safe)". It was a play on Modi's preferred campaign slogan during the recent Maharashtra elections, "Ek hain toh safe hain". Rahul Gandhi stuck to his white T-shirt and khaki trousers look, fixing his sticker to the shirt.

On Friday, Congress MPs came to Parliament holding pocket copies of the Constitution and wearing anti-pollution masks that had on them a similar message: "Modi, Adani bhai bhai (Modi, Adani are brothers)".

A Congress MP said that another reason for the new style of protests was that "the press was not taking an active interest in the Adani issue, and we needed to change that".

Monday's "interview" certainly grabbed eyeballs, not the least because Gandhi was central to it. Several Congress MPs wore either the Modi or the Adani mask to Parliament Monday, and ensured that the cameras caught them hugging or shaking hands in the Parliament complex. "We wanted to show the partnership between the two," said a Congress MP who was part of the protest.

According to the MP, Gandhi then picked two of them — one wearing a "Modi" mask, and the other an "Adani" one — and led them closer to where the reporters were stationed, before doing an "impromptu" question-and-answer session.

"Aaj kal kya ho raha hai bhai (What is happening these days, brother)?" Gandhi began the conversation. Tagore as "Adani", with his arm around Kalge as "Modi", replied: "Main jo bhi bolta hoon, yeh kartaa hai. Main kuch bhi chahta hoon, port chahiye, airport chahiye (Whatever I say, he does. Whatever I want — airports, ports)..." Gandhi then asked, "What are you trying to get these days?" A pat Tagore replied: "We have a meeting in the evening."

Gandhi then asked about their relationship, to which Tagore said: "We are the same. We will do everything together... We have

been together for years." On their future, Tagore said: "India is nothing but me."

Why is he (Modi) not letting Parliament run "because of you (Adani)", Gandhi then asked Tagore. "That man is missing. Amit bhai didn't come to the House. We will have to ask Amit bhai," Tagore said. Asked by Gandhi next on why 'Modi' (that is, Kalge) was so quiet and was not talking much these days, Tagore said: "He is in tension." The Opposition MPs broke into laughter.

Congress MPs said that while the masks were a part of the plan, the interview by Gandhi was not. "Rahul ji just came and started asking questions to the two of them. It was all done in a matter of three-four minutes. Even the two MPs weren't expecting the questions and weren't prepared, but they went along," the Congress MP who hailed "the creativity" of the three said.

Party leaders said that since last week, during the meeting of Congress MPs at 10.15 am daily, there is a discussion on the next day's protest, and depending on the views of the MPs, an idea is finalised. A senior MP has been given the responsibility of sourcing and readying the material, whether masks, banners etc. "The MP is doing it with the help of Congress youth organisations, and he is the one who brings the material to Parliament every morning," said a colleague.

There is no question of easing up on Adani, party leaders indicated, talking about Gandhi's declaration at a press conference on November 21, days before the start of the Winter Session, that the issue will be among the key ones the party will raise.

If there is disappointment that allies like the SP and TMC are not participating in the protests, the party has put them aside.

A Congress MP said: "The country will see more such protests over the next few days. Maybe these will be more creative."

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13,353 applicants benefitted from camps to simplify PM-UDAY registration: L-G

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

MORE THAN 13,000 applicants have visited camps set up to simplify the process of registering houses in unauthorised colonies in the city under the Centre's Prime Minister-Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awasthi Adhikar Yojana (PM-UDAY) scheme.

The scheme, which was launched ahead of the 2020 Delhi Assembly polls, was off to a slow start. Lt Governor VK Saxena announced last month that special camps will be set up on weekends to expedite the process. The PM-UDAY scheme aims to grant ownership rights to residents of 1,731 unauthorised colonies.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) holds these camps every weekend and will continue until December 29 at 10 processing centres in unauthorised colonies.

A statement from the office of the L-G said 13,353 applicants have already visited the camps and most had their applications cleared and approved on the spot.

During the Lieutenant Governor's visit to a camp in Najafgarh last week, a number of people, while appreciating the initiative, had requested him to facilitate on-the-spot registrations for properties.

Following this, Saxena directed to ensure the presence of sub-registrars in the camps.

More than 2,000 new applications were filed in these camps. During the last two weeks, conveyance deeds/authorisation slips were issued for 506 applications and 21 deeds registered. Thousands of pending applications for regularisation were cleared of deficiencies and hundreds of them approved, the statement said.

Similar special camps were organised for clearing mutation of properties on grounds of inheritance and providing electricity connections to 14,000 applicants who faced long delays due to a land-pooling policy, it stated.

VALIDATION FLIGHT BY INDIGO CONDUCTED SUCCESSFULLY

Noida airport completes crucial flight test in run-up to 2025 ops

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

MARKING A key step in the run-up to the greenfield airport starting commercial operations early next year, the upcoming Noida International Airport (NIA) at Jewar in Gautam Buddha Nagar Monday successfully completed its validation flight procedures.

A validation flight is vital for testing and certifying airport approach and departure procedures for aircraft. It is essentially a test flight to validate that the landing and departure procedures, infrastructure readiness, navigational and communication systems for the new runway and the airport are fully compliant with regulatory and safety standards.

"The flight conducted by IndiGo, the launch carrier for the airport, verified the airport's approach procedures, confirming the accuracy and functionality of its navigational aids and air traffic control systems. This crucial step demonstrates NIA's adherence to the stringent safety and operational standards required for commercial operations. Following the validation flight, NIA will finalize the required documentation for aerodrome certification and submit it to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)," NIA said.

The airport will proceed with the next step, which is to apply for the aerodrome licence—the



Workers look on as the first validation flight (right) takes off from the Noida International Airport, Jewar, Monday. Abhinav Saha



approval from the DGCA to operate as an airport. Late August, NIA chief executive officer Christoph Schnellmann had said that the validation flight as well as aerodrome license application were scheduled for December.

The new airport, which will be the second major airport in the National Capital Region after Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), is expected to start commercial operations from April 2025. The upcoming airport is around 90 kilometres from IGIA.

NIA was earlier scheduled to start operations by the end of this year, but the timeline was extended due to delays in delivery of certain construction materials and equipment due to global supply chain constraints. The runway work for the up-

coming airport is complete and the calibration of the Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) — the critical step pertaining to runway operations before a validation flight — were successfully completed in October by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) with support from the DGCA. The airport's terminal and other supporting infrastructure is in an advanced stage of construction.

According to the NIA management, the new airport is seeing considerable interest from airlines — both domestic and overseas — for international flight operations, apart from domestic flights by Indian airlines.

In August, Schnellmann had said that domestic carriers that have already signed up for operations from the NIA — IndiGo and Akasa Air — seemed keen to not just mount domestic flights from the new greenfield airport, but international ones as well.

Schnellmann had said that NIA was in talks with Air India and other domestic as well as international carriers for flight operations from the airport. The airport's terminal has been designed as an integrated terminal for domestic as well as international operations, which means that on its part, the airport will be ready for international operations from day one.

The first phase of NIA — with one runway and one terminal — will have the capacity to handle 1.2 crore passengers annually. Eventually, after the completion of the fourth phase, the airport will have the capacity to manage 70 million passengers per year.

The airport, a marquee project for the Uttar Pradesh government, is being developed by Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (YIAPL), a fully owned subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG. YIAPL is also the operator of the airport over a 40-year concession period that started on October 1, 2021. Schnellmann is the chief executive of YIAPL. NIA will connect the greater Delhi area and western UP with flights and is expected to complement IGIA in servicing demand from the region.

HC stays removal of AAP's Nasir as Bar Council of Delhi vice-chairman

SOHINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9



Sanjeev Nasir

THE DELHI High Court Monday stayed a resolution of the Bar Council of India (BCI) that removed AAP legal cell chief, advocate Sanjeev Nasir, as the vice-chairman of the Bar Council of Delhi (BCD) pending the completion of an inquiry into the authenticity of his law degree.

Justice Sanjeev Narula passed the interim order on Nasir plea challenging the resolution dated December 7. The matter will be taken up next on January 21, 2025.

Nasir was removed over alleged irregularities in his LLB degree and potential fabrication of related records. BCI has resolved to take "immediate and decisive action in the matter concerning

allegations of irregularities in the LLB (Hons) Degree issued to Sanjeev Nasir... by Devi Ahilyabai Vishwavidyalaya, Indore", it stated on December 8. On September 3, an inquiry by a sub-committee flagged many alleged discrepancies in his degree, including that the law programme at the college was unauthorised, alleged tampering of records, and that the law degree was introduced after BCI regulations in 2008 (whereas Nasir's degree is dated 1988). The sub-committee was constituted following the Delhi High Court directions in a writ petition earlier

this year. The inquiry had revealed "significant and glaring discrepancies in the records relating to Mr. Sanjeev Nasir's Degree". BCI accused university officials of "non-cooperation and obstructive behaviour" during the inquiry. The council directed its secretary to approach the CBI "with the request to hold an immediate investigation into the authenticity of the LLB (Hons) degree" of Nasir. Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, on behalf of Nasir, submitted that no notice was issued before his removal. The decision taken by BCI "They don't even have power to remove me and (that too) pending investigation, which is yet to start... Power is given to BCD to conduct elections and (by virtue of) that power, BCD has the power to remove. BCI does not have the power," Pahwa submitted.

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GLOBAL E-TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF UREA

NFL invites bids for supply of Urea (Fertilizer grade) on account of Government of India. Tender (E-tender No. - 2024.NFL.218605.1) shall be available on the websites www.nationalfertilizers.com or <https://etenders.gov.in/> eprocure/app from 09.12.2024. The last date for submission of bids is 14:00 HRS IST, 19.12.2024 and Techno-commercial bid will be opened on 14:30 HRS IST, 20.12.2024.

For more details, visit the above mentioned websites. Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, shall be published only on above websites.
Dy. General Manager-I/c (II&IP)

B N Yugandhar Centre for Rural Studies
Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration
Mussoorie - 248 179

The following vacancies of the Centre are to be filled for a period of one year (extendable based on the satisfaction of Centre Director and subject to fund availability) on contract basis:

Sl. No.	Name of Post	No. of Post	Remuneration (INR)
1	Consultant IT & GIS	01	1,00,000/-
2	Research Scholars	02	70,000/-

Last date of Application: 24 December, 2024.
Detailed advertisement related to eligibility, nature of work, etc. can be seen at https://www.lbsnaa.gov.in/lbsnaa_sub/upload/675687f8bb68Advertisement%20of%20vacant%20post.pdf
Centre Director

Petronet LNG Limited
Regd. Office: World Trade Centre, Babar Road, Barakhamba Lane, New Delhi - 110001
Phone: 011-23411411, CIN: L74899DL1998PLC093073
Email: investors@petronetltd.in, Company's website: www.petronetltd.in
PAN: AAACP8148D GST: 07AAACP8148D1Z1

REQUEST TO THE SHAREHOLDERS FOR REGISTRATION / UPDATION OF EMAIL ADDRESSES

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

Further, pursuant to Regulation 17(1C) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, approval of shareholders for appointment or re-appointment of a director on the board or as a manager is required to be obtained either at the next general meeting or within a time period of three months from the date of appointment, whichever is earlier. Pursuant to Regulations 25(2A) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the appointment, re-appointment or removal of an independent director shall be subject to the approval of shareholders by way of a special resolution. Therefore, the approval of shareholders shall be obtained through the said Postal Ballot within statutory time limit.

In view of the above and pursuant to General Circular nos. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021, 20/2021 dated December 8, 2021, 3/2022 dated May 5, 2022, 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022, 09/2023 dated September 25, 2023 and 09/2024 dated September 19, 2024, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars"), (including any statutory amendment(s), modification(s), variation(s) or re-enactment(s) thereof for the time being in force, and as amended from time to time), the company is bound to provide a process of registration of e-mail addresses of members and state so in its public notice.

Accordingly, the Company urges its members to register/update their email addresses in the following manner, so as to receive the Notice of Postal Ballot/ Shareholders' Meeting and other related communications through email:

- Members holding shares in dematerialised mode, who have not registered/updated their email addresses with their Depository Participants, are requested to register/update their email addresses with the Depository Participants with whom they maintain their demat account.
- Members holding shares in physical mode, who have not registered/updated their email addresses are requested to register/update their email address by submitting Form ISR-1 (available on the website of the company at www.petronetltd.in) duly filled and signed along with requisite supporting documents to RTA i.e. Bigshare Services Private Ltd. at Office no. S6-2, 6th Floor, Pinnacle Business Park, Next to Ahura Centre, Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400093.

For Petronet LNG Limited
Sd/-
Rajan Kapur
Company Secretary

Place : New Delhi
Date : 09.12.2024

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SKY WATCH
December 10
Smog/moderate fog in the morning and night. Mainly clear sky.
MAX: 23 1.8°C below normal
MIN: 7 2.6°C below normal

DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: SISODIA TO FIGHT FROM NEW SEAT, 5 MCD COUNCILLORS FIND A SPOT

In 2nd list of 20 candidates, AAP drops 13 sitting MLAs

MALLICA JOSHI & JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

THE AAP has dropped 13 sitting MLAs in its second list of 20 candidates ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections that are expected to take place in February next year. The party has also switched the seats of two sitting MLAs, Manish Sisodia and Rakhi Bidlan. While former Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia will contest from Jangpura instead of Patparganj, Deputy Speaker Bidlan will contest from Madipur instead of Mangolpuri.

AAP had announced 11 candidates in the first list. The party has, so far, dropped 16 sitting legislators in the two lists it has declared. This does not include Chandni Chowk MLA Parlad Singh Sawhney and Krishna Nagar MLA SK Bagga whose sons have replaced them.

Facing what most of its leaders believe is its toughest election yet, the AAP's second candidate list is an indication of what comes next. "The second list has ripped the bandaid off. It is also the list where the most widespread changes have been seen. It is a clear indication that MLAs whose popularity has dipped are going to be replaced. The only criteria for candidate selection this time are popularity and winnability. We have decided to drop anyone who has a negative image among the people, be it for any reason," said a senior party leader.

On the list are also five sitting MCD councillors of the party, including its leader of the House in the MCD Mukesh Goel who will contest from Adarsh Nagar. "Councillors actively working in these constituencies were

THE 20 CANDIDATES WHO MADE THE CUT

JANGPURA Manish Sisodia Replaces: Praveen Kumar	MUNDKA Jasbir Karala Replaces: Dharampal Lakra	DEOLI Prem Kumar Chauhan Replaces: Prakash Jarwal
TIMARPUR Surender Pal Singh Bittu Replaces: Dilip Pandey	MANGOLPURI Rakesh Jatav Dharamrakshak Replaces: Rakhi Bidlan	TRILOKपुरI Anjana Parcha Replaces: Rohit Kumar
PATPARGANJ Avadh Ojha Replaces: Manish Sisodia	ROHINI Pradeep Mittal Sitting MLA: BJP's Vijender Gupta	GANDHI NAGAR Naveen Choudhary (Deepu) Replaces: Anil Kumar Bajpai
KRISHNA NAGAR Vikas Bagga Replaces: SK Bagga	PATEL NAGAR Parvesh Ratan Replaces: Raaj Kumar Anand	SHAHDARA Jitender Singh Shunty Replaces: AAP's Ram Niwas Goel
MADIPUR Rakhi Bidlan Replaces: Girish Soni	JANAKपुरI Pravin Kumar Replaces: Rajesh Rishi	MUSTAFABAD Adil Ahmad Khan Replaces: Haji Yunus
NARELA Dinesh Bhardwaj Replaces: Sharad Kumar Chauhan	BIJWASAN Surender Bharadwaj Replaces: BS Joon	CHANDNI CHOWK Punardeep Singh Sawhney (Saby) Replaces: Parlad Singh Sawhney
ADARSH NAGAR Mukesh Goel Replaces: Pawan Sharma	PALAM Joginder Solanki Replaces: Bhavna Gaur	

chosen based on their performance, as the party has been consistently gathering micro-feedback from the public in every seat... Based on public feedback and the positive performance of

these councillors, the party has decided to field them as candidates," AAP Delhi Convener, Gopal Rai said. AAP has, so far, given 13 tickets (out of 31) to leaders who

have joined from other parties. This includes Brahm Singh Tanwar (Chhatarpur) and Jitender Singh Shunty (Shahdara) from BJP, and Surender Singh Bittu (Timarpur)



AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, Monday. Tashi Togyal

and Chaudhary Zubair Ahmed (Seelampur) from Congress.

The replacements in Timarpur and Shahdara did not come as a surprise as sitting MLAs Dilip Pandey and Ram Niwas Goel had opted out of the race last week.

Deoli MLA Prakash Jarwal, who was recently convicted by a Delhi court in an abetment to suicide case, is among AAP's three-time MLAs to be dropped. Bidlan, who has won from Mangolpuri thrice, also has a new constituency to fight from.

Jangpura's Praveen Kumar, a two-time MLA, has also been dropped, with three-time MLA Sisodia replacing him.

Among the candidates, two have been declared in seats where the BJP is in power - Rohini and Gandhi Nagar.

Asked about the possibility of sitting MLAs rebelling against the party's decision, a senior party leader said, "These possibilities will exist in every party but we have to see what the best decision for us is. Loyal members have stuck with the party through thick and thin and are with the party even in this decision. There may be a few disgruntled elements but we are confident in our decision."

Why AAP chose Jangpura to field its second-in-command

MALLICA JOSHI & JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

TWO WEEKS AGO, former deputy CM Manish Sisodia rushed to Jangpura's JJ cluster near Sundar Nursery late in the evening. Minutes later, as it emerged that BJP leaders were visiting unauthorised colonies and slum clusters as part of its Delhi Assembly election campaign, sitting MLA Praveen Kumar and Greater Kailash MLA Saurabh Bharadwaj also joined Sisodia.

Sisodia sat amid people whose houses had been razed in a demolition drive. Some had documents showing they had lived in the area for decades. The visit was the clearest indication that he would pick a different seat to contest this time.

Jangpura is traditionally considered a Sikh-Punjabi majority area. In its maiden election in 2013, AAP fielded Maninder Singh Dhir who won and went on to become the Speaker. But he joined the BJP ahead of the 2015 election.

AAP then turned to Praveen Deshmukh, popularly called Praveen Kumar, who has been with the party since its India Against Corruption days, a party insider said. He was also the one behind Dhir's campaign in 2013. While Dhir got 37% of the vote share in 2013, Praveen bettered it to 48% in 2015 and 50% in 2020.

On Monday, after he was dropped from the list, Praveen shared on X, "The father of the education revolution in Delhi,



Manish Sisodia at Jangpura's JJ cluster. X/@msisodia

Manish Sisodia was kept in jail for 17 months by BJP's puppet ED-CBI by implicating him in fake cases. This was not only an injustice but also a conspiracy to suppress the voice of the people. I told Manish ji that the people of Jangpura will answer this injustice. We will make him victorious by a large number of votes... I stand shoulder to shoulder with Manish ji in this fight."



hit a speed bump," another party leader said.

After his name was announced, Sisodia wrote to party volunteers from Jangpura, saying he is committed to ensure education, safety, cleanliness and access to basic needs without any hindrance.

Termining Patparganj the birthplace of his political career, Sisodia said he left it for Avadh Ojha, who joined the party last week and had expressed a desire to contest from there. "...I was deeply moved by his vision. I realised that I should respect his wish to begin his journey from there," Sisodia wrote.

The BJP called Sisodia a "fugitive" and said the change in his seat reflects the disquiet in AAP ahead of the polls. The Congress, meanwhile, said Sisodia had to change his seat because he was not able to address the problems of the people of Patparganj.

In BJP camp, candidates yet to be finalised; party confident of 'direct fight' in 40+ seats

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

EVEN AS it is still identifying potential candidates for the Delhi Assembly elections, the Delhi BJP is "confident" it has a "direct fight on more than 40" of the Capital's 70 constituencies.

Sources, citing internal surveys, said the BJP foresees bright prospects on "40-47 seats" depending on separate scenarios. Currently, the party has seven MLAs in the 70-member House. "If AAP and Congress form an alliance, our surveys posit the BJP will be neck and neck with them in 47 Assembly constituencies since the vote is likely to be split internally between both parties," a senior BJP leader said. "On the other hand, given the



Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva. Express

current scenario where the AAP, BJP and Congress are in a three-corner fight, the surveys predict a direct contest between the AAP and BJP on around 40 seats. There are only a handful of seats such as New Delhi, Okhla, Greater Kailash and Malviya Nagar, among others, where the AAP is considered comfortably ahead for the time

being," the leader added.

The BJP core committee comprising its national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, Delhi BJP general secretary (organisation) Pawan Rana, Delhi incharge Baijayant Panda, MPs Harsh Malhotra, Manoj Tiwari, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Yogender Chandoliya and senior leaders Arvinder Singh Lovely, Dushyant Gautam, Leader of Opposition Vijender Gupta and former Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay, among others, met at the party's state headquarters Monday.

According to party insiders, discussions so far included the names of Sachdeva as a potential pick from Patparganj, Krishna Nagar or Kasturba Nagar; former DCW chief Barkha Shukla Singh

or Anil Sharma from R K Puram; Impreet Bakshi from Jangpura; Satish Upadhyay from Malviya Nagar; former West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma from New Delhi; incumbent MLA Anil Bajpai from Gandhi Nagar; Arvinder Singh Lovely from Krishna Nagar; Manjinder Singh Sirsa from Rajouri Garden; and Ravinder Lohia from Delhi Cantt.

The list will be revealed only after the final go-ahead from the national leadership this week. "The State Election Committee is likely to meet either Tuesday or Wednesday which will be followed by a meeting of the Central Election Committee to be presided by the Prime Minister, Home Minister and Defence Minister, by December 14 or 15. The first list is likely to be announced the same day," a source said.

At Patparganj, locals split on Sisodia's shift

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

IN PATPARGANJ Monday, there was a mixed response to former Deputy Chief Minister and AAP leader Manish Sisodia not contesting from his home turf for next year's Delhi Assembly polls - those who are disillusioned by the three-time MLA said he wouldn't have won this time; the other camp expressed faith that he would win no matter where he contests.

Sisodia has been fielded from Jangpura; Avadh Ojha, a UPSC coaching teacher who joined AAP last week, is the Patparganj candidate.

"What has he (Sisodia) done to develop this area? Nothing," said Radhaya Shyam, a security guard outside a gated community in Mayur Vihar Phase 1. "The roads are broken, sewers are



Patparganj constituency has a mixed population. Archive

overflowing, there is no cleanliness, and traffic is a big issue."

He didn't know Sisodia decided to switch seats. "It's good. In any case, he would have lost the polls here," Shyam quipped.

Situated between the Delhi-Meerut Expressway and Noida Link Road, the Patparganj constituency has a mixed population - businessmen, government employees, and a

substantial chunk of the working class. Among its 2.3 lakh population, Uttarakhandis comprise 22%, Purvanchalis 15%, Brahmmins 15%, Punjabis 12%, Muslims 9%, Gujjars 7%, Vaishyas 8% and Schedule Castes 7%.

A few kilometres ahead, Renu Kumar, who sells earthen pots near Shashi Garden, said the AAP has done a lot for "poor people like us". "They ensured free education for our children. They have given us free electricity which is a huge help..."

Kumar too was unaware that Sisodia wouldn't be contesting from the constituency this time. "I believe he (Sisodia) will win wherever he contests this election. People like me will always support AAP."

Near Patparganj village, Rakesh Kumar, who works in a small cafe in Acharya Niketan, was sure Sisodia would have lost the polls here.

"People do not perceive him the same way as earlier," he said. "...First, it is because of the liquor scam. He went to jail. Then, there is this issue of inflated electricity bills. I have one AC and my monthly bill used to be Rs 1,500-Rs 2,000. This summer, it went up to Rs 4,000 even though I used it only a few hours at night."

Kumar also raised the condition of the roads in his locality. "Look at the Akshardham flyover and Noida link road, it is broken. Sisodia was the PWD minister before going to jail? We complained many times but this road stretch is yet to be repaired."

Ashek Kapoor, a retired businessman who lives in Pandav Nagar, said he isn't happy with Sisodia's decision. "He could not do much because the BJP did not let him. They put him in jail in a false case..." He said Sisodia was always accessible to the public, especially the poor.

Panic grips Capital as 40 schools get hoax bomb emails again

Students evacuated, emails declared a hoax; political war of words ensues

SAKSHI CHAND & SOPHIYA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

A BOMB threat sent en masse to nearly 40 schools across Delhi sent security personnel on high alert Monday, sparking panic among parents even as students and staff were evacuated. The threat was sent in a single email, demanding USD 30,000, to top schools including DPS R K Puram, DPS Vasant Kunj, GD Goenka Paschim Vihar, The British School, Salwan Public School, Modern School, Cambridge School, and multiple DAV schools, late last night.

Multiple agencies - Delhi Police, Bomb Disposal Squads (BDS), and the Delhi Fire Services - promptly dispatched personnel to the affected campuses to carry out a thorough sweep. Following all checks and protocol, police said nothing suspicious was found.

This is the latest in a series of hoax bomb threats targeting key institutions - schools, colleges, hospitals, airports and airlines - in the Capital over the past eight months. Police are yet to make a breakthrough in any of the cases. Monday's incident also prompted

a political firestorm, with the AAP and the BJP levelling allegations.

"In the morning, there was a threat to blow up schools... last week, a utensils businessman was gunned down... Delhi has never seen a situation like this," said AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal. "Today, I demand that Amit Shah ji come to Delhi, sit among the people, and assure them about what is being done for their security."

Chief Minister Atishi wrote on X: "After the daily incidents of ransom, murders, firing in Delhi, now threats of bombing of schools are being received. The law and order situation in Delhi has never been so bad before. The BJP-ruled central government has failed in its only task of providing security to the people of Delhi."

In response, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said it is regrettable that former CM Kejriwal is giving undue publicity and encouragement to hoax threat callers. "Delhi Police and schools concerned have taken them all seriously and to date, no mishap has been allowed to happen," he added. Police said cybercrime teams are working to trace the sender of the emails.

HOAX CALLS, BLASTS OVER PAST EIGHT MONTHS

MAY 1: 150 schools in Delhi-NCR got a bomb threat message on their official IDs, prompting mass evacuations of schools. It was declared a hoax.

MAY 12: 8 city hospitals got hoax messages.

MAY 14: Four more hospitals targeted

MAY 23: 15 colleges across Delhi received bomb threats; all were later declared a hoax

AUGUST: 100 hospitals and malls across the Capital received emails containing bomb threats

OCT 20: Blast outside CRPF school in Rohini's Prashant Vihar, no casualties



Parents outside ASN Senior Secondary School; (right) police at Mother Mary's School, Monday. Tashi Togyal

NOV 28: Low-intensity explosion in front of a sweet shop near a park in Prashant Vihar

Events of Monday

The first alert came from GD Goenka School in Paschim Vihar at 6.15 am, followed by DPS RK Puram reporting a similar threat at 7 am, said police.

The emails, sent at 11.38 pm on Sunday, claimed bombs had

been placed in the schools. "I planted multiple bombs inside the building. The bombs are small and hidden very well. It will not cause very much damage to the building, but many people will be injured when the bombs detonate. You all deserve

to suffer and lose limbs. If I do not receive \$30,000 I will detonate the bombs," it read.

In the email, a group called "E2=80=9CKNR=E2=80=9D", claimed responsibility. On June 18, when several airports received bomb threat e-mails, the same

group claimed responsibility.

The fire department said it first received a call at 6.15 am from GD Goenka School, Paschim Vihar, followed by DPS RK Puram at 7.06 am. This was followed by 11 other calls till 9.44 am. Around noon, they got a 14th

call from AIIMS and Safdarjung Airport regarding a bomb threat.

School authorities were quick to respond, alerting parents and evacuating the premises immediately.

L V Sehgal, Principal of Bal Bharati Public School, Ganga Ram Hospital Marg, which received the threat mail, emphasised that schools need to remain "active" in such circumstances.

"The information was immediately communicated to the area SHO and we took guidance from officials. A bomb squad arrived which checked the area for 15-30 minutes... advisories were sent to parents, informing them that 'there is no need to panic and that the school is functioning in a normal, safe manner'."

He added, "Unlike last time... when a similar threat was received a few months ago, there was no commotion this time as parents are also aware now. We have advised them to remain cautious and not panic and assured them about the safety of their wards. In such circumstances, students are also reassured of their safety immediately."

Salwan Public School at Old Rajinder Nagar also received the email. School Principal Priyanka Barara said, "Our first response was to inform the police... we evacuated the children immediately; our priority was to bring them out of the school building.

The students know the drill. Parents were also informed."

DAV Public School, Sreshtha Vihar, did not receive the mail as per school authorities, but precautions were taken to ensure safety. Principal Suhasini K Nath said, "As a precautionary step, a team of officials checked the school premises. Our school functioned normally. We communicated with parents well in time."

Where do previous cases stand?

On May 1, around 150 schools received bomb threats that turned out to be hoaxes. Weeks later, the Delhi airport and hospitals across the city also received bomb threats via email. In August, over 100 hospitals and malls across the Capital received emails containing bomb threats.

The Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit, which was investigating the case, hit a roadblock after the mail domain was traced to Russia. As per officials, it was not clear if the emails were from the country.

"Such emails are usually sent through virtual private networks (VPN), in which the IP is masked and several locations popped up. It is very difficult to track the exact location. We had also taken help from central agencies but nothing concrete has emerged so far," a police officer said.

CONG-SOROS LINK, ADANI Both Houses disrupted as BJP and Cong trade charges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

BOTH HOUSES of Parliament could not function due to repeated adjournments Monday as the Treasury and the Opposition traded charges over the Adani issue and the allegations linking top Congress leaders with organisations funded by US billionaire investor George Soros.

Deadlocked: Why there are few windows open in this House

LIZ MATHEW NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

PARLIAMENT WITNESSED one more day of disruptions Monday as the Treasury and Opposition Benches clashed over the BJP's accusation that top Congress leaders were "colluding" with billionaire investor George Soros to "destabilise" the country.

leader AB Bardhan, for example, often narrated how in 2003 then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee invited the Left leaders for tea to seek their support to resolve a diplomatic issue between India and the US.



RS Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar with BJP chief J P Nadda, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and other MPs.

Under the Narendra Modi government, almost every Parliament Session has been marked by similar antagonism on both sides, with the channels of communication that earlier allowed the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to get past such disagreements having dried up.

Senior MPs also talk about the good networks previous Parliamentary Affairs Ministers such as Pramod Mahajan of the BJP and Priya Ranjan Damsuni of the Congress cultivated across the aisles, which came in handy to break the ice.

The breakdown of ties is equally visible from the Opposition side, particularly the new Congress. Again, here too, it is old-world leaders such as the late Mulayam Singh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party and the National Conference's Farooq Abdullah who are the few still remembered for warm ties with leaders cutting across party lines.

its allies over its insistence on raising the Adani issue - to the exclusion of all else. The INDIA bloc's SP and Trinamool Congress have already disassociated themselves from the Adani protests, and want the House floor to be used to raise other issues such as the Sambhal mosque violence and Bangladesh.

BJP asks Congress, Sonia to come clean on charges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

STEPPING UP its attack on the Congress, the BJP on Monday accused the party and its top leader Sonia Gandhi of colluding with forces that seek to "destabilise India".



Addressed reporters at BJP office

There are four co-presidents, including Sonia Gandhi as chairperson of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. What is this forum saying? It says that democracy is getting over in India.

and interviews a member of a Pakistani think tank on the matter. The website says the financial support for this comes from Soros Foundation. George Soros is the same person who has put up 1 billion dollars to destabilise the Modi government...

the Congress was one of collusion with foreign forces, Trivedi recalled that former Minister of External Affairs K Natwar Singh had, in his book, referred to a letter he wrote to Sonia Gandhi about American infiltration in Indian intelligence agencies.

Government of India Ministry of Corporate Affairs Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE) IICA Building, 7th Floor, Plot P-6,7,8, Sector-5, IMT Manesar, Gurgaon, Haryana-122050.

FORM No. STK -6 PUBLIC NOTICE [Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016]

Reference: (1) In the matter of striking off or removal of names of (23) companies in the state of Delhi under section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 in respect of:

Table with columns: S.No, Work Item, CIN, Company Name. Lists 23 companies for removal of names.

(2) Notice is hereby given that the Registrar of Companies has received applications from the above-mentioned companies under section 248(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 for removal of its/their name (s) from the register of companies...

Irkan Tirkey Assistant Registrar Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit

भारतीय सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, पुणे Indian Institute of Information Technology, Pune

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR THE POST OF ADJUNCT ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (AAP) (ON TEMPORARY BASIS) WALK-IN-INTERVIEW DATE: 19-12-2024 (Only in Physical mode) VENUE: Board Room, IIIT Pune, Survey No: 9/1/3, Ambegaon Budruk, Sinhgad Institute Road, Pune - 411041, Maharashtra

Indian Institute of Information Technology, Pune (IIITP) is one of the 20 Indian Institutes of Information Technology established under Public-Private Partnership Scheme by Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India.

Table with columns: Post, Department, Qualifications, No. of Post. Lists 3 positions for Adjunct Assistant Professor.

Note: These positions are purely on a temporary and contractual basis for a period of 11 months, may be extended based on performance. The Number of posts may vary as per Institutional requirement.

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank Recovery Department Circle Office, GM Road Darbhanga-846004

Notice is hereby given that the following Borrower's M/s Hollywood Collection, Prop.- Rajeev Kumar (Borrower) has defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank...

Table with columns: S.No, Name of the Borrower, Details of Properties/ Address of Secured Assets to be Enforced, Date of Notice, Amount outstanding. Lists 1 borrower with details of secured assets.

legations against the Congress high command, leaving the latter with little choice but to launch into fresh protests.

Sources said this counter-strategy by the BJP was decided by a core group of the party, with many of its own MPs and leaders of alliance parties such as the TDP and JD(U) not in the loop.

The decision to up the ante on the Soros issue was surprising as the BJP had first raised it during the previous Lok Sabha, in 2023. Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections also, the BJP fielded senior spokespersons who accused Gandhi of taking the support of people who were close to or financially supported by Soros.

The fact that the BJP linked Soros this time to the OCCRP (Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project), which had come out with a report against the Gautam Adani Group, showed that the party was not going to be defensive about the businessman in the face of the Congress's aggression.

The Congress Monday said that the real conspiracy unraveling in the Winter Session is that the government is willing to put at stake even India's ties with the US to save Adani. After the BJP accused the US State Department of trying to "destabilise India" through part funding OCCRP that, it said, "targeted" Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

the US Embassy in New Delhi had expressed its displeasure. But more than the Soros line of attack, what has stunned some BJP ministers is the "cash" charge against Singhvi.

As per normal practice, if anything is found inside the chambers following a sitting, the Marshals or the Parliament Watch and Ward staff bring it to the attention of the member concerned. Leaders said they could not recall a single instance in the past of the presiding officer of the House (in this case, Dhankhar) making an announcement regarding this, and that too just when the House met for the day.

Incidentally, this follows the transfer of security duties of Parliament House to the CISF, from the Parliament Secretariat. While the Secretariat is an independent body, the CISF falls under the Union Home Ministry.

Senior MPs asked in private why Singhvi or any other member sitting in the same row as him in the Rajya Sabha was not contacted over the cash, or why efforts were not made to determine how the money landed in the chambers from the numerous CCTV cameras covering the premises.

Sources said that Dhankhar's remarks that an investigation was on into whether the cash was "fake" meant that the rightful owner may be reluctant to come forward to claim the money.

An MP quipped, only half-jokingly: "Anything can be kept on my table - weed to condom - to create a story."

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल पर्यावरण भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

EXPRESS Careers

If you are a Leader with a Dream, You Belong Here Nirmal Bhartia School is seeking a passionate, self-motivated, dynamic and creative candidate for the post of Principal

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SAD rebel faction dissolved, SGPC chief flags legal hurdles in Akal Takht directive

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, DECEMBER 9

AKALI DAL rebel faction Sudhar Lehar was officially dissolved Monday, with its leaders expressing readiness to rejoin the Shiromani Akali Dal in compliance with the directive of the Akal Takht. However, SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami raised concerns about technical challenges in implementing the directive,

complicating the reorganisation process. The Sudhar Lehar, launched earlier this year by dissidents demanding Sukhbir Singh Badal's resignation as president of the 104-year-old party, held its final meeting in Amritsar. The leaders decided to disband the group, created to advocate for reforms within SAD's organisational structure. The movement gained momentum after Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh recently directed its dissolution and initiated a six-month

membership drive to restructure SAD and elect new office-bearers. Dhami, tasked with overseeing the reorganisation, acknowledged challenges posed by EC guidelines. "There are some technical issues in the directions given by Sri Akal Takht Sahib. We have discussed these concerns internally and informed Jathedar Sahib. The ECI guidelines for a recognised political party must be considered. Legal advice should also be sought to ensure compliance," he said.

Lankesh case witness says accused showed locations used to plot attack on Nayak

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, DECEMBER 9

A WITNESS in the 2017 murder case of journalist Gauri Lankesh last week testified in a special court that in 2018, he witnessed the identification of a location in Mangalore where a member of a right-wing crime syndicate, arrested for the murder, claimed to have stayed to plot an attack on nationalist Narendra Nayak in 2016.

The 58-year-old witness told the special court on December 5 that he was called on July 28, 2018, by the police to be a witness to places shown in Mangalore by alleged arms trainer Rajesh Bangera for a crime syndicate as locations used for surveillance on a fresh target and training shooters.

The panchnama witness (a person who testifies to the details of a crime scene investigation recorded in a document called a panchnama) identified Bangera, 56, accused number eight in the murder of Lankesh, as the person who claimed to have provided arms training to shooters in Mangalore and also conducted surveillance over the activities of Nayak.

Bangera is alleged to have trained the shooter accused in the murder, Parashuram Waghmore, a former Sri Rama Sena activist from the Vijayapura region, and other youths from Karnataka and Maharashtra recruited by a crime syndicate between 2012 and 2018 to use guns to carry out killings.

Bangera took the police team and witnesses to a secluded place on the Vita road, where he claimed to have trained a few youths in the usage of guns and subsequently to a location near the Mangla

stadium in Mangalore, where he claimed to have conducted surveillance over Nayak for two days, the witness told the court.

A Karnataka Special Investigation Team (SIT) has arrested 17 people on the shooting of Lankesh on the doorstep of her home in Bengaluru on the night of September 5, 2017.

The SIT filed a 9,235-page chargesheet on November 23, 2018, in the case, stating that the murder was carried out by an organised crime syndicate group whose key members acted according to principles and guidelines outlined in a book called Kshatra Dharma Sadhana published by the radical right-wing Hindutva group the Sanatan Sanstha.

The trial in the case has been underway since July 2022, and 11 of the 17 accused have been granted bail because of a delay in proceedings.

For the first time, the trial has been held over two consecutive weeks since December 4. The SIT has indicated in its chargesheet that the right-wing extremist group involved in the shooting of Lankesh in September 2017 also watched over the activities of the Nayak in Mangalore in the year 2016 after identifying him as a target.

The SIT has enclosed details of panchnama at various locations in Mangalore. Bangera and a Mangalore youth, who was recruited and trained to carry out an attack, monitored the rationalist's activities for two days. As per the panchnama, an associate living in Mangalore pointed out the rationalist's home to Bangera.

The SIT probe has also found that Bangera trained four youths in the use of guns prior to carrying out the surveillance work.

Rajasthan Police's all-woman 'patrol unit'

PARUL KULSHRESTHA
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 9

STARTING NEXT week, Rajasthan will have specialised women units in "distinctive" blue uniforms patrolling its malls, colleges, and religious places. The state police are all set to launch its 'Kalika Patrolling Unit' - a specialised unit aimed at ensuring the safety of women and children in these places.

According to Malini Agarwal, Rajasthan's additional director general of police, 250 such police teams have been set up in the initial phase, each comprising four women. This will eventually be expanded to 500 teams. Of these, Jaipur will have 35 units - while 10 units in each District Commissionerate.

These patrolling teams will operate under the leadership of senior female police officers.

"There have been several complaints of eve teasing. So, it was thought to have a special patrolling unit under the leadership of women police officials. Woman of constable and head constable-rank will patrol public places on a scooter," the senior officer told *The Indian Express*. For uniform, the units will wear a special blue design with a neon monogram on the back, along with matching caps. Their scooters and helmets will be black.

"This combination makes the patrolling teams easily recognisable and professional," the official said, adding that a special police control room and number will be set up to take calls.

Kalika patrolling units were announced in government budget this June.

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL & FISHERIES RESOURCES
BIHAR, PURNEA.
PURNEA SEMEN STATION
A UNIT OF BIHAR LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Advert. No.- 05/2024-25
URGENT - TENDER FOR AUCTION SURPLUS HGM BREEDING BULLS.

Purnea Semen Station decided to auction Surplus HGM breeding bulls (under production or rearing) received from RGMPT Projects under MSP (DADF-GOI) documents of 2019. Details are as follows:

S. No	Bull SSID	Date of Birth	Dam's Yield (D)/ +ve EBV for milk (Kg)	Total FSD Production	S. No	Bull SSID	Date of Birth	Dam's Yield (D)/ +ve EBV for milk (Kg)	Total FSD Production
1	SH-0069	20-02-21	3332.89(1)/ 148	53466	8	SH-0125	01-12-21	2866.15(1)/ 94.67	--
2	SH-0066	24-08-21	2807.11(2)/ 24	--	9	MR-0120	04-08-21	3292.51(2)/ 163.4	--
3	MR-0062	29-08-20	3520.53(1)/ 59	18977	10	JYSH-0013	15-11-17	3216(1)/ 21.81	188192
4	MR-0063	23-07-20	3077.62(1)/ 59.8	23769	11	JYSH-0011	24-11-17	4029(3)/ 129.02	139752
5	MR-0074	19-09-20	3398.42(3)/ 37	1858	12	MR-0019	06-02-18	2731(1)/ 45.24	119163
6	MR-0059	29-09-20	3117.57(4)/ 18	18777	13	HFCB-0007	20-09-17	5353(2)/ 90.62	163627
7	SH-0124	02-10-21	2836.07(2)/ 65.8	--	14	MR-0015	27-12-16	2567(1)/ 13.36	14218

SH - Sahiwal, MR - Murrah, JYSH: Cross breed Jersey, HFCB: - Cross breed Holstein Friesian.

These bulls can be used for up grading & cross -breeding of female live-stocks through natural services at interior places where AI facility still not available as well as better breeding of farm animals. General manager, PSS is fully authorized to accept/reject the tender without any reason. You can get detailed information about auction and bull inspection by visiting with above mentioned documents at our office address given below and other Terms & Conditions of tender may be seen on our website - www.sspurnea.com. You are requested to quote for the same including above mentioned minimum eligibility criteria documents through our website and at our following address:-
Address: Purnea Semen Station (A Unit Of BLDA)
NH-31, Maranga, Purnea, Bihar - 854303.
Contact No: - +91-9153968500,
Website: http://www.sspurnea.com

Important Dates
Date for visit at PSS for bull inspection : 18/12/24 to 28/12/24 (10:00 AM to 5:00 PM)
Start date for Bid Submission : 18/12/2024 (form 10:00 AM)
Last date for Bid Submission : 10/01/2025 (Till 11:00 AM)
Opening date of Auction : 10/01/2025 (12:00 PM)

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

General Manager
Purnea Semen Station

PR. No.14233 (Animal) 2024-25

बिहार में राचाव का व्यापार, विक्री एवं सेवन अवेध है। इससे संबंधित शिकायत इस नंबर पर दर्ज कराये, आपकी जानकारी गुप्त रखी जाएगी।
टॉल फ्री नं- 15545 या 1800 345 6268

Govt. of Bihar
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
Public Health Engineering Division, Darbhanga
SHORT TERM TENDER NIT No -28/PHED/AIIMS /DARBHANGA /2024-25 (MBNQ)
National Competitive Bidding
(For Packages under 2.00cr.)
(Through e-procurement mode on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

1	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Darbhanga.
2	Date of issue of Tender Notice	06.12.2024
3	Period of sale (downloading) of tender Bid Document	22.12.2024 to 30.12.2024 up to 17:00 Hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
4	Date, time & place of pre-bid meeting	10.12.24 at 11.30 hrs. hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer, P. H. Division, Darbhanga.
5	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	30.12.2024 up to 17:00 Hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
6	Last date and time of submission of hard copy of EMD (in original).	31.12.2024 up to 16:00 hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PH Division, Darbhanga. A. Executive Engineer of concerned P.H. Division, Darbhanga. B. Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Darbhanga. C. Zonal Chief Engineer, PHED Zone Muzaffarpur.
7	Date and time of opening of technical bid	02.01.2025 at 14:00Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
8	Date and time of opening of financial bid	To be informed later after the approval of technical bid.

Group No	Name of Work	No. of schemes in a Group.	Estimated Cost (in Lakh)	Amount of Earnest Money (in Lakh)	Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in Rs.	BSEDC Bid Processing Fee (in Rs.)	Completion Period (in months)
1	(a) Construction of 450mm x 300mm x 125M deep, screen 30M long, high yielding tube well having discharge of 50 lps etc. all complete and as per direction of E/I. AIIMS Darbhanga Campus under P.H. Division Darbhanga. (b) Construction of pump house size 3.65M X 3.0M X 4.86M (High) etc. all complete as per direction of E/I. under P.H. Division Darbhanga. (c) Cost of Submersible Pump Set of approved make having discharging 35 LPS at a total head of 45 M with suitable size of M SERW column pipe coupled with 35 H.P. submersible Motor 2900 RPM 3 phase 50 cycle/sec 380/415 Volt, electric induction motor along with C.I. D/F ISI marked sluice valve and reflux valve with FASD/ATSD starter & main switch including 3T chain pulley block and all necessary electrical and mechanical accessories etc. all complete set and Cost towards supplying, installation and commissioning with all labours, tools for 100 Kva Transformer etc. all materials and also taking connection of line (H.T. Line -1500M) with BSEB including 15% supervision charges paid to BSEB as per direction of E/I. etc. all complete and as per direction of E/I (d) Construction of 250mm x 150mm x 125M deep, screen 30M long, high yielding tube well having discharge of 22 lps etc. all complete and as per direction of E/I. (e). Construction of pump house size 3.65M X 3.0M X 4.86M (High) etc. all complete as per direction of E/I. (f) Cost of Submersible Pump Set of approved make having discharging 15 LPS at a total head of 45 M with suitable size of MSERW column pipe coupled with 15 H.P. submersible Motor 2900 RPM 3 phase 50 cycle/sec 380/415 Volt, electric induction motor along with C.I. D/F ISI marked sluice valve and reflux valve with FASD/ATSD starter & main switch including 3T chain pulley block and all necessary electrical and mechanical accessories etc. all complete set and Cost towards supplying, installation and commissioning with all labours, tools for 63 Kva Transformer etc. all materials and also taking connection of line (H.T. Line -500M) with BSEB including 15% supervision charges paid to BSEB as per direction of E/I. etc. all complete and as per direction of E/I.	01	127.756	2.60	As Per E-proc2	As Per E-proc2	120 दिन

Name of Work: WATER SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED AIIMS AND ITS RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS, DARBHANGA UNDER P.H. DIVISION, DARBHANGA.

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

Executive Engineer
P.H. Division, Darbhanga.

PR. No. 014266 (PHED) 2024-25 सुरक्षित जीवन अपनाओ, अपनी नियमित एच.आई.टी. जांच कराओ।

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 invites e-tenders for the following works before 15:00 hrs. on the date mentioned against items and will be opened at 15:30 hrs. (1) Tender No.: E-KGP-HQ-40-2024; Description of Work: Repairing of damaged road & drainage slab in the section of SSE(W)/South/Kharagpur, SSE(W)/South-West/Kharagpur & SSE(W)/North-West/Kharagpur under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Settlement/Kharagpur; Tender Value: ₹2,08,11,946.80; Earnest Money: ₹2,54,100.00; Completion period of the work: 06 Months; (2) Tender No.: E-KGP-South-48-2024; Description of Work: Supplying 50mm gauge hard stone machine crushed ballast and loading the same into Railway's wagons/hoppers at Barharwa/Rajgram/Bakudih depot for Kharagpur Division, (99,254 Cum); Tender Value: ₹13,00,89,240.18; Earnest Money: ₹8,00,500.00; Completion period of the work: 12 Months; (3) Tender No.: E-KGP-South-45-2024; Description of Work: Construction of NHS (Normal Height Subway) of size 5 mtr x 5 mtr beside existing bridge No. 265 at Km 229/26-28 at Haldipada-Balasoara section under ADEN/Balasoara; Tender Value: ₹10,55,81,302.91; Earnest Money: ₹6,77,900.00; Completion period of the work: 12 Months; (4) Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-52-2024; Description of Work: Execution of works of (i) Howrah-Santragachi Jn. - TTR (FS+CS+CMS)-23 sets (1:8:5), (ii) Abada Yard: Shifting of 03 Nos of 1 in 12 Points and X-ing, 01 No DS and dismantling of 01 No 1 in 8.5 points and X-ing and (iii) Mechada: Conversion of point No. 101B in UP line from 1 in 8.5 to 1 in 12 for removal of 1 in 8.5 PSC from passenger line as per IRPMM guideline under the jurisdiction of DEN/EAST/KHARAGPUR; Tender Value: ₹3,20,34,596.93; Earnest Money: ₹3,10,200.00; Completion period of the work: 12 Months; (5) Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-53-2024; Description of Work: Replacement of over aged/dilapidated steel tanks by RCC overhead tank (capacity up to 1,00,000 liter) over four (04) stations under the jurisdiction of DEN(East)/KHARAGPUR (2nd Call); Tender Value: ₹4,11,01,360.60; Earnest Money: ₹3,55,500.00; Completion period of the work: 18 Months; (6) Tender No.: E-KGP-WEST-36-2024; Description of Work: Supply 50mm gauge hard stone machine crushed ballast and loading the same into Railway's wagons/hoppers at Pakur/Bakudih/Taljhari/Rajgram/Barharwa/Pinararia Depot for Kharagpur Division (1,21,950 cum); Tender Value: ₹24,38,14,635.00; Earnest Money: ₹13,69,100.00; Completion period of the work: 15 Months; Date of Opening: 19.12.2024 (for Sl. no. 1 & 2) and 26.12.2024 (for Sl. no. 3 to 6); Tender Document Cost: NIL (All Bids); Bidding Start Date: From 05.12.2024 and up to 15:00 hrs. on 19.12.2024 (for Sl. no. 1 & 2) and From 12.12.2024 and up to 15:00 hrs. on 26.12.2024 (for Sl. no. 3 to 6). Interested tenderers may visit website www.irops.gov.in for full details/ descriptions/specifications of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these works will be accepted. N.B.: Prospective bidders may regularly visit www.irops.gov.in to participate in all tenders. (PR-879)

भू-सम्पदा विनियामक प्राधिकरण
(REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY, BIHAR)
चौथा/छठा तल्ला, बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लिमिटेड, मुख्यालय भवन, पतिरा, शास्त्रीनगर, पटना-800023
आम-सूचना

एतद् के द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि रेरा, बिहार द्वारा अग्रणी होम्स के जन्त किये गए परिसंपत्ति, जिसका रकबा 85.6 डेसिमल है और जो पटना जिले के धवलपुरा में अवस्थित है, का इ-प्रोक के माध्यम से, जिसका वेबसाइट <http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in> है, नीलामी किया जा रहा है। इस संदर्भ में पटना जिला प्रशासन द्वारा हिन्दुस्तान अखबार में दिनांक 28 अक्टूबर, 2024 को विज्ञापन भी प्रकाशित किया गया था जिसका PR No. 011426 (District) 2024-25.

उक्त परिसंपत्ति को नीलामी के माध्यम से खरीदने के इच्छुक व्यक्ति दिनांक 10.12.2024 के अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक वर्णित वेबसाइट के माध्यम से नीलामी की प्रक्रिया में

उक्त सूचना state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर भी देखी जा सकती है।
PR- 014432 (B & C) 2024-25
सचिव, बिहार

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

Govt. of Bihar
Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.
चौरचन्द पटेल पथ / Beerchand Patel Path, पटना / Patna- 800 001
दूरभाष / Phone : - +91-612-2222622
फैक्स नं / Fax No : - 0612-2506218
CIN: U63040BR19805GCO01486,
Web: www.bstdc.bihar.gov.in E-mail: contactbstdc@gmail.com

सं: सं-14/24/H&C/Esstt./2024-25/3622/24

Tender Notice

Bids are invited under Two-bid system for the appointment of agency/firm to manage Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. food counter at Dilli Haat on contract having experience of at least two years in providing similar services in this field.
The Schedule of tender is as under:-

SCHEDULE OF TENDER	
Name of tender	Selection of agency for running Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. Counter at Dilli Haat. Tourism Tourism
Bid Document Cost	INR.1000 (Rupees One thousand)
Earnest Money Deposit	INR.50,000/- (Rupees Fifty thousand)
Place and Date of Pre bid Meeting	30/12/2024, 3pm at, BSTDC office , Sikh Heritage Bhawan , Daroga Rai Path, Patna
Date of downloading of Bid Document from BSTDC website (http://www.bstdc.bihar.gov.in/)	From 24.12.2024 to 08.01.2025
WEB	
Last date of submission of BID	Date-09.01.2025 till 03:00 PM
Date of opening of technical bid	Date-09.01.2025 at 04:00 PM
Date of opening of financial bid	Shall be intimated to shortlisted bidders
Contact Detail	8544418405

- The MD, BSTDC will have the authority to accept/reject the bid at any time.
- For any other information, kindly refer RFP Document

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

(General Manager)
Planning & Development

PR. No.14235 (B & C) 2024-25

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

Govt. of Bihar
Office of the Principal
Government Polytechnic, Nawada
AT+PO: Khanwan, PS: Narhat, Nawada-805122
E-mail: principalgpnawada@gmail.com; Website: www.gpnawada.org

Tender Notice No.- 10/2024-25,
Urgent Tender Notice: INVITING e-TENDER for
"Equipments for Electrical Engineering Lab in the Premises of
Government Polytechnic, Nawada"
(Through e-Procurement mode only on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

The detailed e-Tender document contained in following sections has been prepared to elaborate all techno-commercial conditions of this tender. In case of any discrepancy between the press advertisement and detailed provisions of this Tender Document, the later will prevail. For any further changes (if any, based on feedback/queries and pre-bid meeting) in this tender document, please see its updated version/corrigendum on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in. The press e-Tender Notice will be published by Information and Public Relation Department, Government of Bihar, Nawada.

- Government Polytechnic, Nawada has been constituted under the Department of Science, Technology and Technical Education, Government of Bihar to cater to the needs of technical education. The Government Polytechnic, Nawada intendment to invite bids from eligible entities supply of Machines and laboratory Equipment's for Electrical Engineering in the institute Premises as mentioned in the tender document.
- The contract will be signed between Government Polytechnic, Nawada and the successful agency/bidder.
- To participate in the e-tendering process, the bidder/agency is required to get themselves registered with eproc2.bihar.gov.in.
- Bidder may also download the tender document available from eproc2.bihar.gov.in and submit the tender by using the downloaded document.
- The Government Polytechnic, Nawada will select the bidder based on Least Cost Selection (LCS) method for supply of Machines and Laboratory Equipment's for Electrical Engineering in the Institute Premises.
- The tender shall be accompanied by Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of 100000/- (One Lakh rupees only) in the shape of Demand Draft from any Schedule Bank in favour of Government Polytechnic, Nawada.
- Schedule of Events:**

S.N.	Event Description	Timeline
7.1	RFP No. & Date	No-10/2024-25, Date-03/12/2024
7.2	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 100000/-
7.3	Bid Validity Period	180 Days
7.4	Pre-Bid Meeting	18/12/2024, Office of the Principal, Government Polytechnic Nawada, At+PO-Khanwan, PS-Narhat, Dist.-Nawada at 11.00 AM
7.5	Bid Submission Start Date	14/12/2024 at 11.00 AM on the eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7.6	Bid Submission End Date	23/12/2024 till 5.00 PM on the eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7.7	Last Date & Time of Downloading the RFP	Till 23/12/2024, upto 5.00 PM on the eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7.8	Submission of EMD	Offline By Demand Draft in Favour of "Principal, Government Polytechnic Nawada" on 23/12/2024 till 05.00 PM
7.9	Opening of Technical Bid	26/12/2024 on the eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7.10	Opening of Financial Bid	After Evaluation of Technical Bid on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7.11	Method of Selection	Least Cost Selection (LCS)
7.12	Contact Person	Principal, Government Polytechnic, Nawada Mobile:8252958485 Email: principalgpnawada@gmail.com

Principal, Government Polytechnic, Nawada reserves all the right to revise/change/cancel the tender without assigning any reasons thereof.
For further details please visit www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
For further details please visit website state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

PR- 14248 (Sci & Tech) 2024-25
Principal
नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार। Government Polytechnic, Nawada

9 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

Democracy becoming stronger, people voting for stable govt: Modi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 9

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi said Monday that democracy is not only thriving but also becoming increasingly stronger, and that people are voting for a stable government.

Inaugurating the three-day Rising Rajasthan Investment Summit, the Prime Minister said, "The power of democracy, demography, digital data, and delivery is evident from Bharat's success. In a diverse country like Bharat, democracy is not only thriving but also becoming increasingly stronger, which is a significant achievement in itself."

"While remaining democratic, Bharat's philosophy is centred on the welfare of humanity, which is intrinsic to its character. Today, the people of Bharat, through their democratic rights, are voting for a stable government," he said.

Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Deputy CMs Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa, top industrialists, including Gautam Adani, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Anand Mahindra, and Anil Agarwal, among others, were also present on the occasion.

Emphasising the demographic dividend of the country, Modi said, "For many years to come, Bharat will remain one of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Governor Haribhau Bagde and CM Bhajan Lal Sharma at Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit, in Jaipur, Monday. PTI

the youngest countries in the world. Along with having the largest pool of young people, Bharat will also have the most skilled youth. To harness this potential, the government is making a series of strategic decisions."

Today, every expert and investor around the world is highly optimistic about India, he said, adding that following the mantra of Reform-Perform-Transform, the country has achieved remarkable growth that is visible across all sectors.

Listing the achievements of his government, he said, "In the seven decades after Independence, Bharat could be-

come the 11th largest economy in the world. In contrast, over the past 10 years, Bharat has moved from being the 10th largest economy to the 5th largest economy. During these 10 years, Bharat has nearly doubled the size of its economy."

"Exports have also almost doubled in the past decade. Compared to the decade before 2014, Foreign Direct Investment has more than doubled in the past decade. Additionally, Bharat has increased its infrastructure spending from approximately 2 trillion rupees to 11 trillion rupees during this time," he said.

Praising the Chief Minister, he

said, "The people of Rajasthan have given a resounding mandate to the responsive and reformist BJP government here. In a very short span, Bhajan Lal ji and his entire team have demonstrated remarkable results."

Chief Minister Sharma said his government has organised the summit in the first year itself so that all necessary steps can be taken properly and on time to implement the investment proposals received. He said that the state is hosting people from 32 countries as part of the summit, and even before the start of this summit, MoUs worth more than Rs 35 lakh crore have been signed.

PM LAUNCHES LIC'S 'BIMA SAKHI YOJANA' IN HARYANA

'Double-engine govt will work 3 times faster'

SUKHBIIRSIWACH
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

THE DOUBLE engine BJP government — at the Centre and in Haryana — in its third term will work three times faster for all-round development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday said even as he underscored how during the party's first two terms in state, farmers received more than Rs 1.25 lakh crore as MSP. After formation of the government for a third time, "I again assure you that the double engine government will

work three times faster in the third term. And the role of woman power will continue to grow," Modi said.

Addressing a gathering after launching the 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' of the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), Modi said the double engine government has been working for the welfare of farmers with honesty.

"In the first two terms of the BJP government in Haryana, the farmers got more than Rs 1.25 lakh crore as MSP. After formation of the government for a third time, the farmers of paddy, bajra, moong have been given Rs 14,000

crore as MSP. As much as Rs 800 crore have been given to the drought affected farmers," he said.

The PM, however, did not speak on the ongoing agitation by Punjab farmers at Haryana's borders since February 13 demanding a legal guarantee for the MSP of their crops. The farmers, who had announced a foot march to Delhi to press for their demands, suspended it on Sunday after some of them sustained injuries in teargas shelling by Haryana security personnel at Shamshi border point.

Modi, meanwhile, said India is moving forward with the res-

olution of Viksit Bharat by 2047, but to achieve it, many new sources of energy are needed.

"Nari Shakti (woman power) is one such source of energy," Modi said. "Why does Modi get so much affection from mothers and sisters? Ten years back, crores of women did not have a toilet. Modi made more than 112 crore toilets. Ten years back, crores of women did not have a gas connection. Modi gave them free Ujjwala connections. The gas cylinders were made cheaper. We began supplying water to the homes through taps".

Haryana RS seat: BJP overlooks seniors to pick ex-NCW chief

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

FOUR MONTHS after her resignation as National Women Commission (NCW) chairperson, the Haryana BJP on Monday nominated Rekha Sharma for the vacant Rajya Sabha seat from the state.

Sharma was picked over several senior leaders who were in the race for the RS seat. Former Haryana MP Kuldeep Bishnoi, Haryana BJP MP Mohan Lal Badoli, former Karnal MP Sanjay Bhatia, Haryana Cabinet Minister Om Prakash Dhankar, and former MP Sunita Duggal were among those said to be eyeing the seat, for which voting will take place on December 20.

The RS seat was earlier occupied by the BJP's Krishan Lal Panwar.

He won in the recent Haryana Assembly polls from



Ex-NCW chief Rekha Sharma

Israna and is now the state Panchayat Raj minister. In Haryana's 90-member Assembly, the ruling BJP has 48 members. This makes Sharma's road to the upper house almost clear. The Congress is not likely to field any candidate as it has only 37 MLAs.

BJP Haryana chief Mohan Lal Badoli told *The Indian Express*: "Rekha Sharma ji is an old committed party worker. She had been on several positions including chairperson of the NCW and

has worked in many spheres. She is a good choice".

On names of other leaders doing the rounds, Badoli said, "the party has announced the official name only on Monday".

During her term, she was known for the NCW's campaign with the National Legal Services Authority to help provide women legal aid.

But her tenure was marked by controversy. Sharma was criticised over her "silence" on atrocities against women in states led by the BJP or their allies, whether the alleged rape in Bihar's Muzaffarpur this June or the protest by Haryana's women wrestlers against alleged sexual harassment by BJP leader and former Wrestling Federation of India head Brij Bhushan Singh. Sharma also received flak for her alleged inaction over sexual atrocities in Manipur since violence broke out in the state in 2023.

VCK suspends 'Lottery king' Martin's son-in-law for targeting ally DMK

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, DECEMBER 9

FOLLOWING HIS recent attacks on ally DMK, leading to questions over the alignment of the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) with the ruling alliance, the axe seems to have finally fallen on VCK leader Adhava Arjuna, the son-in-law of controversial "lottery king" Santiago Martin.

VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan Monday suspended Arjuna claiming his activities had caused "severe harm to the party's reputation and goodwill" while asserting his party's commitment to discipline and unity amid growing "internal and external" pressures.

The action is also being seen as an effort by Thirumavalavan, one of the state's tallest Dalit leaders, to reaffirm his control over

SC: Reservation cannot be on basis of religion

No interim relief for Bengal in OBC case

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

RESERVATION CANNOT be based on religion, the Supreme Court observed Monday as it heard pleas challenging the Calcutta HC verdict nullifying the West Bengal government's decision to classify 77 communities, mostly Muslim, as Other Backward Class for reservation benefits.

The observations by a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan came as a larger question on the constitutionality of using religion as a yardstick for quota is pending before a Constitution Bench.

The West Bengal government and other petitioners moved the SC after the Calcutta HC, on May 22, cancelled all OBC certificates issued by the state since 2010, saying "religion indeed appears to have been the sole criterion" for granting OBC status to the 77 communities.

Monday, as Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal sought to justify the state government's decision, Justice Gavai observed: "Reservation cannot be on the basis of religion." Responding, Sibal said West Bengal's decision "is not based on religion but backwardness, which has been upheld by the Court". "Backwardness exists in all communities," he said.

When Justice Gavai pointed out that it "requires quantifiable data" to show backwardness, Sibal said "we have quantifiable data" and added the issue "affects a larger number of people including students".

According to Sibal, in striking down provisions of the 'West Bengal Backward Classes (Other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 2012', the Calcutta HC had relied heavily on an Andhra Pradesh HC ruling which quashed the reservation for Muslim OBCs.

However, he added, the HC ruling was stayed by the SC and is

still pending final adjudication. Sibal's reference was to the Andhra HC's November 2005 decision striking down 5 per cent quota to Muslims in the state. The HC verdict was challenged before the SC which, in January 2006, refused to stay the operation of the entire HC order and allowed a status quo to continue vis a vis educational institutes and government jobs. The SC also directed that the matter be placed before a Constitution Bench. It is pending final adjudication.

In Kerala, the entire Muslim community has been classified as OBC whereas in Tamil Nadu, they were granted 3.5% reservation.

While defending the Bengal government's decision granting OBC status to the 77 communities, Sibal said the Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission had favoured reservation for Muslims (as well as Dalit Christians). Of these 77 communities in Bengal, he said, 44 figure in the Central OBC list while the rest are recognised by the Mandal Commission.

Senior Advocate P S Patwalia, who appeared for the respondents, said the Calcutta HC found that no survey was done to find out backwardness and there was no data.

He said the state Backward Classes Commission was bypassed and the reservation was granted after a statement was made by the then Chief Minister (Buddhadhab Bhattacharjee) in 2010. He said the HC had said that the state could do it but only after following due procedure.

The bench, meanwhile, wondered how the Calcutta HC could have set aside Section 12 of the Act which enables the state to classify. He further asked, "How can a provision in statute be struck down which grants the state the power? Is possible misuse of a provision a ground enough to strike it down?"

Sibal pressed for interim relief but the SC did not grant any and fixed the matter for hearing next on January 7, 2025.

Omar seeks restoration of J&K's statehood

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DECEMBER 9

CHIEF MINISTER Omar Abdullah Monday asked the central government to fulfil its promise of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, saying dial powers were "not beneficial" to the state.

Talking to media persons after a function organised by the Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry this evening, Omar said that "there has been a promise with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, made publicly, inside Parliament and the Supreme Court, not only once, but more than once".

"It has been repeatedly assured that full statehood will be restored to J&K," he said, adding that "dual power centres are not beneficial for any government and that is the reason there has not been such an arrangement in any state".

BIRTHDAY PARTY PLAN

CONGRESS MPS on Monday were looking forward to wishing Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi personally on her 78th birthday, but to their disappointment the senior leader did not attend the House proceedings. Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi made sure the MPs got to speak to Sonia via mobile phone. He called his mother after the meeting of party MPs and put the phone on speaker, letting the MPs wish her and sing the birthday song for the veteran leader.

TOPPING THE BILL

WITH THE Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 being postponed to the next Parliament session, the government seems to be keen on resuming the debate on one nation, one election, a reform that is top priority of the Narendra Modi government. Sources said the Bill was likely to be tabled soon, but there was no certainty of it being taken up in the Winter Session. However, according to the sources, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is keen on an intense debate on the issue across the country, so it will be a part of the discourse initiated by the BJP and its talking heads in the coming days.

A SOROS POINT

There is a pronounced difference between the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist) when it comes to discussion on George Soros in Parliament. While the CPI(M) may want to discuss the matter raised by the Treasury Benches, the CPI clearly does not. A CPI leader said such a discussion would only benefit the ruling party. "They are making an issue out of nothing. Why should we support that?" the CPI leader said.

TWO MINISTERS & A NEW DEPT

Himanta Cabinet rejig brings spotlight on Assam's Barak Valley

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, DECEMBER 9



CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

THE RESHUFFLE of Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma Cabinet Monday brought into focus Assam's Bengali-majority Barak Valley, with newly inducted minister Kaushik Rai being allocated charge of a newly formed Barak Valley Development.

The Assam Cabinet was reshuffled after an expansion last week with the induction of four BJP MLAs as ministers. The decision to create a new department called Barak Valley Department had been announced Sunday. As part of the portfolio allocation, Kaushik Rai, who represents the Lakhimpur constituency in the Barak Valley, has been allocated the department, along with the departments of Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs, and Mines and Minerals.

Rai said that primary focus is on the implementation of ongoing development work in Barak Valley. "Assam has been divided into two parts, the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley and there has always been less development in the Barak Valley. There is not even direct road transport between both the

parts and travelling by road requires going through Meghalaya. Under the current government, a lot of projects have been undertaken there and this department has been created in the style of the Union government's DONER [Development of North Eastern Region] department for coordination in the implementation of projects by all departments. In the new budget, there will also be separate allocation for this department," he said.

With the induction of Rai, who is known to be close to Chief Minister Sarma, and another newly inducted minister Krishnendu Paul, a Bengali Hindu leader, there are now two ministers from the Barak Valley in the Assam Cabinet, a first since the BJP came to power in 2016. Before this, Parimal Suklabaidya — currently Silchar MP — had been the only minister from the region in the BJP governments. This comes after the number of assembly segments from the Valley had been reduced from 15 to 13 in last year's delimitation exercise.

Hasina calls Yunus regime 'fascist', condemns attacks on minorities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA, KOLKATA, DEC 9



Sheikh Hasina

BANGLADESH'S DEPOSED premier Sheikh Hasina has launched a fierce attack on the interim administration, accusing its Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus of running a "fascist regime" that allows terrorists and fundamentalists to act without restraint.

In a virtual address to a gathering of overseas Awami League supporters in London on Sunday, Hasina accused Yunus of being the "mastermind" behind the July-August turmoil that ousted her government and vowed to bring him and his allies to justice under Bangladeshi law.

She criticised Yunus and his interim government for their alleged persecution of religious minorities in Bangladesh.

"Since August 5, the attacks on minorities, places of worship of Hindus, Christians and Buddhists have been rampant. We condemn it. The Jamaat and terrorists are having a free run

under the new regime," she said. Her remarks came ahead of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's visit to Dhaka Monday where he raised India's concerns over the safety of minorities.

"Bangladesh is now under the grip of a fascist regime where people's democratic rights have been obliterated. Our government's achievements in poverty alleviation and infrastructure development, strengthening of democracy were being undone under Yunus's leadership," Hasina said during her 37-minute virtual address.

Hasina accused the Yunus government of providing clemency to terrorists and criminals, including those involved in arson and murders.

ENS & PTI
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 9

IN A strong reaction to statements made by a section of Bangladesh politicians that Bangladesh could occupy West Bengal "within days", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee warned the neighbouring country from daring to think about it and said, "When you will come to invade, do you think we will sit and eat lollipops?"

Speaking during the Question Hour session in the Assembly, the CM condemned the persecution of minorities in Bangladesh, calling it "unacceptable", and stressed the need for unity among India's religious communities.

'Don't think we will sit and have lollipops while you come': Mamata slams Bangla leaders' invasion threat



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee after meeting Governor CV Ananda Bose, in Kolkata on Monday. Partha Paul

"You will occupy Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, and we will have lollipops? Don't even think that. No one has the guts to take our lands, don't even think about

it," the CM said. Mocking some Bangladeshi leaders who made provocative statements, Banerjee said, "Stay calm and healthy and have peace of mind."

Advocating peace between the two countries, she added: "We should not comment in such a way that could instigate communal violence."

Condemning the persecution of minorities, especially Hindus, in Bangladesh, she said: "We are not taking it well... We condemn the ongoing violence against Hindus in Bangladesh... Communal violence is not done by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or Christians; it is done by anti-social elements. We should all remember this and avoid making statements that could disrupt the peace in West Bengal."

She also condemned the circulation of fake videos in India and without naming anyone blamed "a certain political party" for at-

tempting to stoke tension in the state. "A certain political party is responsible for the circulation of fake videos to stoke fire. I appeal to everyone to stay away from such misinformation. We are not in favour of any one group, we care for everyone here," the CM said. The CM called upon the media to be cautious in their coverage of Bangladesh, particularly regarding the spread of fake videos.

"This is not Uttar Pradesh or Rajasthan where we will ban or arrest you. But I request you to be responsible. Many fake videos are doing the rounds. A political party is trying to ignite a fire. Both communities must be watchful of this," she warned.

"We don't want riots; we want peace," she said.

Kuwait bank files complaints in Kerala: 1,400 loan defaulters

10 cases, mostly against nurses; bank says loans taken while they were in country

SHAJU PHILIP THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 9

TEN CASES of cheating have been registered at various police stations in Ernakulam and Kottayam districts after the Gulf Bank of Kuwait filed police complaints in Kerala, alleging that several people from the state, most of them nurses, defaulted on large loans that they had availed from the bank when they were in Kuwait.

faulters will stand legal scrutiny. Cheating and criminal conspiracy will only stand legal scrutiny in loan defaults if the loanees had forged documents to avail loans. Without any collateral security, why had the bank given loan to the expats? Why did the bank's internal mechanism not function?" said a police officer familiar with the case.

List properties burnt, looted in clashes: SC to Manipur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

THE SUPREME COURT on Monday asked the Manipur government to submit a list of properties which were burnt, looted, or encroached upon during the ethnic clashes in the state.

"We also direct the state govt to file the following details of buildings which have been burnt, partially burnt, buildings and properties which have been looted, buildings and properties which have been trespassed and encroached upon. In all the three cases, give name and address of the owner as well as the person, if

any, in illegal occupation of the property," a bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar said.

in the media". The bench remarked that the government will have to take a decision on what it wants to do in the cases of properties encroached or trespassed "both in terms of criminal action as well as to ask them to pay mesne profits for the use and occupation (of properties)".

The court also sought the state's response on the release of funds for temporary and permanent housing, flagged by the Justice (retired) Gita Mittal Committee. Senior Advocate Vibha Datta Makhija, who is the Amicus Curiae in the matter, said the Justice Mittal committee had drawn up 34 reports since its inception "where extensive and some very commendable work has been done, entirely pro-bono".

been built, they have been brought back to occupy their properties." "But there are certain problems being faced" which have been flagged in three reports, Makhija said.

Mentally ill student 'sexually harassed' in TN; Opp attacks govt

ARUN JANARDHANAN CHENNAI, DECEMBER 9

OPPOSITION PARTIES in Tamil Nadu have accused the DMK government and the state police of inaction and negligence in connection with a case of sexual harassment of a mentally challenged college student in Chennai.

According to police, a complaint was filed by the father of a "mentally disturbed college student", alleging that his daughter was "being misled inappropriately by a female student studying with her and some male friends, and that one of the male friends attempted sexual harassment". Initially registered as a CSR case, the probe led to interrogations of the "female friend" and several male acquaintances. Police said after they confirmed that a sexual offence had occurred, they registered a case on December 6.

Tiruvallur, and Nares, a 19-year-old school student were arrested. In response to comments from Opposition leaders, police appealed to the public to refrain from raising public criticisms of the case, warning that such discussions could hinder the investigation and cause mental distress to the victim and her family.

16-yr-old girl 'set on fire' by minor stalker in Andhra Pradesh, dies

SREENIVAS JANYALA HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 9

A 16-YEAR-OLD girl died after allegedly being set on fire by another minor, who police said had been "pestering her for several weeks", in Andhra Pradesh's Nandyal district early on Monday.

Police said the two minors were from neighbouring villages and were students of the same educational institution. "He had been stalking and pestering her for several weeks, but she rejected him. The girl complained to her parents, who sent her to stay with her grandmother about six months ago. After midnight on Sunday, he accosted her at her grandmother's house... He also sustained burn injuries but is fine," an officer said.

Sunil Pal kidnapping: Cops freeze 2 accounts

AMIT SHARMA MEERUT, DECEMBER 9

WITH THE ransom money linked to comedian Sunil Pal's kidnapping transferred to their bank accounts on December 3, two Meerut jewellers found themselves in a sticky situation when Mumbai Police froze their bank accounts.

After learning that their accounts were frozen for accepting extortion money, one of the jewellers, Akshit Singhal, lodged an FIR at the Lal Kurti police station in Meerut. "I have given the CCTV footage of two persons who purchased coins and a chain from two shops by showing the Aadhaar card of Sunil Pal," Singhal said. The kidnapers allegedly purchased two gold coins and a gold chain with the same amount on December 3.



Comedian Sunil Pal

said Ayush Vikram Singh, Superintendent of Police, Meerut. After returning to Mumbai on December 4, Sunil Pal alleged that he was abducted on the evening of December 2 while he was on his way to perform at an event in Haridwar.

For woman who lost family in Wayanad landslide and fiancée in road accident, govt job brings hope

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC 9

A 24-YEAR-OLD woman from Kerala's Wayanad, who lost her entire family in the July landslides and then her fiancée in a road accident a month later, joined the government service on Monday as a clerk in the Revenue Department at Wayanad Collectorate.



Sruthi had earlier worked as an accountant with a private firm in Kozhikode.

would a great support for her future. The job had been promised to Sruthi by the state government after

she faced the back-to-back tragedies. She had earlier worked as an accountant with a private firm in Kozhikode. A month before the landslide, Sruthi's family had moved to a new house at Chooralmala village, where they also held celebrations of her engagement with 24-year-old Jensen.

In the slides that washed away the villages of Chooralmala and Mundakkai on July 30, she lost her father Shivanna, a mason; her mother Sabitha, a shop worker; and younger sister Sreya, a college student. Their newly constructed home, 15 sovereigns (nearly 120 grams) of gold and Rs 4 lakh in cash that her parents had

kept aside for her wedding, were washed away. Her paternal uncle, Siddaraj, his wife Divya, and their son also died in the landslide. After the slides, it was Jensen who was trying to nurse her back from the trauma. The two, who came from different faiths, had been friends since school. However, a road accident on September 11 killed Jensen and left Sruthi seriously injured.

Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light bags 2 Golden Globe nominations

ALAKA SAHANI MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

DIRECTOR-WRITER Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light secured two Golden Globe nominations in Best Motion Picture in a non-English language and Best Director categories.

Kapadia, who won the Grand Prix award at the Cannes Film Festival in May this year, will compete with The Brutalist director Brady Corbet, The Substance's Coralie Fargeat, Conclave's Edward Berger, Emilia Perez's director Jacques Audiard and Anora's Sean Baker for the Best Director award. The 2025 Golden Globe awards ceremony is expected to be held on January 5 in Los Angeles.

Commenting on the double nomination at the 82nd Golden Globe, Kapadia said: "I'm deeply honoured by this nomination and grateful to HFPA (Hollywood Foreign Press Association) for this recognition. This is a celebration for everyone who worked so passionately on the film. To everyone in India, All We Imagine as Light is still in theaters, please go watch it and support us."

BRIEFLY

MAHARASHTRA Bus ploughs into vehicles, kills four, injures 29

Mumbai: At least four persons were killed while 29 others were injured after a BEST bus ploughed into several vehicles and ran over people in a congested market near the Kurla railway station Monday night. Police said it appears to be a case of brake failure.

MANIPUR Internet ban lifted, govt says situation better

Imphal: Manipur Government lifted the ban on internet service on Monday citing the improving law and order situation in the state. The state home commissioner issued an order in this connection.

UTTAR PRADESH Woman killed by husband, son over house sale

Meerut: A 50-year-old woman was allegedly clubbed to death by her husband and elder son over refusal to sell their house in Agra district Sunday, police said. The deceased, Rama Devi, was pressured by her husband Dhadhich Goswami, 56, and son Manoj, 25, to sell their house for the last two years, which was registered in her name, the police said.

ODISHA Tigress 'Zeenat' ventures into Jharkhand

Bhubaneswar: Tigress Zeenat, which was moved from Tadoba-Andhari tiger reserve in Maharashtra to Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha as part of the project to improve gene pool of the big cats in STR, has ventured into Jharkhand jungle in search of new territory. The three-year-old tigress was released to Simlipal on November 24 after keeping it in a soft enclosure within the core area for 10 days.

'India's nobody's property' - Dosanjh invokes Rahat Indori's poetry amid calls to cancel his Indore concert

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BHOPAL, DECEMBER 9

AMID BAJRANG Dal protests demanding that singer Diljit Dosanjh's Indore concert be cancelled, the singer dedicated his concert to Urdu poet Rahat Indori, a resident of Indore who passed away in August 2022.



Singer Diljit Dosanjh

ularity recently after it became a rallying cry for those protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and a pan-Indian NRC. On Sunday, Bajrang Dal had approached the Indore police to not allow the concert to proceed.

show. If the event still takes place, we will protest in our own way". Indore Bajrang Dal leader Tannu Sharma told The Indian Express: "Our protest was against the consumption of drugs. We are not against this concert. It's not in our culture to consume drugs in these concerts we are against that. We are also against consumption of alcohol and there were such stalls in this concert".

विहार राज्य शैक्षणिक आधुनिक संरचना विकास निगम लिमिटेड BIHAR STATE EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD. [A Govt. of Bihar Undertaking] ISO 9001:14001; OHSAS 18001:69 Shiksha Bhawan, Bihar Rashtrabhava, Parishad Campus, Acharya Shivpujan Sahay Path, Saidpur, Patna-800004 Tel. No: 0612-2660850 * Fax No: 0612-2660256 E-mail: bseidc@gmail.com * Website: http://www.bseidc.in * CIN: U80301BR2010SGC015859 अत्यकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या 24 पंच 2024-25 SBO अत्यंत प्रसिद्ध दर निविदा (केबल ई-टेंडरिंग पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर) बिहार राज्य अंतर्गत विभिन्न विद्यालयों के कार्य हेतु अत्यकालीन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED (A State Government Undertaking) Head Office: 10-15/21, Sri Sai Towers, Bandar Road, Kanuru, Vijayawada - 520007. TENDER NOTICE Lr. No. Mktg. M6/ RG Dall/Tenders/ 2024 Date: 10.12.2024 BIDS ARE INVITED FROM THE ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR SUPPLY OF 15,675 MTs (+ 25%) OF RG DALL IN 1 KG PACKET FORM WITH SECONDARY PACKING IN 50 KG PP BAGS TO ALL THE 251 MLS POINTS OF APSCSL IN TWENTY SIX(26) DISTRICTS ACROSS THE ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FOR DISTRIBUTION UNDER PDS/ ICDS/ THR SCHEMES FOR FEBRUARY-2025 THROUGH NCDEX E-MARKETS LIMITED (NEML) AUCTION PLATFORM.

GOVT OF ODISHA "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA WORKS DEPARTMENT Tender Call Notice E-mail: rbcirclekhorda@gmail.com Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle-20/2024-25 Memo No. 2441 Dt. 09/12/2024 The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road works as detailed in the table below:

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : SUNABEDA email- serwsb2003@yahoo.com e-Procurement Notice for Road work 1. Name of the Work : Periodical Renewal work of 5 year post DLP PMGSY Roads (36 Nos) 2. Class of Contractor : "B" & "A" Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority 3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.91.97 Lakhs to Rs. 399.62 Lakhs (Approximately) 4. Details projects as per Annexure attached

EXPRESS NETWORK

Siddique killing: Anmol behind plot, no links to Lawrence so far, say police

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

THE MUMBAI police, which is probing the murder of NCP leader Baba Siddique, on Monday said that they have not found any links connecting jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi with the case, so far, and that his brother Anmol Bishnoi was behind the conspiracy.

While seeking the custody of 13 accused arrested earlier in the case, the police told a court here that there are two separate gangs led by Anmol and Lawrence Bishnoi and in the Siddique murder case, Anmol's gang is involved.

The defence lawyers said that Lawrence Bishnoi and Anmol Bishnoi were part of the same gang, which the prosecutor opposed.

"They (Lawrence and Anmol) are two separate gangs and so far Lawrence Bishnoi is not an accused in the case," the special public prosecutor representing the Mumbai police submitted to the court.

Siddique was shot dead by assailants in Bandra (East) on October 12. So far, 26 persons have been arrested in the case, including the alleged shooters.

The police had last month invoked stringent sections of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), claiming that the murder was the handiwork of an organised crime gang led by Anmol.

The police claimed that Anmol was trying to establish his supremacy as a gang leader.

The police sought the custody of the 13 accused to probe further into the financial aspect of the crime.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and other Indian and Russian officers during the commissioning ceremony of INS Tushil in Kaliningrad, Russia, on Monday. ANI

Missile frigate INS Tushil inducted into Navy, Rajnath praises India-Russia ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

INDIAN NAVY'S Russian-manufactured guided missile frigate INS Tushil was commissioned into the force at Russia's coastal city of Kaliningrad in presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday.

The warship is expected to significantly bolster the Navy's operational capability in Indian Ocean, which has witnessed increasing forays by China's PLA Navy in the last few years.

In his remarks, Singh described the commissioning of the warship as a "proud testament" to India's growing maritime

strength and a "significant milestone" in the long-standing friendship between the two countries. "The ship is a big proof of the collaborative prowess of Russian and Indian industries. It exemplifies India's journey towards technological excellence through jointmanship," he added.

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Russia's deputy defence minister Alexander Vasilyevich Fomin and Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy Admiral Aleksandr Alekseyevich Moiseyev were present at the commissioning ceremony.

INS Tushil has been constructed in Russia as part of an over USD 2.5-billion deal that

New Delhi had inked with Moscow in 2016 for four stealth frigates for the Indian Navy.

Under the deal, two ships were to be built in Russia, while the other two were to be manufactured in India.

Singh said India and Russia will enter a "new era" of cooperation by taking advantage of each other's expertise in areas such as artificial intelligence, cyber security, space exploration and counter-terrorism. He said the India-Russia friendship is bound by "mutual trust, and special and strategic privileged partnership".

In his address at the commissioning ceremony, Singh highlighted the deep ties between the navies of India and Russia

and stated that technical and operational collaboration is constantly touching new heights.

He also reasserted the Indian Navy's commitment to peace and security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), saying it has foiled the "designs" of arms and drug smugglers and non-state actors in various hotspots. "From the Gulf of Oman to the Gulf of Aden, from Suez to Malacca and from Australia to Madagascar, the Indian Navy is playing the essential role of a net security provider in the IOR," he said.

The defence minister also reiterated the Indian Navy's commitment to realise PM Modi's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

FIRST STATEMENT AFTER ASSAD REGIME FALL We advocate peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process: India

Calls for ensuring stability, territorial integrity of Syria

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

INDIA ON Monday called for a "peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process" which respects the interests and aspirations of all sections of Syrian society, in its first statement since the fall of President Bashar al-Assad on Sunday.

Assad fled to Russia after Islamist rebels advanced and captured Damascus on Sunday. The Syrian conflict had been frozen for the last few years and the Assad regime had managed to stave off any possible insurrection in the last 13 years. But that changed last week when the rebels advanced against the Syrian regime's army.

The Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement that its embassy in Damascus is in contact with the Indian community.

"We are monitoring the situation in Syria in the light of the ongoing developments. We underline the need for all parties to work towards preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We advocate a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process, respecting the interests and aspirations of all sections of Syrian society. Our Embassy in Damascus is in contact with the Indian community, for their safety and security," the MEA said.

India's friendly relations with Syria stood the test of time when the Syrian conflict broke out in 2011. Its stand of resolving the conflict in a non-military way and

EXPLAINED
India-Syria friendly relations

INDIA AND Syria have enjoyed friendly political relations based on historic and civilizational links. Both countries have had a secular, nationalist and developmental orientation, share similar perceptions on many international and regional issues and are members of the NAM.

through an "inclusive Syrian-led political process" was viewed positively by the Assad regime. India maintained its embassy even during the peak of the crisis.

Monday's statement is a continuity in the approach — "inclusive Syrian-led political process" — that has been maintained by New Delhi over the last 13 years of Syrian conflict.

On Sunday, as the events unfolded in Syria, sources in Delhi said its embassy remained operational in Damascus. "The embassy is in touch with all Indian nationals, and they are safe. The embassy remains available to assist Indian nationals in Syria," said a source.

A day before, New Delhi issued a travel advisory and also urged Indians residing in Syria to remain in touch with the Indian embassy in Damascus. "In view of the situation prevailing in Syria, Indian nationals are advised to avoid all

travel to Syria until further notification... Those who can, are advised to leave by the earliest available commercial flights and others are requested to observe utmost precaution about their safety and restrict their movements to the minimum," the MEA said.

On Friday, India had said it is closely following the situation in Syria and "taken note of the recent escalation in fighting in the north of the country". MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said there were nearly 90 Indian nationals in Syria, including 14 who were working with various UN organisations, and that the mission was in close contact with them "for their safety and security".

India and Syria have enjoyed friendly political relations based on historic and civilizational links. India's traditional support for Arab causes notably the Palestinian cause and for the return of the occupied Golan Heights to Syria is appreciated by the Syrians.

Assad too had maintained positive ties with India; he visited New Delhi in 2008. He had also taken a more nuanced stance on Jammu and Kashmir, and had always referred to the dispute as India's internal affair. This ensured that successive Indian governments had a favourable attitude towards the Syrian government led by Assad. With his departure and the entry of the Islamist rebels — with links to Al Qaeda — New Delhi is cautious about the attitude of the new players in the regime.

LAST DAY OF SPECIAL SESSION IN MAHARASHTRA ASSEMBLY

Ajit, Shinde slam Opp EVM claims: Accept poll defeat, why stunt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

DEPUTY CHIEF Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar on Monday said that Opposition MLAs' decision to not take oath on the first day of the special session of Maharashtra Assembly alleging EVM "misuse" was "anti-constitutional" and also termed it a "stunt".

"Instead of blaming the EVMs, it is important to face the reality," said Ajit Pawar, while speaking at the Legislative Assembly on a resolution congratulating newly elected Speaker Rahul Narwekar.

Ajit Pawar's views were echoed by Shiv Sena chief and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde who asked the Opposition to accept the defeat.

On December 7, the first day of the special three-day session of the Maharashtra Assembly, the Opposition MVA MLAs refused to take oath in protest against alleged misuse of EVMs in the recently held polls and the state government not allowing mock polls using ballot paper at Markadwadi village in Malshiras constituency.

Reacting to this, Ajit Pawar said, "The behaviour on the first day, when they (opposition) decided not to take oath, was anti-constitutional. I had told everyone that these people would silently come and take the oath next day. What was the need of that stunt?"

Taking a dig at his estranged uncle and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar over his statements comparing number of votes and number of seats won by each party, Ajit Pawar said that he will talk in detail about those who are talking about number of votes.

"We did not blame the EVMs when you won the Lok Sabha and instead of crying we started working. Instead of blaming the EVMs, it is important to face the reality," he said.

Shinde referred to the Supreme Court's remarks while dismissing a plea seeking re-introduction of ballot papers in place of EVMs. "Even an SC justice recently said that why do you blame the EVMs only after the defeat," said Shinde.

Meanwhile, state Congress chief Nana Patole said in the Assembly that the Opposition was happy to discuss the issue with the ruling side.

Narwekar: Sena to BJP, Colaba MLA to second-term Speaker

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

ON JULY 1, 2022, when Rahul Narwekar was nominated by the BJP for the Speaker's position in the Maharashtra Assembly, many in the state political circles had wondered why the party had picked a first-time MLA for the coveted post which is usually reserved for veteran legislators.

A day earlier then, BJP had formed the government with the Shiv Sena faction led by Eknath Shinde who had split his party after raising a banner of revolt against Uddhav Thackeray.

The BJP was alleged to have played a key role in "engineering" this split in the Sena along with Shinde, which led to the collapse of the then Uddhav-led MVA government. Narwekar was said to have been chosen by senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis for the Speaker's position. An advocate by profession, Narwekar, then 45-year-old, became one of the youngest Assembly Speakers in the country.

Anticipating long-drawn legislative and legal battles with the Uddhav-led Sena faction, Fadnavis had "handpicked" Narwekar for the Speaker's post in view of his "strong legal back-



Speaker Rahul Narwekar with Governor C P Radhakrishnan, CM Devendra Fadnavis at the Assembly, Monday. Ganesh Shirsekar

ground", BJP sources said.

On Monday, Narwekar was elected as the Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly for the second consecutive term. In the recent Assembly polls, he was re-elected from the upscale Colaba seat in Mumbai.

On Sunday, when Narwekar filed his nomination papers for the Speaker's office, his victory was a foregone conclusion. He was elected unopposed as the MVA decided not to put up any candidate with the numbers heavily tilted towards the ruling Mahayuti camp. The polls were swept by the Mahayuti which bagged 234 out of 288 seats as against the MVA's 48.

Narwekar started his politi-

cal innings with the undivided Sena. He was the Shiv Sena youth wing spokesperson. By his own admission, he shared cordial relations with Uddhav and his son Aditya Thackeray.

After a 15-year-long association with the Sena, Narwekar quit the party in 2014 to switch to the Sharad Pawar-led NCP. The NCP fielded him in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from the Maval constituency, but he lost.

Narwekar joined the BJP in the run-up to the October 2019 state Assembly elections. The BJP gave him ticket from Colaba, where he won. He was also appointed as the state BJP's media in-charge.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

Fadnavis urges Speaker to prevent House from turning into 'bazaar'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday urged the newly elected Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar to limit crowding at the legislative building and prevent it from turning into a "bazaar" (market).

"What I am going to say now may not be appreciated by few MLAs. But it needs to be said. We have observed in the last few years that with every MLA come 20-25 people. The legislative building becomes so crowded that sometimes it becomes difficult even to move," said Fadnavis. He was speaking on a resolution moved to congratulate the unanimously elected Speaker Narwekar.

"I don't want to use the word. But I can't find a better alternative to describe the situation. This premise should not become a bazaar," he said, asking how the House would function properly in case of overcrowding. Fadnavis requested the Speaker to take measures to control the crowd.

'Deport them if you want, but you can't let them die': Omar on Rohingya in J&K

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, DECEMBER 9

JAMMU and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday described the settlement of the Rohingya people in the UT as a "humanitarian dispute" and made it clear that "they cannot be made to starve and die when they are here". His remarks came hours after BJP demanded a CBI probe into the alleged illegal settlement of Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals in J&K.

"Yahan thand se unko marahi sakte ho (You cannot get let them die in the cold here)," he said, asking the Government of India to clarify as to what has to be done with them. "Till they are here, you have to take care of them," he added.

"Hamne unko yahan la ke basaya nahi. Unko laya gaya, yahan basaya gaya (They have been brought here and settled, but we did not bring them here)," Omar said. "Now if the Centre's policy (on them) has changed, it shall take them back," he said. "If you (Centre) want to take them, then take them. However, till they (Rohingya) are here, they cannot be treated like animals. They are human beings and they shall be treated like humans".

Talking to media persons on the sideline of a function, the CM said: "If they have to be deported, then deport them. If you can send



They were brought here and settled: CM

them back, then send them and if you cannot, then you cannot make them starve and die here."

Earlier in the day, the BJP termed the alleged illegal settlement of Rohingya and Bangladeshi nationals in J&K "a matter of security concern" and urged Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to order a CBI probe to identify those involved in facilitating it.

Hitting out at the NC government over remarks on providing water connection to Rohingya nationals, J&K BJP chief spokesperson Sunil Sethi said the illegal settlement in J&K, especially in Jammu, which is only a few kms away from Pakistan, is a matter of security concern.

Making a fervent appeal to the L-G to order a CBI inquiry to "investigate and identify persons involved in bringing in and facilitating the settlement of Rohingyas and Bangladeshi nationals in Jammu", Sethi said that "such persons/elements should be booked for anti-national activities and punished". "People should know those showing sympathy with the illegally settled foreign nationals and advocating their cases in courts," he added.

Allahabad HC judge backs Uniform Civil Code at VHP event

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

TRIGGERING A debate on judicial propriety, Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting judge of Allahabad High Court, has made strong remarks on Muslim marriage practices and backed the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) while speaking at a VHP event.

Addressing the event organised by the VHP's legal cell on the court premises on Sunday, Justice Yadav said, "You can't disrespect a woman who has been recognised as a goddess in our Shastras and Vedas. You can't claim the right to have four wives, perform halala, or practice triple talaq. You say, we have the right to say 'triple talaq', and not give maintenance to women."

According to a VHP press release, the judge also spoke in favour of the UCC. "Having different Constitutions for people of different communities and religions in a country is no less than a danger to the nation. When we talk of human uplift, it should rise above religion and should be within the ambit of the Constitution," the press release quoted him as saying.

"If the interests of a woman are to be protected, whether it is about her wealth, her maintenance, her rightful share in the property, her remarriage, or her freedom to choose a partner, the limits of all these things should be decided within the ambit of one Constitution," he said.

Justice Yadav said that the Constitution does not permit interests of "Muslim women to be



Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav. Allahabad HC

determined separately or interest of women of other religions to be determined by different method".

This is not the first time the judge has attracted public scrutiny. In September 2021, while rejecting the bail petition of a man booked under the UP Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act, 1955, Justice Yadav had urged the Centre to declare cow as the national animal, introduce a Bill in Parliament for cow protection and recognise "cow protection as a fundamental right of Hindus". In October 2021, while grant-

ing bail to an accused, he had observed that Parliament should pass a law to honour Hindu deities.

In December 2023, while hearing another bail plea, he had directed the Prayagraj Police Commissioner to submit a progress report on how many cow slaughter cases have been filed in the district and the status of each, on account of the "seriousness of the cow slaughtering cases" in Uttar Pradesh.

Justice Yadav enrolled as an advocate in 1990. During his career at the Allahabad HC, he represented both the Central and state governments in several capacities.

According to the HC website, he served as an Additional Government Advocate and Standing Counsel for UP before working as a Senior Counsel for the Union of India and Senior

Counsel of Railway until he took the oath as a judge of the High Court on December 12, 2019.

Justice Yadav was first recommended to the Supreme Court collegium for appointment as a High Court judge on February 14, 2018. However, the Collegium comprising Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra and Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Madan Lokur deferred his recommendation on September 25, 2018. Following CJI Misra's retirement, with CJI Gogoi at the helm, the Collegium recommended Justice Yadav's appointment as an Additional Judge of the Allahabad High Court on February 12, 2019. His appointment as a Permanent Judge was approved on March 5, 2021.

INPUTS FROM MAULSHREE SETHI IN LUCKNOW

Brinda Karat writes to CJI

New Delhi: Former CPI (M) MP Brinda Karat on Monday wrote a letter to CJI Sanjiv Khanna, saying Justice Yadav's speech undermined the principles of judicial impartiality.

"Whether a senior judicial functionary should at all attend a function of a sectarian organisation is a serious issue. This is the first matter to which I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Chief Justice — the code of conduct for the judiciary," Karat wrote.

Referring to the UCC and the Waqf bill, Karat wrote: "... should members of the judiciary comment publicly on matters that are sub-judice or are being discussed in the legislatures?" Karat wrote.

Migrant Pandits' group files complaint against Iltija

Jammu: Youth 4 Panun Kashmir (Y4PK), an organisation of migrant Kashmiri Pandit youth, here on Monday claimed to have lodged a complaint with the Delhi Police's Cyber Crime Cell against PDP leader Iltija Mufti for her alleged "derogatory and inflammatory remarks".

Pointing out that the complaint has been filed with Vithal Chowdhary, the Y4PK president, a statement said that Iltija's remark was "deeply offensive, is

aimed at inciting communal discord, and deliberately insults Lord Rama, the Hindu religion and its followers". The complaint cites Sections 302, 325, and 323 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and Section 67 of the IT Act.

Roots in Kashmir (RIK), another prominent Kashmiri Pandit organisation, welcomed the Y4PK's move. RIK's Amit Raina said it will provide all assistance to Chowdhary to ensure Iltija is booked.



WORDLY WISE
I FOUND I COULD SAY THINGS WITH COLOR AND SHAPES THAT I COULDN'T SAY ANY OTHER WAY.
— GEORGIA O'KEEFE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A point of no return

Will Syria and the wider Middle East be better off without Assad? There are no easy answers



P R KUMARASWAMY

AFTER ASSAD

Even as the world celebrates the fall of a tyrant, fingers remain crossed on whether it will lead to a more pluralistic Syria

FEW IN THE world, barring the ruling circles in Tehran and Moscow, will shed a tear for the fall of the Assad dynasty that has ruled Syria with an iron fist for more than half a century. Under Hafez and Bashar al Assad, Syria, one of the ancient and vibrant societies of the Levant, was turned into a brutal police-state run by a small clique. Bashar's collapse on Sunday — it took an 11-day offensive by rebel groups — is a reminder that rule by dictators is "very strong", until it is not. Back in 2011, amid the Arab Spring, Bashar al Assad crushed the peaceful protests for change. Since then, his rule had been under great stress.

Even as the world celebrates the fall of a tyrant, it is important to remember that it does not take long for good news from the Middle East to turn bad. Everyone has their fingers crossed on whether the new rulers in Damascus can keep their word on developing a more pluralistic framework in Syria that respects minority rights and the enormous diversity of the nation. That the leader of the rebels who led the charge to Damascus, Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani, was a former al Qaeda operative raises questions about whether Syria might move from the tyrannical "secularism" of the Assads to an intolerant Islamist authoritarianism. Nor is it clear if the different factions of the rebel groups that have taken over Damascus will hang together in building a stable system of governance.

Adding to the massive domestic challenges is the role of external powers. It was the Iranian and Russian interventions that helped Assad stay in power at enormous cost to the Syrian people. Over the last few days, Tehran and Moscow, distracted by battles elsewhere, gave up on the dictator. Having been the biggest supporter of the Assad regime, Iran is undoubtedly the biggest loser. The loss of Syria punctures a big hole in the "axis of resistance" that Tehran had constructed against Israel. With a new regime in Damascus, Tehran loses its access to Syria and Lebanon. It is not clear if Russia can retain the air and naval bases it had acquired in Syria under the new regime; but unlike Tehran, Moscow retains some diplomatic leverage as a permanent member of the UNSC. Turkey is a major winner, having backed the rebel forces, and has ambitions to expand its influence in Syria and the broader Levant region. Although Israel is pleased to see Assad go, it would be wary of Syria falling into the hands of the extremist groups that could target Tel Aviv with renewed vigour. The moderate Arab states like Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates would not want to see radical Islamic groups destabilising the region. In Delhi, there is a lingering attachment to the Assad dynasty that had backed Delhi in its disputes with Islamabad over the decades. But the bells have tolled for the Assad dynasty. Delhi, whose stakes in the region are growing by the day, has no time to waste on sentimentalism; it must think of the post-Assad Middle East in broader strategic terms rather than the distorting prism of the competition with Pakistan.

IN A SWIFT and unpredictable operation, rebel forces have overrun Damascus and toppled the Assad regime. In a matter of days, following the fall of Aleppo, the second largest city, the fate of President Bashar al-Assad was sealed in the early hours of Sunday. Indeed, his ancestral hometown, Qardaha in the Latakia Province in the northwest — where his father Hafez and brother Basil were buried in the family mausoleum — was already under the control of the rebel forces.

Assad became the last of the Arab leaders to be toppled following domestic unrest in the city of Daraa, closer to the Jordanian border, on March 6, 2011. For over a decade, he survived, primarily due to the commitment and loyalty of the Assad-Army-Alawite triumvirate, and they swam together and survived. When this proved insufficient to counter dozens of rebel forces supported by various regional and extra-regional powers, Assad reached out for military help from Iran, Russia and Hezbollah. The decade-long active Russian intervention, which began in September 2015, shored up the beleaguered Assad regime and also prevented the international community, especially the United Nations, from actively intervening in ending the civil war. For their part, Iranian and Hezbollah fighters fought alongside government forces to recover and restrain rebel gains.

During this period, some Arab countries were critical of Assad for not "listening" to the voices of Syrians and for prioritising personal survival over the larger interest of Syria. The persistence of the Assad regime resulted in the Syrian expulsion from the Arab League in November 2011; however, the survival of Assad resulted in the League revoking its decision in May 2023, signalling the Syrian return to the Arab fold. In recent months, several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, began courting Syria, and they even hosted President Assad. The restoration of Iran-Saudi Arabia relations — mediated by China in March 2023 — partly improved the

situation. However, weekend events have radically altered the situation in Syria and beyond.

The end of the Bashar regime comes against the backdrop of a volatile and highly charged Middle Eastern order following the October 7, 2023, terror attacks by Hamas against Israel. One, despite the huge civilian casualties, hardships and widespread international criticism, Israel's military strategy brought some tangible, radical and tectonic shifts. There is considerable destruction and downgrading of the terror infrastructure of Hamas and Hezbollah, marked by the elimination of key figures of the militant groups, including Ismail Haniyeh, Hassan Nasrallah and Yahya Sinwar. These measures might not have completely eliminated the threats facing Israel, but the military capabilities of Hamas and Hezbollah are significantly downgraded.

Two, the military weakening of Hezbollah was accompanied by its unpopularity over its parallel foreign policy at the behest of Iran. This led to considerable resentment against the group within Lebanon and forced the Shia militant group to accept a temporary ceasefire with Israel. Among others, the ceasefire deal called for the pullback of Hezbollah militants beyond the Litani River or about 30 km north of the Israel-Lebanon border. Hezbollah was able to overrule this demand in the past, but not under current circumstances. Moreover, the involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian civil war was unpopular both inside Syria and Lebanon, and the latter ended up hosting over 1.5 million Syrian refugees, who account for nearly 25 per cent of the Lebanese population. In the eyes of several Lebanese civilians, by rallying around and fighting for the unpopular Assad regime, Hezbollah has directly contributed to the influx of Syrian refugees. The Lebanese discontent over the Syrian civil war, some believe, contributed to the intelligence leaks that resulted in the Israeli assassination of Nasrallah last September.

Three, the Islamic Republic of Iran, which leads the anti-Israeli forces in the Middle East under the banner of the Axis of Resistance, is internally weakened. Dispelling regional fears and contrary to its public rhetoric, Tehran chose not to respond to the October 26 Israeli strike believed to have been carried out by 100 fighter jets against 20 Iranian targets. Asking its proxies to pursue resistance while maintaining strategic silence signals the weakness of the Iranian strategy. Its options are extremely limited in light of the military defeats and setbacks suffered by its proxies. In the wake of Donald Trump's election, even Houthis are signalling friendly overtures. These are manifested in the internal debates taking place in Iran. President Masoud Pezeshkian represents the pragmatic wing that opposes and resists a more activist and militant strategy pursued by the clergy-dominated hardliners in Tehran.

There are initial signs that the forces of Iranian Revolutionary Guards are already pulling out of Syria. Indeed, literally hours before the rebel takeover, the Iranian officials left their mission in Damascus. Moreover, while providing political asylum to Assad, Russia is preoccupied with Ukraine and is unable to shore up additional support for Assad.

With the collapse of the Assad regime, two things are certain. One, Syria, as we have known it geographically since the end of World War II, is no longer possible. Two, Bashar Assad destroyed the lasting legacy of his father: Political stability. As Defence Minister Hafez lost the Golan Heights to Israel in 1967, and now, President Bashar lost the whole country to the rebels, some of whom are ideologically closer to the xenophobic ISIS. Will Syria and the wider Middle East be better off without Assad? There are no easy answers, but most probably not.

The writer teaches contemporary Middle East at Jawaharlal Nehru University

A HOT WINTER

Record temperature levels in 2024 signal deepening of climate crisis. Policymakers have their task cut out

IT'S ALL BUT certain that 2024 will be the warmest year on record. Latest data from the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) show that last November was the 16th month in a 17-month period when the average global temperature rise was more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-Industrial Revolution period. The Paris Pact commits its 196 signatories to keep global heating to below 1.5 degrees to limit the impact of climate disasters. The world came close to breaching that threshold last year. With the temperature rise in the first 11 months of 2024 exceeding 1.6 degrees, C3S warns that there will be a default on the Paris benchmark this year. That does not yet mean a contravention of the landmark climate treaty — its implementation is measured over at least a decade. But reversing temperature trends will require sustained action on several fronts.

Meteorologists had anticipated global temperatures to come down a tad this year after the planet heated to a record level in 2023. Their forecasts were hinged on the cooling effects of the La Nina, which was initially expected to set in around July and then in October. La Nina can only be confirmed if the Oceanic Niño Index consistently drops to at least -0.5 degrees. This threshold has not been met so far this year, leaving scientists perplexed — the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has admitted to being "spooked". Only twice in the past 75 years has La Nina set in later than October. Experts reckon that the La Nina will be weak even if it arrives mid-winter. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology estimates that it could even be delayed till February 2025. From affecting crop cycles and energy use to having a bearing on local pollution to increasing the vagaries of extreme weather events, the behaviour of this oceanic phenomenon poses a new climate-related challenge. Policymakers will have to prepare for the economic ramifications and scientists and Met bodies will have to work together to refine forecasting models.

Close on the heels of C3S's announcement on November temperatures, the Swiss Re Institute — the academic wing of the eponymous insurance major — released a report on the economic costs of extreme weather events. It estimated that climate vagaries cost the world \$320 billion this year, 25 per cent more than the average over the past decade. Meteorological extremes do not necessarily have to develop into disaster risks. Mitigation of GHG emissions and adaptation to weather vagaries hold the key to a climate-resilient world. If the record of post-Paris CoPs is any indication, national governments and global policymaking agencies have their task cut out.

CHOCOLATE, COFFEE, REALITY

Pantone's colour of the year for 2025 — Mocha Mousse — speaks simultaneously of indulgence and the everyday

FORGET FAIRYTALES. IF there is one rags-to-riches story worth telling, it is that of the colour brown. For the first time since Pantone began its colour trend forecasting in 1999, a shade of brown — Mocha Mousse — has been chosen as its colour of the year 2025. The fact that this "warming, brown hue imbued with richness" has been picked as the tone that will define the coming year is one of fashion's one-of-a-kind moments. Brown has risen from its common association with swamps and slush to represent "quiet luxury" and, in the case of Mocha Mousse, "delectable qualities of chocolate and coffee". Perhaps this is the demure response to Charli XCX's "Brat Green".

The internet is agog. Some complain about this "boring" choice while others speculate on the consumer trends that will champion the cause of the hitherto unremarkable brown. At a time when storytelling shapes marketing strategies and entire films are dedicated to increasing sales (hello *Barbie* and *The Lego Movie*), rest assured, luxury brands will release more tans, more walnut browns, more beige.

And yet, when Pantone began the colour of the year programme, it was meant to be educational — "to draw attention to the relationship between culture and colour" and promote the "language of colour" to describe the world. While its previous picks have largely been staid, with shades of blue and pink dominating the roster — 2024's "Peach Fuzz" also fought allegations of bias against non-White people — Mocha Mousse defies status quo. Brown, with its many textures and tones, denotes diversity. Brown is also the colour of reality: In a world reeling under wars and climate change, what could be more representative, than brown? And then, on a foggy winter morning, there's no greater comfort than a well-worn brown cashmere shawl and a steaming mug of hot chocolate.



HARMALA GUPTA

DIGNITY AT THE END

As spectre of ageing population looms, India can no longer neglect palliative care

DYING WITH DIGNITY is one of the most vexing challenges we face today. The recent passage of a bill in the House of Commons in Britain highlights this concern. A cry has been raised by a section of its citizenry, which is resonating across the globe, asking for assisted dying for themselves and for their loved ones in the face of unbearable suffering.

Data from Oregon — it was the first state to legalise assisted dying for the terminally ill in 1997 — shows that two-thirds of those who asked for help to die last year had cancer. Not surprisingly, the main reasons for patients to seek this recourse are loss of dignity, fear of becoming a burden, inadequate pain control and the financial implications of continuing treatment. What should also set alarm bells ringing is that research published in the JAMA Network Open suggests that among all cancer survivors, male adolescents and young adults (15-39) not only have the highest rate of death by suicide but that this rate has increased three-fold in recent years.

We have been let down by our policymakers, legislators, administrators, medical institutions and practitioners, the judicial and health systems and society at large. The debate in the House of Commons brought these shortcomings sharply into focus with demands for more investment of government resources in palliative care. It was shocking to hear that in the UK, considered the mother of the modern hospice and palliative care movement, hospices have had to shut down because they depend primarily on funds from charity. Accessible, affordable and compassionate palliative care can save many lives.

Based on our 28 years of experience looking after patients with serious health-related suffering, there is no doubt in our mind that palliative care must be universally available and made part of the public healthcare system. With non-communicable diseases on the rise and the prospect of an ageing population looming large, we must act now. We can not afford to neglect this aspect of care as what are now isolated cries for assistance in dying are likely to become a chorus. For India, this will be disastrous.

At CanSupport, we can testify to this. We have had a few people with terminal cancer who had suicidal intentions but once their issues were sorted out, not only did they continue to live well but they also died with dignity. This is what palliative care achieves by focusing on the physical, psycho-social, spiritual and financial needs of patients and their caregivers.

Yet, this care is accessible to less than 4 per cent of those who need it. It is largely provided by NGOs that suffer from a paucity of funds and face a number of hurdles, especially procuring a licence for oral morphine, the drug of choice for unremitting cancer pain. Our laws must also ensure that advance medical directives or living wills are executed and complied with.

Recently, the Supreme Court of India disallowed parents from removing the feeding tube of a 30-year-old who had been in a vegetative state for 11 long years after suffering a head injury. The parents pleaded that they could no longer afford to look after their son. Such demands are not isolated and are a symptom of our callous indifference to suffering.

When CanSupport heard of this family's plight, our palliative care team visited them and discussed with the parents how best to look after their bedridden son, as well as answering queries which had never been addressed.

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lation looming large, we must act now. We can not afford to neglect this aspect of care as what are now isolated cries for assistance in dying are likely to become a chorus. For India, this will be disastrous.

Unlike parts of the Western world, we are a highly stratified society. The potential misuse of a law on assisted dying, despite guardrails, would be immense. Marginal and vulnerable populations who are financially dependent on family members and the state are likely to be disproportionately affected. Developments in Canada after the legalisation of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) testify to this.

Not only has MAID become a slippery slope, with calls now being made to include more sections of the population in its ambit, but Canadian healthcare workers believe that the provision of accessible and quality healthcare services for those most vulnerable is beginning to deteriorate, pushing them in the direction of MAID. In view of this, a coalition of disability rights organisations in Canada have filed a Charter challenge against the so-called track two of the MAID law, which allows individuals to seek MAID even when death is not reasonably foreseeable. In the UK, too, the British Medical Association has expressed its unease with a law that would require doctors to offer assisted suicide to their patients.

Palliative and hospice care offer the tools to prevent serious health-related suffering. The question is, do we have the commitment and necessary foresight to use them with wisdom and compassion?

The writer is founder-president, CanSupport



DECEMBER 10, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

STILL HAZARDOUS

ALTHOUGH SEVEN DAYS have passed since the leakage of the poisonous gas that killed 2,000, the technicians and chemists working round the clock have not been able to decide on a safe method to dispose of the remaining 30 tonnes of Methyl Isocyanate. Experts are reportedly concerned that although nitrogen is being provided to purge the deadly MIC, if it is kept for too long, a rise in temperature may lead to another leakage.

TEHRAN AIRPORT CRISIS

IRAN DECLARED A state of emergency at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport after hijackers

holding a Kuwaiti airline threatened to blow it up. The four Arab hijackers, who are demanding the release of 17 prisoners from Kuwait prisons, killed four of their hostages, including two Americans, in the earlier five days of the hijack drama.

WORKERS IN DANGER

THOUSANDS OF WORKERS in Faridabad may be dying a slow death after inhaling toxic gases continuously emitted by chemical factories in the industrial area. The Haryana government is treating the chemical factory owners with kid-gloves because they claim to have "connections" at the highest political level. Chlorine

and acidic effluents emitted by the factories have caused extensive damage to electric, water and sewerage installations in the area.

TAMIL MILITANTS STRIKE

WITH THE TAMIL militants in northern Sri Lanka stepping up their activities and the army indulging in retaliatory attacks on the civilian Tamil population, the picture is one of "slow genocide" of the Tamils. The imposition of a 42-hour curfew in three northern districts indicates that either something big, other than the hijacking of three oil tankers by Tamil militants, has happened or that the army is preparing for a major onslaught.

The diminution of a party

At least three sets of red lines were crossed by Akal Takht's public interrogation of Sukhbir Singh Badal, and sentencing



DESHKAAL
BY YOGENDRA YADAV

SOMETHING DEEPLY TROUBLING is happening in Punjab. And it is not just the condemnable bid on the life of Akali leader Sukhbir Singh Badal. The manner in which the Akal Takht has intervened to resolve the crisis of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) raises deeper political and legal-constitutional issues that must not be glossed over. When we face nothing short of a dismantling of the secular republic, we cannot afford to be casual or selective about such issues.

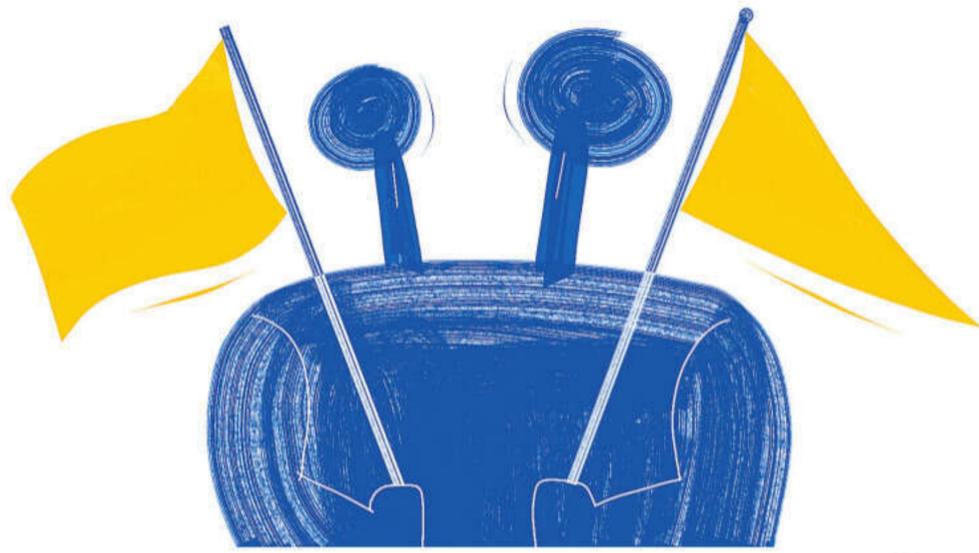
The facts of the case are straightforward. The SAD faces an existential crisis following a series of electoral debacles, ever since the younger Badal inherited his father's political legacy and courted serious charges of misgovernance, corruption and political ineptitude. This led to a full-blown rebellion within the party that threatened its disintegration. This is when the Akal Takht, the highest religious authority of the Sikhs, stepped in. It summoned Sukhbir Badal, interrogated him publicly on allegations against his government and his leadership of the party. He was sentenced to a symbolic *seva* at the Golden Temple and a committee was appointed to restructure the party. The attempt on Sukhbir Badal's life, thankfully averted by an alert policeman, happened when he was serving his sentence.

Now, some of this is perfectly understandable. A robust political articulation of regional concerns is the glue that binds many border states to the Indian union. Therefore, an effective marginalisation and possible extinction of a regional political force like the SAD in a sensitive state like Punjab should be a matter of concern.

Its absence from the political spectrum would hurt India as well as Punjab. Such a vacuum may spawn extremist voices outside democratic politics. Besides, a significant section of Sikhs inside and outside Punjab still nurse the wounds of 1984, especially since nothing has happened against the guilty. The presence of the SAD in state and national politics, with all its flaws and failures, is a soothing signal to the community. Also, there is no doubt that Badal Jr has not inherited the political sagacity, tact and popularity of his father. He has been driving the party downhill. Someone needed to intervene to stem this free fall.

This much makes sense. But the real issues are: Who could have, or should have, intervened in this matter? Was it appropriate for the Akal Takht to intervene and arbitrate? And, was it appropriate for the SAD to submit itself to the supreme command of the Akal Takht? This is not an internal matter of a party or of a community or between a party and some religious leaders. There are at least three sets of red lines that seem to have been crossed here.

First of all, there is a regress of the SAD from a regional party to a party of one religious community. The SAD originated as a panthic organisation that has its roots in a



C.R. Sasikumar

religious reform movement. But following the successful return of the SAD to power in the post-terrorism days, the Akali Dal made a big shift in 1996 in its Moga convention from being a "panthic" party to being a Punjabi party, from a religious-regional to a purely regional entity. While the SAD continued to mainly represent Sikh interests, over the years it offered membership and leadership positions to many Hindus. The message of the latest developments is loud and clear: It is a party of and for the *panth*, of the majority Sikh community in Punjab, accountable to its religious establishment. If we accept this, how do we critique those who wish to run this country as per the wishes of the majority Hindu community?

The second issue is about constitutional propriety. How can a registered and recognised political party, that is required to take a pledge of secularism, submit itself to the supreme command of a religious authority? Obviously, the constitution of the SAD, mandated for all parties under the law, does not mention the Akal Takht as the arbiter of its internal disputes. Now, a political party should be free to take its ideological guidance and advice from outside the party. There is nothing anyone can do if a party leadership seeks informal advice from religious leaders. Indeed, there are parties that are known to be tied to caste or religious organisations and that take their guidance. But here we are speaking of a formal trial conducted in full public view and a binding judgment. How does that sit with the role of a political party that competes for constitutional office? How does anyone, then, question the role of the RSS in running the affairs of the BJP and its governments?

Finally, there are serious concerns about the propriety of the Akal Takht interfering in political matters. The Akal Takht is not just a spiritual institution of a religious community, independent of law and state, that exercises moral authority. The *jathedars* of the Akal Takht are appointed and removed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) established by the law of the land. Needless to say, the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 nowhere authorises the SGPC or

The SAD originated as a panthic organisation that has its roots in a religious reform movement. But following the successful return of the SAD to power in the post-terrorism days, the Akali Dal made a big shift in 1996 in its Moga convention from being a 'panthic' party to being a Punjabi party, and from a religious-regional to a purely regional entity. While the SAD continued to mainly represent Sikh interests, over the years it offered membership and leadership positions to many Hindus. The message of the latest developments is loud and clear: It is a party of and for the *panth*, of the majority Sikh community in Punjab, accountable to its religious establishment. If we accept this, how do we critique those who wish to run this country as per the wishes of the majority Hindu community?

anyone appointed by it to interfere in politics. The Akal Takht is there to offer guidance to the community in faith-related matters. And if both parties agree, it may adjudicate or arbitrate in social disputes. There have been questions about its authority to "excommunicate" members of the community. Former Union Home Minister Buta Singh was excommunicated for his alleged complicity in rebuilding Harmandir Sahib without involving the community following Operation Blue Star. Surjit Singh Barnala, then the CM of Punjab, was punished by the Akal Takht for ordering the police to enter the Gurdwara. These were controversial but borderline cases, way back in the past and pertaining to religious matters.

The present case is qualitatively different, and crosses the red line. The public trial of Sukhbir Badal was political. Only one of the many questions formally posed by the Akal Takht to him related to a religious issue, namely his mishandling of the "be-*adabi*" (desecration) of the holy Granth. Everything else pertained to his role in government and as leader of the party that affected the "panth". Of course, the Akali Dal and its leaders have no issues with it; they must have sought this intervention. Yet that does not answer how this purely religious institution acquired the authority to order the restructuring of a political party. If this is acceptable, what's wrong with Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sacha Sauda instructing his followers to vote for the BJP?

Worse, would this action not reduce the Akal Takht to the level of any political entity, subject to the same kind of public scrutiny and mud-slinging that any political body exposes itself to? Would the Akal Takht now fall back upon the "piri-miri" doctrine that argues for non-separation of religious and political authority for the Sikh community? If this holds for the Sikhs, how can the BJP not invoke it to defend the toxic intrusion of *babas*, *yogis* and *swamis* that it has unleashed into the body politic?

The writer is member, *Swaraj India* and national convenor of *Bharat Jodo Abhiyaan*. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The ongoing crisis, playing out against the backdrop of the Malaysian freeze on recruitment of new foreign workers earlier in the year, shows the urgency of addressing procedural bottlenecks and irregularities to better protect the interests of our workers."
— THE DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH

In Sri Lanka, a delicate negotiation

NPP's ability to bring about reconciliation between ethnic communities depends on relieving economic pressures



AHILAN KADIRGAMAR AND
DEVAKA GUNAWARDENA

SRI LANKA HAS witnessed a major political shift in recent months. Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the National People's Power (NPP) coalition won the presidential election held on September 21. It was the first time a candidate from neither of the two major parties that have ruled Sri Lanka since independence, or their offshoots, became president. Then, on November 14, the NPP won a landslide victory in parliament. It won over two thirds of the seats, a number unprecedented under the system of proportional representation.

Consequently, the centre-left NPP government now has a tremendous mandate. Will it push back against the IMF austerity programme and provide relief to the people while rebuilding the economy in the aftermath of Sri Lanka's worst economic crisis since independence? And can it find the political will for constitutional changes to abolish the authoritarian executive presidency and share power with minority communities?

The NPP draws its strength from the powerful uprising against President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022 for his failure to address the economic crisis. Across the ethnic divide, people are focused on their livelihoods. This has opened the space to challenge the polarising but mutually dependent Sinhala Buddhist and Tamil nationalisms. Indeed, the most surprising outcome of the parliamentary elections was that for the first time a national party has won the electorates in the Tamil nationalist stronghold of the Northern Province.

The results represent a break with the past. The NPP's chief constituent party, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), has a problematic history complicit with Sinhala nationalism. Its insurrection in the late 1980s opposed the Indo-Lanka Accord and devolution of power. It further joined a coalition with the government led by Mahinda Rajapaksa during the last phase of the civil war. These actions have raised concerns about the party's position on minorities.

Since the end of the war in 2009, the JVP has embraced a range of democratic causes. However, it has stayed relatively silent on ethnic issues, gesturing towards national harmony rather than advancing power sharing with minorities. Nevertheless, with its victories in the recent elections, the NPP leadership has made it clear that it is increasingly open to engaging with minority communities, especially in the North, East, and Hill Country. That includes promising the release of lands occupied by the military in the war-torn regions. Given its own popularity in the South, it has the latitude to undertake these measures.

In this context, the NPP's ability to pursue efforts towards reconciliation are not solely determined by forces within Sri Lanka. The country is now buffeted

by the crosscurrents of an unravelling global order. Many observers have tended to accuse Sri Lanka of creating its own problems. That included the successive failures of the majority leadership to address the concerns of minority communities. But today, the country's exposure to external dangers reflects the growing weight of foreign over domestic politics in constraining or enabling democratic outcomes.

The NPP government is bound to face economic disruptions and geopolitical manoeuvres. It must prepare the country and take decisive action to manage the shocks. Trade volatility could undermine essential imports while global interest rate hikes may further aggravate Sri Lanka's debt crisis.

In this context, how would regional powers at loggerheads, such as India and China, deal with a Sri Lankan foreign policy of neutrality? Sri Lanka was at the centre of the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike that moment, there appears to be little appetite for a similar coalition of countries in the Global South today. The NPP government will have to weigh the value of economic support from major powers and the political cost of aligning too closely with any of them.

The determining factor is Sri Lanka's development trajectory, including sources of development financing and its trade relationships. The new government should seek investments that align with a new development plan that can defend people's living standards and rejuvenate livelihoods. Sri Lanka must be able to use international funding to make its own decisions about how to sustain its people.

That approach stands in stark contrast to the recent focus of funding mega infrastructure projects, which have been accompanied by speculation in luxury urban real estate. Moreover, Sri Lanka must build strategic complementarities through trade, rather than being told to liberalise its economy willy-nilly. The latter would only put further strain on the balance of payments.

Accordingly, a change in external engagement is urgently needed. India played a major role in providing Sri Lanka a lifeline during the Covid-19 pandemic and related economic woes. But India's bridge financing came with the assertion that an IMF agreement was the only way out. The IMF programme and its ongoing austerity measures are going to be perhaps the biggest challenge for the new government. There is tremendous pressure from the West and India to stay the course.

The IMF path is bound to create a tremendous backlash given the social suffering. The NPP leadership's ability to bring about reconciliation between Sri Lanka's ethnic communities depends on relieving the economic pressures on ordinary people. If the new government fails, it would create room for xenophobic forces that would also feed into the already unstable global order. Consequently, the choice is clear. Dissanayake and his government should be given the space to act on the people's mandate for change in Sri Lanka.

Kadirgamar is a political economist and senior lecturer, University of Jaffna. Gunawardena is a political economist and research fellow with the Social Scientists' Association in Sri Lanka



G AMARJIT SHARMA

Death of empathy

Hard ethnic lines in Manipur have led to a narrowing of the public sphere

WOMEN AND CHILDREN, languishing as internally displaced people (IDPs), were killed and thrown in the river. A woman was burnt alive in her house. Another woman was shot dead while harvesting in a paddy field. The latest episode of violence in the Jiribam district of Manipur in November accentuated the deeply precarious condition of people in the state since the beginning of violence in May 2023. Several such brutal killings can be cited in the last 17 months of Manipur violence. Why do horrific killings not lead to collective ethical actions against violence and redefine our politics? Judith Butler, renowned philosopher and gender theorist, maintains that the precariousness of life and vulnerabilities of the body due to pain and grief potentially enable us to see one another as equals, leading to collective ethical actions. But what we see in Manipur is different. There is a need to deliberate on the state of brutal politics, the seeming death of collective grief and the absence of ethical action against violence.

On November 14, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) announced the extension of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in six police station limits in five districts of Manipur on the ground of "volatile" situation and "active participation of insurgent groups in heinous acts of crime". In effect, to the contrary, the extension of AFSPA has gone down as an instru-

ment to deepen an already divided society and geographies. The extension signifies not only the continuity of extraordinary laws but also the institution of an extraordinarily fragile civil life. It is reminiscent of the experience of violence in postcolonial northeast India and the popular movement against it based on the values of right to life and justice. One would expect that the experience of the struggle would have deepened respect for each other's lives and dignity. What we see is the opposite. The brutality that such people's struggles criticised and challenged in the past has become part of the divisive politics.

Insurgency has not ended. The state's impunity too, has now apparently extended extra-judicially to various nodal power centres in society. Civil society groups that dominated rights politics and challenged military forces' unmitigated powers have fallen silent. Instead, groups that seemingly have a symbiotic relationship with ambiguous state and non-state powers dominate the public discourse. In the past year-and-half of the violence, civilian groups freely roamed fully armed, almost hijacking public life in the name of ethnic demands or territorial identity. In this context, one wonders where the state is. In the official state narrative, there is a rendering of the state as a third-party mediator, ascribing current violence entirely as a result of inter-community "historical" hos-

tilities on land and identity. The reality is that while the state fails to act swiftly, armed groups enjoy impunity against punishment for crimes they have committed. The sovereign is there. But it is not exercising its writs effectively to end the violence.

Paraphrasing philosopher Walter Benjamin's critique of violence, violent ethnic politics institutes political order, and violence conserves ethnic politics. Such politics determines who is and who is not, who belongs and who does not in an ethnic enclosure. This politics does not allow us to see vulnerability as an equal experience. It tends to privilege one vulnerability over another. Precarity of life and weaknesses are politically ghettoised and not equally seen and experienced. When people mobilise against the extension of AFSPA, other sections of society feel the necessity of the Act in all districts of Manipur. One individual death is the death of a community, while another community is regarded as the perpetrator. While a section of the people feel the protection of security forces, others feel insecurity from the same security forces. While one feels the state's complicity in the violence, the other feels the protection of the state. The state is differently felt, accessed, and interpreted.

In this precarious circumstance, there is a widespread incapacity to share pain and suffering in Manipur. While fighting in the name of ethnic nationhood and territorial

identity, debates and discussion on public order and civility on matters of life and death have stopped. Across communities, anyone who speaks against the self-determined politics of territorial identity or autonomous ethnic identity is silenced or threatened. Ever since violence erupted in May 2023, the unspoken dictum is to speak only to defend your community, or to keep silent. Many feel that long years of self-termination movements have almost become ploys for those who want to preserve political influence or create their own spheres of influence. The unfortunate result is the death of the public conscience and that of a critical public sphere.

However, that does not mean one should stop thinking against and beyond the violence. The violent disruption in daily lives, anxiety, uncertainty, and brutal politics can be looked at as critical to rethink our selves and our politics. Taking such moments as those that enable collective moral action, at least for a people who have a shared history of violence in postcolonial northeast India, is not political naïveté. There is still a silent moral collective that thinks against violence and ruthless politics. The time has come to give space to such a collective.

The writer teaches at the Special Centre for the Study of North East India, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SHORTAGE BURDEN

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'ATB warning' (IE, December 9). India's progress in addressing TB will be jeopardised if there is a shortage of drugs. The government's failure to provide the necessary medication can lead to a catastrophic number of TB cases. There are pre-existing issues that the country needs to resolve, including structural, psychosocial, and clinical barriers. For instance, there are transportation challenges and time and money problems that come in the way of distributing medication. A shortage of TB drugs will burden the healthcare system, increase susceptibility, and render the 2025 target of eliminating TB impossible to accomplish.

L.R. Murmu, New Delhi

TREAD CAUTIOUSLY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Unfreezing ties' (IE, December 9). The impending change in geopolitics, coupled with the apparent slowdown of the Chinese economy, has compelled Beijing to initiate a broader dialogue with Delhi. Indian industries depend heavily on China for technological parts, raw materials, and machinery. While Chinese investments

can inject much-needed capital into the Indian economy, we must proceed with caution, particularly in sectors like telecommunications that have security concerns. Small and medium enterprises are likely to struggle against the lower costs and higher quality of Chinese products, potentially disrupting the "Make in India" initiative. A graded opening of the economy to China must be the way.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Unfreezing ties' (IE, December 9). S Jaishankar's recent statement in Parliament regarding India-China relations is a significant articulation of India's position on the bilateral relationship. While his comments underscore the importance of resolving border disputes and maintaining peace in sensitive areas, the effectiveness of such statements depends on the willingness of both nations to engage. The minister's emphasis on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity reflects a firm stance. However, lasting progress requires more than rhetoric; it demands tangible action. Confidence-building measures, strengthened communication channels, and mutual respect for each other's concerns are prerequisites to ease tensions.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,K.M. MRIDULA SHUKLA, W/O RAJESHVAR TRIPATHI, R/O PLOT NO-641, SECOND FLOOR NITI-KHAND-1, LINDIRAPURAM CHAZIABAD, UP-201014. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MRIDULA TRIPATHI, FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

0040762989-4

I, VEER PAL, S/O LATE AMRIT SINGH, R/O-H.NO.91/188, JATAV BASTI, VILLAGE-CHILLA, SARONDA KHADAR, DELHI-110091, inform that in my daughter's name (SIRSTY) wrongly-written in her school records. Her correct name is SRSHTI, for all future purposes.

0040762949-6

I, Sunil S/O Nathu Ram, R/O Shop No. K-26-27, Wazir Pur, J.J Colony, Delhi-110052, have changed my name to Sunil Rathor for all Purposes.

0040762990-3

I, Suhail Ahmed Khanday, S/O Bashir Ahmed Khanday, R/O-Tazipora, Tehsil/District-Kulgam. In my school records the name of my father has been wrongly mentioned as Bashir Ahmad Khanday instead of Bashir Ahmed Khanday. It needs correction. Objections be filled to CBSE authorities within a week.

0020485644-1

I, Sharmila Devi/Sharmila Yadav, W/O Madan Pal, R/O-460 Sunset Road Sector-42, Gurgaon-122001, have changed my Name to SHARMILA permanently.

0040762986-1

I, Sanjeev s/o Vijay pal, R/O-E-44/a-131 new Seemapuri delhi-110095, have changed my name to Mohd. Sameer, for all future purposes.

0040762989-3

I, SUMITRA CHOUHAN, WIFE OF, GANPAT GANESH PRESENTLY RESIDING AT 230(F/F), ASHOKA ENCLAVE MAIN, SECTOR-35, FARIDABAD, HARYANA, PIN-121003. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM SUMITRA CHOUHAN TO SUMITRA CHAUHAN VIDE- AFFIDAVIT, DATE 09, DEC-2024.

0040762949-8

I, SOMVEER S/O LATE SHRI. SUKHPAL, R/O H.No.-36, YADAV MOHALLA, NEAR-OLD CHAUPAL AF, RAJOKARI, SOUTH WEST DELHI-110038, inform that SOMVEER and SOMBIR, both names are same person.

0040762993-1

I, Ronaq W/o Riaz Ahmed, R/O, House, No.2872-74, third Floor, Main Bazar Kucha Chelan, Darya Ganj, Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Ronaq Jahan, permanently

0040762989-9

I, Ravindra Yadav, S/o-Satbir Singh R/O, H.No.88/21, Street, No.4, Raj Nagar, Khandsa-Road, Gurgaon, (Haryana)-122001, have changed my Minor Son's name, from Hitarth Gonthwal to Hitarth Yadav.

0040762978-7

I, Pooja Wadhwa alias Pooja Narang, D/o Bhagwan Dass Wadhwa W/o Sumit Narang R/O H.No.15 Block-BJ, West Shalimar Bagh North West Delhi-110088 have changed my name to Pooja Narang

0040762986-4

I, Pawan Kumar, S/o-Budh Singh, R/O, H.No.265, Tara Patti, Near Gramin-Bank, Khandsa(104), Gurgaon, (Haryana)-122004, have changed my name to Pawan Raghav.

0040762978-5

I, PUSHP S/O ANUP KUMAR R/O A-1/72B MAA SHAKTI APARTMENT PASCHIM VIHAR DELHI-110063, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PUSHP CHOUDHARY.

0040762949-3

I, PUNIT GUPTA, S/O Ram Lal, R/O A-27, Gali No.5, Badli Extension Po, Samai Pur, North-West, Delhi-110042, have change my name PUNIT GUPTA to RAHUL GUPTA.

0040762978-3

I, Pooja Tutlani D/o Urmil Tutlani R/O A-593, sector-46, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201303, have changed my name to Pooja Tutlani

0130047242-1

I, Nirmal Kumar Sekhani, S/O Trilokhand Sekhani, H.No-A-7A/2 First-Floor Block-A, Rana-Pratap Bagh, Delhi-110007, have changed my name, from Nirmal Kumar Sekhani to Nirmal Sekhani, for all future purposes.

0040762978-4

I, NIYA RANI SARKAR, W/O NIKHIL CHANDRA BRAHMA, presently, residing at, VILL-CHILURGHAT, PO-BHATIBARI, PS-SAMUKTALA DISTT-ALIPURDUAR, WEST BENGAL-736121, have changed my name from NIYA RANI SARKAR to NIBHA BRAHMA.

0040762949-9

I, Lekh Raj S/O Mulakh Raj R/O S-2/122, Old Mahavir Nagar Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Lekh Raj Lamba.

0040762989-5

I, Mohammad Owais Riaz, S/O Riaz Ahmed, R/O House, No.2872-74 third-Floor, Main Bazar Kucha Chelan, Darya Ganj, Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Mohammad Owais permanently

0040762989-8

I, Lakshita Jain, D/o Raj kumar Pahwa, 3409 Upper Ground-Floor, Mahindra Park, Rani Bagh, Delhi-110034, have changed my name LAKSHITA PAHWA Permanently.

0040762989-2

I, Khushal S/o Raj kumar Pahwa, 3409 Upper Ground Floor, Mahindra Park, Rani Bagh, Delhi-110034, have changed my name KHUSHAL PAHWA Permanently.

0040762989-1

I, KRISHAN GOPAL, S/O ROSHAN LAL MALHOTRA, residing at, 2N-38/B, NIT, FARIDABAD, HARYANA, 121001, have changed my name to KRISHAN GOPAL MALHOTRA, for all future purpose.

0040762949-1

I, KALAPANA PANWAR, W/O-SH. ANURAG SINGH, R/O-MIG-1218, SECTOR-3, VASUNDHRA, GHAZIABAD, U.P.-201012, HAVE CHANGED, MY NAME, TO KALPANA SINGH.

0040762990-2

I, Jawahar Lal S/o Kumar Prasad R/o 499, Gali, No-3, Main Market, Jhandapur, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201010, have changed my name to Jawahar Prasad.

0040762990-5

I, JASIKA JUNEJA, W/O-SHIVAM ARORA, R/O FLAT-151, TOWER-G, 11TH, AVENUE GAUR CITY-2, SECTOR-16C, GREATER NOIDA WEST, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO JASSIKA JUNEJA.

0040762990-1

I, Deepak Kumar, S/o Jagdish Singh, H.No.8, UGF Back-Side, Gali, No.-2, Block-B, Vikas Nagar, Uttam nagar, West-Delhi-110059, have changed my name to Deepak.

0040762978-6

I, Daleep Kumar Taral S/o Nek Ram R/O Flat-1203, Tower-5, NRI-Residency Sector-45, Noida G.B.Nagar (U.P.)-201301, have changed my name to Daleep Kumar for all purposes.

0040762990-2

I, Chandra Prakash S/o Kanhiya Lal R/O H.No. DLF Phase-3, Natpukur Gurgaon (Haryana)-122002, have changed my name to Chander Parkash.

0040762978-8

I, Bhuvneshvaribha Jadeja, w/o Aniruddhsinh Jadeja, R/O, C-801, Nimbus Hyde-Park, Sector-78, VTC, Noida, Gautambuddha nagar, up-201301, have changed my name Bhuvaneshwari Jadeja, for purpose.

0040762986-3

I, Arti Bhartwal D/o Satya Prasad and W/o, Pankaj Kumar R/O, H.No.234, A-Block, Bharat-Vihar, Dwaraka, New Delhi-110078, have changed my name to Arti Singh after marriage.

0040762990-4

I, Anil Kumar Talwar, S/o-Bharat Mittar Talwar, Address: 62, Second Floor, East Avenue-Road, East Punjabi-Bagh, New-Delhi-110026, have changed my Name to Anil Talwar, for all, Future Purposes.

0040762978-2

I, Anil Kumar Talwar, S/o Bharat Mittar Talwar, Address: 62, Second Floor, East Avenue Road, East Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi-110026, have changed my Name to Anil Talwar, for all, Future Purposes.

0040762949-7

I, Aika W/o Sh. Deepak Singhal R/O-25/36 Lane No.16, Vishwas Nagar, Delhi-110032, have changed my name to Aarti Singhal after marriage, for all purposes.

0040762978-10

I, AMITAVA KUMAR SINHA, S/O KRISHNA MURALI SINHA, R/O 1552, CATANIA, MAHAGUN MASCOT, CROSSING REPUBLIC, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH 201016, have changed my name to AMITAVA SINHA, For all purpose.

0040762978-1

I, ALOK PAHUJA, S/O VED PARKASH PAHUJA, R/O, H.No-10915, Gali, No-19, Pratap-Nagar, Opposite gulabi bagh thana, Delhi-110007, have changed my name to ALOK KUMAR permanently.

0040762949-5

I, AAKANKSHA MISHRA, D/O-RAJEEV KUMAR MISHRA & RACHNA MISHRA, R/O B-147, SECTOR-22, NOIDA GBN, UP, have changed my name, from AAKANKSHA to AAKANKSHA MISHRA, for all, future purposes.

0040762989-7

I, Vinod Kumar S/o. Mulkh Raj R/O. 63, Ground Floor, Kailash Hills, East of Kailash, New Delhi 110065 have changed my name to Vinod Kumar Arora

0040762904-1

I, Sakshi Gulia W/o-Srikant Mathur R/O-H.No.258, Koko Bagadi Pana, Karala, Delhi-110081, have changed my name to Sakshi Mathur for all purposes.

0040762941-1

I, Renu Nirmal Dhameja, W/O Nirmal Dhameja, R/O D703, The Hyde Park, Sector-78, Noida, Gautam Budha Nagar, UP-201304, have changed my name to Renu Dhameja for all purpose

0070938922-1

I, Reena Jain W/o Amit Jain R/o B-9/151 Flat Sector-5 Rohini Delhi-110085 have changed from Reena Goyal to Reena Jain for all purposes.

0070938964-1

I, NEETU, D/O RAMA SHANKAR PANDEY, R/O B-444, SECOND FLOOR, AVANTIKA, SECTOR-1, ROHINI, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110085. Have changed my name to NEETU SHARMA For all future purposes

0070938999-1

I, Manish Gupta S/o Ajit Parsad Gupta, R/O-85, J.K. Apartment Block-A-3, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my minor son's name Naitik Gupta to Naaetech Gupta, Permanently.

0040762717-4

I, MOHAMMAD ARSH ANSARI S/O MOHAMMAD SALEEM ANSARI R/O 2965 2ND FLOOR, CHOTI BARADARI BALLIMARAN, CHANDNI CHOWK, DELHI-110006, have changed my name to MOHAMMAD ARSH ANSARI Permanently

0070938994-1

I, Lakshya Israni S/o Bharat Israni R/O House no-34/211, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, South Delhi, New Delhi-110024 have changed my name to Lakshay Israni for all future purposes

0070938982-1

I, Manju W/O Lekh Raj Lamba, R/O S-2/122, Old Mahavir Nagar Delhi-110018 have changed my name to Manju Lamba.

0040762989-6

I, Kapil Mohan Bhadana S/o Sh. Satbir Bhadana, R/O-Mohan-Farm-209, Ikram road, V.P.O-Pali, Faridabad, Haryana-121004. I, informed that kapil Mohan Bhadana, and Kapil mohan is one and the same person. The Correct-name is Kapil Mohan Bhadana

0040762717-5

I, KAVITA w/o PARVEEN KUMAR R/O 478, Main Ghevara Road, Teen Pana, KANJAWALA, Delhi-110081 have changed my name to KAVITA KATARIA.

0040762892-1

I, Jaya D/o Ajay Kumar Bhatnagar R/O B-101, The Lions CGHS, Sector-56, Gurgaon, Haryana-122011, have changed my name to Jaya Bhatnagar.

0040762903-1

I, HITESH Kumar Srivastava S/O Rashmi Srivastava R/O H.No 218B/6K Jayantipur Sulem Sarai Prayagraj U.P.-211011 have changed my son's name from Samarth Srivastava to Akhar Srivastava for all purposes.

0040762962-1

I, Girjesh Balbir S/o Balbir R/O House No.5-A, DDA Flats, 32 Quarters, Arkashan Road Ram Nagar, Pahar Ganj, Delhi-110055 have declare that Both names GIRJESH BALBIR & GIRJESH one and the same person. My actual name is GIRJESH BALBIR.

0070938923-1

I, DEEPAI SHARMA, W/O MOHIT ARORA, R/O EA-152, INDERPURI, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110012. Have changed my name to DEEPAI ARORA For all future purposes.

0070938990-1

I, ASHA, W/o Virendra Kumar Midha, R/O A-21, Ashok Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP-201001, have changed my name to ASHA MIDHA, for all purposes.

0040762894-1

I, AKASHAT WADHWHA, S/O NAVEEN KUMAR WADHWHA, R/O B-1/177, 3RD FLOOR, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-110058 have changed my name to AKSHAT WADHWHA

0070938921-1

I, AARTI D/o Sham Lal, R/O D-468 Tagore Garden Extn, Delhi 110027, have change my name to AARTI SHARMA.

0040762949-2

I, SURYA PRAKASH S/O MAHAVIR PRASHAD, DOB- 15-07-1970 R/O A-5/30 Paschim Vihar New Delhi-110063 have Change Name, Father Name, Dob from SURYA PRAKASH GOYAL S/O MAHABIR PRASHAD GOYAL DOB- 29-09-1967 FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

0070938925-1

I, Rajesh S/o Mohender Kumar R/O House Number-10408, Street No-1, Bagichi Allauddin, Multani Dhanda Pahar Ganj, Swami Ram Tirth Nagar, New Delhi, Central Delhi, Delhi-110055, have changed my name to Rajesh Vesarwal

0070938966-1

I, Jaibeer singh, S/O Azad Singh, Add/1250, 26 BEHIND HARI RICE MILL, WEST RAM-NAGAR, SONIPAT, Haryana-131001, changed my name to Jaiveer.

0040762986-2

I, Meghna Gandhi Mendhiratta W/O Nikhil Mendhiratta R/O Tower 34 Unit No-001, Lotus Boulevard Espacia, Sector 100, Noida Uttar Pradesh. Have Change My Name To Meghna Gandhi For All Future Purposes.

0070938979-1

I, PRABHA SINHA W/O LATE SH RAJESHWAR PRASAD R/O Y 321, VIVEKANAND CGHS LTD PLOT NO 2 SECTOR 5 DWARKA NEW DELHI HAVE LOST ORIGINAL SHARE CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY VIVEKANAND CGHS LTD NAME OF H S RANA VIDE BOOK NO 40 & SR NO 36, DATED 26/05/1994 FINDER CONTACT 9999463512.

0040762905-1

I, Ranjini Muralidhar D/o V.R.K. Pillai have lost my property's original share certificate of Flat No.-22, Vidhi Apartments, plot no. 116, I.P. Extension, Delhi-110092. Finder contact 981327497

0040762900-1

LOST AND FOUND
To be known to all that my Client Vijay Kumar Sharma S/o Sh. Vishnu Dutt Sharma R/O WZ-65A, Meenakshi Garden, Tikla Nagar, New Delhi-110018. The Original Property document i.e. Sale Deed, Registered On 22.06.1986 and Original GPA Regd On 18.09.1953 property vide Plot No. 151-A, MPL No. WZ-65A, Area 210 Sq. Yds, Meenakshi Garden, Tikla Nagar, New Delhi-110018 has been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, Vide NCR/LR No.2376484/2024 dated: 07/12/2024. Any Person(s) claiming any right, interest, in any objection or found in possession of original documents may write with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

0070938994-1

LOST AND FOUND
To be known to all that I, Nirmal Sharma W/o Sh. Mukesh Sharma D/o Sh. Ram Swaroop Vats R/o G-28A, Gali No. 2, Shakarpur, East Delhi-110082, am the original attorney of Flat No. 3135, Sector-A, Pocket-B & C, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-70 vide File No. F12513187/SFS IX/VII/1 at 31/03/1987. The Original Documents viz (1) Original DDA Site Possession Slip of the said property has been misplaced. An Information Report of this effect has been lodged in Police Station Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No.2375202/2024 on 07.12.2024. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest having any objection or found in possession of said misplaced original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 882030983.

0070938994-1

LOST AND FOUND
To be known to all that my Client Mrs. Bina Saxena W/O Late Sh. S. N Saxena, Flat No. 57, Bhagat Singh Market, Gole Market, New Delhi is a lawful owner of the property situated at Flat No. 57, First Floor, Bhagat Singh Market, Gole Market, New Delhi. All are pur to notice that a legal case concerning the property is being heard before the Hon'ble District Judge, New Delhi District, Patiala House Court titled, "Abhishek Bisaria vs Bina Saxena" (CS/207/2020). The Hon'ble Court in the said case has restrained our client from creating third-party interest in the suit property till further orders. The said order as of date subsists. Mrs. Bina Saxena hereby declares that she has not voluntarily authorized, empowered, or granted permission to any individual or entity to sell, lease, mortgage, or deal with the said property in any manner. If any such authorization or claim exists, the same is hereby revoked and declared null and void with immediate effect. General Public is cautioned not to engage in any transaction or dealings concerning the said property, as such actions will be deemed illegal and liable for legal consequences. Any person(s) found to be involved in such activities will do so at their own risk and responsibility.

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GOLD	USD RATE	OIL	SILVER
₹78,960	₹84.86	\$71.94	₹93,850

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) per barrel as of December 6

SENSEX: 81,508.46 ▼ 200.66 (-0.25%) NIFTY: 24,619.00 ▼ 58.80 (-0.24%) NIKKEI: 39,160.50 ▲ 69.33 HANG SENG: 20,414.09 ▲ 548.24 FTSE: 8,354.27 ▲ 45.66 DAX: 20,385.77 ▲ 1.16

International market data till 1900 IST

HANDLED MULTIPLE DOMESTIC AS WELL AS EXOGENOUS SHOCKS

Das' 6 years at Reserve Bank helm: Inflation remains unfinished agenda

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

FOR OUTGOING Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Shaktikanta Das, who led the central bank in the last six years with several key decisions and overhaul of the regulatory framework, inflation remains an unfinished agenda. Despite a 250 basis points hike in the repo rate—the key policy rate, between May 2022 and February 8, 2023, consumer price index-based (CPI) inflation continued to remain elevated and above the RBI's comfort zone of 2-6 per cent, as mandated by the government.

In the last policy review on December 6, the RBI kept the Repo rate, the main policy rate, unchanged at a high of 6.50 per cent amid the fall in GDP growth, squashing chances of a rate cut. The latest data showed that CPI, or retail inflation, surged to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October 2024, compared to 5.5 per cent in September. Das, in his multiple speeches has admitted



Shaktikanta Das, Governor, Reserve Bank of India. File

that the last mile of disinflation has been prolonged and arduous.

"The disinflation process is getting a lot of resistance from food inflation remaining stubborn and very high, primarily because of supply-side factors which are affected by the weather conditions," he had said at an event earlier this year.

However, apart from inflation, Das' track record has been uncontentious.

The RBI, during his tenure, weathered various domestic as well as exogenous shocks including the collapse of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) and its impact on other non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), once in a lifetime Covid-19 pandemic and the effect of Russia-Ukraine war on inflation.

In his tenure as the RBI Governor for the last 6 years, Das used conventional and unconven-

tional policy measures to maintain macroeconomic and financial stability in the country.

During Covid 19 pandemic, Das reduced the repo rate by 115 basis points to revive the economy. He offered a loan moratorium to mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic.

The RBI, under Das, continued reforms in the banking sector at a time when lenders were reeling under the worst asset quality situation. The efforts resulted in an improvement in the gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) of banks from 10.8 per cent in September 2018 to 2.8 per cent at end-March 2024.

He also jacked up risk weight on the exposure of banks towards consumer credit, credit card receivables and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) by 25 per cent up to 150 per cent, to address the build-up of risks.

The RBI also tightened norms for NBFCs that were aggressively pursuing growth without building up sustainable business practices and risk management frameworks.

Das also refrained from granting banking licence to big corporate houses amid fears over connected lending and self-dealing if they are allowed in the banking space. "Experience world over has shown that when real sector companies enter into the banking space, there are potential conflicts of interest. The problem around related-party transactions is also a major issue," Das had said in July this year.

Under Das' stewardship, the RBI surplus transfer reached an all-time high of Rs 2.11 lakh crore for the year 2023-24. Between FY19 and FY24, the RBI paid a total dividend of Rs 6.61 lakh crore to the government.

He oversaw the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 notes without causing any disruption to common people and businesses. Das also focused on making Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and RuPay, the card payments network of the country, global. Das was instrumental in launching the central bank digital currency (CBDC), or digital rupee, for both wholesale and retail uses.

Govt vs RBI Governor tussle: Repeat of the same script at the fag end of Shaktikanta Das' tenure

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

SHAKTIKANTA DAS' tenure at the helm of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) comes to an end on December 10 amid some degree of friction with North Block towards the end of his second term as Governor. The trigger was the central bank's refusal to cut key policy rates despite growing calls on the need to tackle the slowdown in GDP growth. This tussle between the government and the Reserve Bank of India, though, is not something new or unusual.

Turf wars between the two sides have played out for years as successive Governors sought to protect the autonomy and independence of the central bank. The four predecessors of Governor Das — YV Reddy, D Subbarao, Raghuram Rajan and Urjit Patel—had escalating conflicts with the governments in Delhi on issues, including the issue of cutting rates to spur growth.

There was a repeat of this trend, with two Union ministers recently calling for a cut in the repo rate ahead of the monetary policy review on December 8.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman batted for "affordable bank interest rates" to support industries to ramp up and build capacities. Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, also urged the RBI to cut interest rates to boost economic growth and look through food prices while deciding on monetary policy. However, much against the wishes of the government, the RBI, which is keen to bring inflation under control, kept the Repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

YV Reddy, who was RBI Governor from 2003 to 2008, had run-ins with then Finance Minister P Chidambaram and had to even offer an "unconditional apology" to the minister after the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tried to sort things out between them. Reddy, who contemplated quitting twice during his tenure, said the government has powers to give directions. But, in giving directions also, unlike other statutes, consultation with the Governor is necessary in regard to the RBI before issuing the directions, according to Reddy.

A major area of disagreement between Reddy and Chidambaram related to the development of financial markets. Chidambaram was keen about the development of bond currency derivatives in an integrated manner. However, Reddy explained that there were other priorities for the financial sector reform. Reddy opposed the proposal made in February 2008 to write off loans to farmers amounting to Rs 60,000 crore.

A proposal to utilise India's growing foreign exchange reserves (during 2004-05 to 07-08) was mooted by the Planning Commission first and then by the government. That put the govern-



File

ment in conflict with the RBI which was opposed to the proposal saying that it was not unenclumbered. It was sorted out only after the RBI insisted that the government provide a guarantee on lending by a government backed entity — IIFCL from part of the reserves.

After Reddy made a mention of Tobin tax on capital flows in a speech citing it as an empirical case, the government forced the Governor to clarify the same day that there was no intention to tax inflows.

With differences between him and the Finance Ministry surfacing on several occasions, D Subbarao wrote that he was "invariably discomfited and annoyed by this demand that the RBI should be a cheerleader for the government". Subbarao was the RBI Governor during 2008-2013 when the global financial crisis rocked the financial system.

"Both Chidambaram and Pranab Mukherjee who were finance ministers during that period were vexed by the RBI's anti-inflation stance, which they thought was stymieing growth," Subbarao wrote in his recent book 'Just A Mercenary? Notes from My Life and Career'.

The formation of the Financial Stability and Development Council or FSDC headed by the finance minister was a flash point between the finance ministry and the RBI. The central bank's rationale was that the primary responsibility of stability was with the RBI and the

new arrangement could undermine its influence. The Government still went ahead with the proposal when Pranab Mukherjee was the finance minister. The other major tussle which was played out in the open was on interest rates. Chidambaram as finance minister was pitching for lower interest rates at a time when inflation was still relatively high. When the RBI didn't oblige, he went on to say that -if the government has to walk alone to face the challenge of growth, we will walk alone. That prompted Subbarao to respond a week before he completed his term that "I do hope that finance minister, Chidambaram will one day say that I am so frustrated by the Reserve Bank that I want to go for a walk even if I have to walk alone. But thank God the Reserve Bank exists".

Raghuram Rajan who was the RBI Governor between 2013 and 2016, recalled the words of his predecessor Subbarao about "frustrated by the Reserve Bank, so frustrated that I want to go for

a walk, even if I have to walk alone. But thank God, the Reserve Bank exists." "I would go a little further. The Reserve Bank cannot just exist, its ability to say "No!" has to be protected," Rajan said.

In 2015 when the government incorporated a provision in the finance bill without consulting the RBI—to assign the responsibility of regulating the money markets to Sebi, the RBI protested fiercely. Rajan took his objections to the finance minister and the government, leading to the proposal being rolled back. Rajan was apparently not very enthusiastic about demonetisation of the notes. During his tenure, the RBI sent a note outlining potential costs and benefits of demonetisation, as well as alternatives that could achieve similar aims.

Rajan was not given an extension by the government. Weeks after he left the Governor post, the government announced demonetisation of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 notes. Urjit Patel took charge as the 24th Governor on September 5, 2016, and was chosen by the BJP-led government. Under him, relations between the RBI and the government remained fractious. Citing "personal reasons", Patel quit as the RBI Governor on December 10, 2018.

Under Patel, there were significant differences between the RBI and the government after the central bank resisted the government's pressure to change policies on surplus transfer, liquidity window for finance companies and more powers for the RBI Central Board. The government had for the first time invoked a provision in the RBI law — Section 7 — to open a formal discussion with the Governor.

During the tenure of Urjit Patel, the feud erupted when the government reportedly sought to tap into the RBI's excess capital reserves. Then, it also wanted the central bank to relax lending norms to smaller businesses. Patel refused to buckle under pressure from the government on various issues and preferred to resign.

On October 26, 2018, the slugfest between the RBI and the government came out in the open when then Deputy Governor Viral Acharya, in a stinging criticism, reminded the government about the need for an independent central bank and warned that "governments that do not respect central bank independence will sooner or later incur the wrath of financial markets, ignite economic fire, and come to rue the day they undermined an important regulatory institution".

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Auto retail sales up 11.21% in Nov: FADA

New Delhi: Retail sales of vehicles across categories in India grew by 11.21 per cent at 32,08,719 units in November, as compared to 28,85,317 units in the same month last year riding on two-wheeler demand, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Monday.

Retail sales of two-wheelers were at 26,15,953 units last month, as compared to 22,58,970 units in November 2023, a growth of 15.8 per cent buoyed by the festive spillover. On the other hand, passenger vehicle (PV) retail was down 13.72 per cent at 3,21,943 units, as against 3,73,140 units in the year-ago month. The PV segment faced notable headwinds, FADA said in a statement.

"While November was initially expected to build on its prior momentum, particularly due to the marriage season, dealer feedback suggests that this segment underperformed overall expectations," FADA president, C S Vigneshwar said.

IT Ministry to prepare roadmap for power supply to AI data centres

AGGAM WALIA & SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

THE IT ministry is in discussions with the ministries of power, and new and renewable energy, and other related agencies to prepare a roadmap to ensure that the growing numbers of data centres in India—a function of the global artificial intelligence (AI) boom—are offered enough power supply, a top government official said Monday.

"Today, the biggest question is the availability of power... As we adopt AI more and more, (the question is) do we have enough power supply to power that—otherwise, where do you make sure that this power supply comes up in a way that we are able to address this issue," said IT Secretary S Krishnan. His comments are significant given the massive energy requirement of data centres that big technology companies are building around the world, owing to the spectacular popularity of AI solutions, which rely on such facilities for computing power. As per the International Energy Agency, data centre electricity usage could double by 2026, making the challenge for companies to become net zero or carbon negative by 2030 increasingly unattainable.

This has forced companies like Google and Microsoft—who have big stakes in the AI game—signing deals with nuclear power plants to purchase energy for their data centres. In India, the government is looking to subsidise setting up



File

of data centres to capitalise on the AI boom, and make access to computing capacity easier for smaller entities like start-ups and research institutions. As per a September report by S&P Global, India currently has a leased data centre capacity of 1-3 GW, which is the highest compared to other emerging markets like Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

A majority of the capacity is located in Mumbai (55 per cent), followed by approximately 12 per cent each in Chennai and Delhi-NCR. Savills, a real estate consultancy, expects additional supply of over 2,000 MW capacity between 2024 and 2028.

Power consumption and related infrastructure costs are a key part of a data centres' capital and operational expenditure. According to CareEdge Ratings, 40 per cent of capex of such facilities goes towards electrical systems and 65 per cent of operating cost is on account of electricity consumption. It takes between Rs

60-70 crore to set up one MW of data centre capacity in India. Naturally, the country is looking at the energy mix it can offer to data centres in India, where data centres are looking primarily at renewable energy to run operations. For instance, the Adani group will supply roughly 61 MW of electricity from its upcoming solar-wind hybrid project in Gujarat's Khavda to Google's cloud operations in India. As per a report released in September by Tata Power Company, the company is planning two pumped storage plants (PSPs) near Pune with a cumulative capacity of around 3,000 MW, for which the Central Transmission Utility of India (CTUII) has received applications for drawal of 1,400 MW from data centre loads in Mumbai beginning January 2027.

"The applications are under process and connectivity is being proposed at South Kalamb S/S to address the requirement of drawal of such huge quantum of power," the transmission planning authority said in a September report. In October, the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) discussed the anticipated surge in power demand from data centres during a National Committee on Transmission (NCT) meeting, where CEA chairperson Ghanshyam Prasad directed the Power Data Management and Load Forecasting Division to study the load pattern of data centres.

The direction followed an assessment of a major grid event in north India this June, which caused a load reduction of approximately 16.5 GW. An executive from Grid-India told the NCT that existing load modelling approaches need to be reviewed in light of changing load behaviour.

"Further, as a large quantum of electrolyser and data centre load is also envisaged to be connected at ISTS (Inter-State Transmission System) level in near future, it is important that adequate reactive power compensation is planned nearby such ISTS load feeding stations," the executive said. Reactive power compensation near load centres helps prevent tripping and load shedding by stabilizing voltage levels and reducing strain on the grid. Data centre developers in India are aiming to increase energy efficiency, which is indicated by a low Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) ratio. In India, the PUE averages around 1.9 while for green data centres, the PUE is lower at 1.3.

Air India tops up its mega 470-aircraft order with another 100 Airbus jets

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

IN WHAT may be seen as the Tata group's growing confidence and ambition in India's high-potential aviation sector, Air India has topped up its \$70-billion order for 470 aircraft placed last year with another 100 Airbus jets, taking the cumulative order size to 570 planes. New aircraft orders are critical to Air India's fleet expansion and modernisation plan, which the airline embarked upon after the Tata group acquired it from the government in January 2022.

Air India's 470-plane order with both major aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing also included options to acquire up to 370 additional aircraft. In large aircraft orders, purchase options allow carriers to buy additional planes in future at a previously agreed-upon price and schedule. The airline did not divulge financial details of the latest 100-aircraft order.

The 100 new Airbus aircraft



File

ordered by Air India include 10 wide-body A350 planes and 90 narrow-body A320 family jets, including the A321neo. The 470-aircraft order, the world's largest aircraft order at the time of its announcement in February 2023, was made up of 250 Airbus planes and 220 Boeing planes. With the latest top-up, Airbus now makes up for 350 of the 570 planes that will be deployed by Air India and its no-frills arm Air India Express.

"With India's passenger growth outpacing the rest of the world, its significantly improving infrastructure and an aspirational young population increasingly going global, we see a clear case

for Air India to expand its future fleet beyond the firm orders of the 470 aircraft placed last year. These additional 100 Airbus aircraft will help to position Air India on the path to greater growth and contribute to our mission of building Air India into a world-class airline that connects India to every corner of the world," said Tata Sons Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran, who is also the chairman of Air India.

Under government control, Air India faced significant financial stress, which did not allow the airline to meaningfully expand or even modernise its fleet. The Tata group wants to transform the airline into a carrier of global repute

by significantly expanding its fleet and network and sprucing up the product offering. These large aircraft orders are set to play a pivotal role in that journey.

Air India has so far received six aircraft—all A350s—from its Airbus order, and the airline's order book now at 344 planes. Of the 250 Airbus aircraft ordered by Air India last year, 40 were A350s, while the remaining 210 were A320 family jets. Of the 220 Boeing aircraft ordered by Air India, 35 737 MAX jets have already been delivered.

Air India on Monday also announced it has selected Airbus' Flight Hour Services-Component (FHS-C) to support the maintenance requirements of its growing A350 fleet. The new materials and maintenance contract will help Air India to optimise the reliability and performance of its A350 fleet, with comprehensive engineering services and integrated component services including on-site stock at Delhi provided by Airbus.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

'CCI seeks Supreme Court hearing to expedite Amazon, Flipkart cases'

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

THE COMPETITION Commission of India (CCI) has asked the Supreme Court to hear legal challenges to an investigation of Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart e-commerce platforms, saying those challenges, filed by Samsung, Vivo and others at high courts, were aiming to scuttle the probe.

In a filing on December 3, reviewed by Reuters and not released publicly, the CCI asked the court to hear 23 challenges, filed by Samsung, Vivo, and several vendors on the Amazon and Flipkart platforms, to enable the case to be decided quickly.

Amazon declined to comment, while Flipkart, Samsung, Vivo and the Competition Commission did not respond to

PROBE BY COMPETITION COMMISSION

■ The Commission's investigation unit concluded in August that Amazon and Flipkart breached antitrust laws by favouring selected sellers on their websites.

requests for comment.

The investigation is a major regulatory challenge for Amazon and Flipkart in a market where e-commerce sales are set to exceed \$160 billion by 2028, up from \$57 billion to \$60 billion in 2023.

The Commission's investigation unit concluded in August that Amazon and Flipkart breached antitrust laws by favouring se-

lected sellers on their websites. It also found that smartphone companies such as Samsung and Vivo broke those laws by colluding with the two e-commerce companies to exclusively launch products online.

Since the findings, almost two dozen lawsuits across five high courts have been filed by some Amazon and Flipkart vendors, as well as by Samsung and Vivo, to block the investigation as they want to "debilitate and scuttle" the process, the Commission said.

The separate lawsuits, if allowed, "will lead to absurdity since it will interfere with the flexibility of the (Commission's) Director General to carry out investigation in any matter." Amazon and Flipkart have faced criticism from smaller retailers for years over their business practices. Amazon and Flipkart deny any wrongdoing.

Ukraine will soon get another 4.2 billion euros (\$44 billion) in funds after the European Union members approved the payment of the money, said the EU Council on Monday. EU said the money will help its economy, as the country continues to fight against Russia. **REUTERS**

TOPOF THE WORLD



Far-Right RN party leader Marine Le Pen

Le Pen's party loses bypoll after toppling govt

Paris: Days after orchestrating the downfall of the French government, Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) has lost a seat in a by-election in northeastern France. RN critics pounced on the narrow defeat as a sign of condemnation of the party's push last week to topple former Prime Minister Michel Barnier's government over his 2025 budget bill. The close vote in the Ardennes left Marine Le Pen's RN with 124 lawmakers - a setback, though it remains the largest party in the 577-seat parliament. The RN did not respond to a request for comment or mention the loss on its social media accounts. President Emmanuel Macron pressed on with meetings with leftist leaders Monday as he seeks a new PM. **REUTERS**

TURKEY
Military copters collide midair, killing six officers

Ankara: Two Turkish military helicopters collided in midair on Monday, causing one of them to crash and killing six military personnel on board, officials said. The second helicopter landed safely. Five of the victims died at the site of the accident while a sixth died of his injuries at a hospital, the defense ministry said. The crash occurred in the southwestern province of Isparta during regular training flights, according to the region's governor, Abdullah Erin. **REUTERS**

INDONESIA
Landslides, flood hit Java, at least 10 dead

Sukabumi: Indonesian rescuers recovered 10 bodies that were swept away in flash floods or buried under tons of mud and rocks that hit hilly villages on the country's main island of Java, officials said Monday. Two people are still missing. Torrential rains since last week have caused rivers to burst their banks, tearing through more than 170 villages in Sukabumi district of West Java, as mud and rocks tumbled down hamlets, said rescue officials. **AP**

We had a purpose and a goal and now we are done with it. We want the state and security forces to be in charge.

FIRDOUS OMAR, REBEL FIGHTER SINCE 2011, PLANS TO RETURN TO FARMING

Day after, Damascus stirs back to life

Busy traffic returns to streets, banks to reopen today; transitional authority to be headed by rebel leader Mohamed Al-Bashir

MAYA GEBEILY & TIMOUR AZHARI
DAMASCUS, DECEMBER 9

DAMASCUS STIRRED back to life on Monday at the start of a hopeful but uncertain era after rebels seized the Syrian capital and President Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia, following 13 years of civil war and more than 50 years of his family's brutal rule.

Busy traffic returned to the streets and people ventured out after a nighttime curfew, but most shops remained shut. Rebels milled about in the centre.

The main rebel commander Ahmed al-Sharaa, better known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, met overnight with Assad's Prime Minister Mohammed Jalali and Vice President Faisal Mekdad to discuss arrangements for a transitional government, a source familiar with the discussions told Reuters.

Al Jazeera television reported that the transitional authority would be headed by Mohamed Al-Bashir, who ran the administration in a small pocket of rebel-held territory before the 12-day lightning offensive that swept into Damascus. A source close to the rebels confirmed Bashir had been nominated, though there had been no official announcement.

Syria's banks would reopen on Tuesday and staff had been asked to return to offices, according to a Syrian central bank source and two commercial bankers. Syria's currency would continue to be used, they said.

At the Interior Ministry that ran Assad's police force, furniture

had been looted and staff stayed away. Armed rebels were there to maintain order.

The oil ministry called on all employees to head to their workplaces starting on Tuesday, adding that protection would be provided to ensure their safety.

Fighters from the remote countryside milled about in the capital, clustering in the central Umayyad Square. "We had a purpose and a goal and now we are done with it. We want the state and security forces to be in charge," said Firdous Omar, who said he had been battling the Assad government since 2011 and was now looking forward to laying down his weapon and returning to his job as a farmer in provincial Idlib. The advance of a militia alliance spearheaded by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a former al-Qaeda affiliate, was a generational turning point for the Middle East.

It ends a war that killed hundreds of thousands, caused one of the biggest refugee crises of modern times and left cities bombed to rubble, countryside depopulated and the economy hollowed out by global sanctions. Millions of refugees could finally go home from camps across Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

The Arab world faces the task of reintegrating one of the Middle East's pivotal states, while containing the militant Sunni groups that have in the past metastasized into the sectarian violence of ISIS. HTS is still designated as a terrorist group by the United Nations, but has spent years trying to soften its image to reassure foreign states and Syrian minorities. **REUTERS**



The Umayyad Square in Damascus on Monday, a day after the rebels seized control and President Bashar al-Assad fled Syria. AP

Cautious Israel seizes buffer zone, attacks 'strategic weapons systems'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, DECEMBER 9

ISRAEL HAS struck suspected chemical weapons sites and long-range rockets in Syria in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of hostile actors, the foreign minister said Monday.

Syrian rebels reached Damascus over the weekend and overthrew President Bashar Assad's government following nearly 14 years of civil war, raising hopes for a more peaceful future but also concerns about a potential security vacuum in the country, which is still split among armed groups.

Israelis have welcomed the fall of Assad, who was a key ally of Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, while expressing

concern over what comes next. Israel says its forces temporarily seized a buffer zone inside Syria dating back to a 1974 agreement after Syrian troops withdrew in the chaos.

"The only interest we have is the security of Israel and its citizens," Gideon Saar told reporters on Monday. "That's why we attacked strategic weapons systems, like, for example, remaining chemical weapons, or long-range missiles and rockets, in order that they will not fall in the hands of extremists." Saar did not provide details about the strikes.

An AP journalist in Damascus reported airstrikes in the area of the Mezzeh military airport, southwest of the capital, on Sunday. The airport has previously been targeted in Israeli airstrikes, but it was not immediately clear who launched the lat-

est strike. Israel has carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria in recent years, targeting what it says are military sites related to Iran and Hezbollah.

Syria agreed to give up its chemical weapons stockpile in 2013, after the it was accused of launching an attack near Damascus that killed hundreds.

Meanwhile in northern Syria, Turkey said allied opposition forces seized the town of Manbij from Kurdish-led forces backed by the United States, a reminder that even after Assad's departure to Russia the country remains split among armed groups that have fought in the past. This illustrates how the interests of Ankara and Washington diverge over support for the Kurds, who have been instrumental US partners in fighting ISIS group. **WITH NYT INPUTS**

EXPLAINED
Tel Aviv's concerns

BASHAR AL-ASSAD'S fall was hailed by Israel as the consequence of its campaign against Iran and its proxies. But it is also concerned about who follows. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham — the main rebel force — while being anti-Iran, is also an Islamist group with no love for Israel. Turkey, which backs the insurgent forces, is also critical of Israel's actions in Gaza leading to unease in Israel about the prospect of a Turkish-backed government controlling one of its northern borders.

Assad gone, Syrians search notorious Sednaya prison for missing relatives

MAYA GEBEILY
SEDNAYA (SYRIA), DEC 9

AS FAMILIES desperately scoured the filthy cells of Syria's forbidding Sednaya prison Monday for any sign of long-detained relatives after its gates were flung open by rebels, hope for finding missing loved ones began to fade.

Thousands of prisoners spilled out of president Bashar al-Assad's detention system after he was toppled Sunday, to tearful reunions with relatives who believed they had been executed.

But countless families were still trawling dark corridors and hidden cells in the labyrinthine complex for a trace of loved ones

detained for attending protests, defying authorities or simply voicing discontent.

Ahmed Najjar had come to Damascus from Aleppo, hoping to find his brother's two children, detained by security forces in 2012. "We're looking. They're saying there's an underground prison," he said. The White Helmets rescue organisation, which for years has dug through fallen buildings after air strikes, deployed a team.

"They had a map from a defected Syrian army officer and broke down one wall and found nothing," said one of the rescue workers. "They broke a second and found a door."

But by Monday afternoon there was no sign of more prison-



People gather as civil defence groups search for prisoners underground at Sednaya prison on Monday. Reuters

ers. Outside, Intsar al-Jaber sat waiting for news. Her brother and cousin were imprisoned in Sednaya but she had not been allowed to see them since 2014. "They told me... 'your brother is a terrorist, and he died, so there's nothing for you here'."

At a mosque on the road to the prison, people were registering names and phone numbers in case imprisoned kin were found.

Rights groups have reported mass executions in Syria's prisons, and the US said in 2017 it had identified a new crematorium at Sednaya for hanged prisoners. Torture was widely documented.

Videos have emerged of some shaven-headed, near-skeletal prisoners barely able to give their

names or say where they were from. Reuters was not able to verify them all but the freeing of prisoners is not in dispute.

Inside the solitary confinement cells, there was water and mud on the concrete floors. Excrement lay around. People searching the prison rifled through discarded papers and asked former inmates if they knew of routes to other storeys.

Several times, they revealed a hidden hallway, prompting bursts of gunfire from rebels to alert the thousands waiting.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, who heads the Syrian Network for Human Rights, said that the prison doors had simply been flung open had made it harder

to trace inmates, and set actual criminals free alongside political prisoners.

"They need to run this as well, just like they're trying to manage other things, keep things under control," he said.

Outside the prison, where traffic once passed quickly, with passengers' eyes averted, a long queue of cars waited to get in while others scrambled across the scrubby countryside on foot and cut barbed wire fences to join the crowds searching inside.

One of those, Radwan Eid, called Sednaya "the human butcher's shop". "The blood that was spilled here cannot just run," he said. "They must be held to account." **REUTERS**

[ELSEWHERE]

S Korea's Yoon banned from foreign travel, treason probe on

REUTERS
SEOUL, DECEMBER 9

SOUTH KOREAN President Yoon Suk Yeol has been banned from leaving the country over a failed attempt at imposing martial law, a justice ministry official said on Monday, amid growing calls for him to step down and a deepening leadership crisis.

Yoon has apologised for the botched attempt and said he was leaving his political and legal fate to his ruling People Power Party (PPP) but has not resigned. He has become a subject of criminal investigation, according to local media reports. On Monday, the



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol. File

defence ministry said Yoon was still legally commander in chief, but growing dissent among senior military officers against the president has thrown into ques-

tion his grip on power.

Oh Dong-woon, head of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, said he had barred Yoon from foreign travel, when asked at a parliament hearing what actions have been taken against the president.

A justice ministry official, Bae Sang-up, told the committee the travel ban order had been executed. While Yoon survived an impeachment vote in parliament on Saturday, his party's decision to delegate presidential authority to the prime minister has plunged the key U.S. ally into a constitutional crisis. Yoon has refused calls, including from within his party, to resign.

More than 180 killed in massacre in Haiti capital

Port-au-Prince: More than 180 people were killed in a massacre over the weekend in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Haiti's capital, the United Nations human rights chief said Monday.

A leading Haitian human rights group described the killings as the personal vendetta of a gang boss who had been told that witchcraft caused his son's fatal illness. The slaughter began Friday in the Wharf Jeremie section of Cité Soleil in Port-au-Prince, the National Human Rights Defense Network, a civil rights group, said.

Older people who practiced voodoo appeared to have been targeted, according to the group. That assessment was backed by

another rights organization and a Cité Soleil resident. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, said in Geneva that at least 184 people had been killed.

Nearly 130 of those who were killed were over 60 years old, according to the UN, adding that gang members burned bodies and flung them into the sea. The brutality reflects a country enduring an "accelerating spiral into the abyss," said William O'Neill, UN human rights expert for Haiti.

Haiti has been convulsed by violence since early 2024, when rival gangs banded together in an attack on government institutions, including police stations, prisons and hospitals. **NYT**

Netanyahu set to take witness stand in corruption trial today

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, DECEMBER 9

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to take to the witness stand Tuesday for the first time in his trial on corruption allegations, a pivotal point in the drawn-out proceedings that comes as he wages war in Gaza and faces an international arrest warrant for war crimes charges.

Netanyahu is on trial in Israel for accusations of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate affairs. Netanyahu denies wrongdoing, but his appearance on the witness stand will be a low point in his decades-



Netanyahu is on trial over alleged fraud, breach of trust and bribery. File

long political career. It will be the first time an Israeli prime minister has taken the stand as a criminal defendant, and Netanyahu has repeatedly sought

to delay the proceedings, citing the ongoing Gaza war and security concerns. The judges ordered the trial to resume Tuesday, moving the proceedings to an underground chamber in a Tel Aviv court as a security precaution.

Prosecutors have called roughly 140 witnesses to the stand. Like other witnesses, Netanyahu will testify three days a week, for hours at a time, and his testimony is expected to last weeks. If he is eventually voted out of power, being away from the prime minister's seat would make it harder for Netanyahu to rail against the justice system and delegitimize the verdict in the eyes of the public.

THREE KEY PLAYERS IN SYRIA'S PAST, PRESENT, POSSIBLE FUTURE



BASHAR AL-ASSAD
FALL OF AN IRON-FISTED LEADER
The fall of Syria's president is also a setback for Russia, where he is currently sheltering, and Iran. Russia's bases in Syria could go, and Iran's pathway to Hezbollah could now be cut off. The shift in Damascus is seismic; a new chapter of uncertainty begins now.

ABU MOHAMMAD AL-JOLANI
EX-JIHADIST FACES COMPLEX TASK
The leader of the rebel forces has sought to present a moderate, pragmatic face, handing out assurances of security to Syria's minorities. There is happiness in the streets about the fall of the Assad regime — but the country remains deeply divided. The principal question for the "transitional" administration: can it force the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups in Syria today?



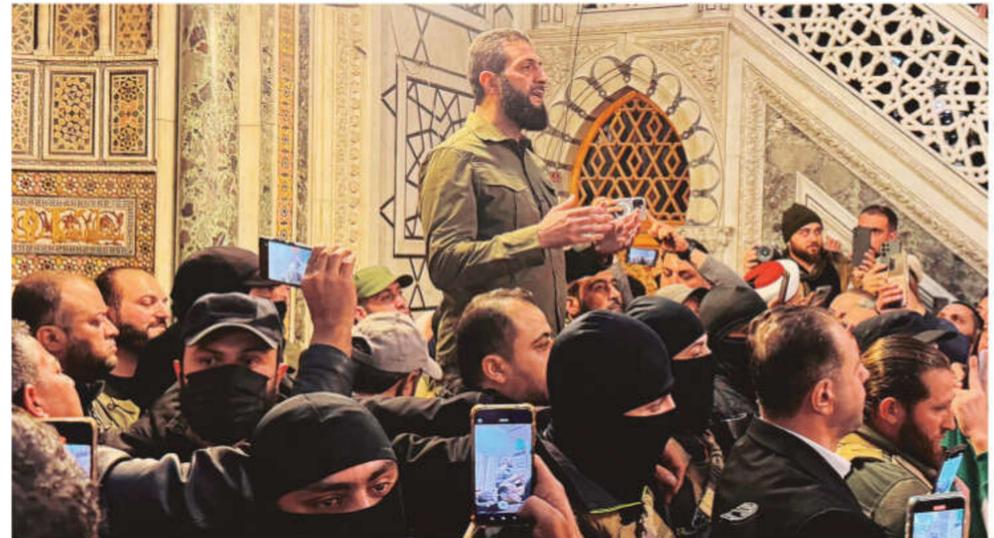
RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN
LIKELY BIG WINNER OF THE WAR
With Russia and Iran losing their long-standing ally in Damascus and President-elect Donald Trump announcing this isn't the US's war, Turkey could emerge as the most influential foreign actor in post-Assad Syria — with significant political and economic gains.

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

Re-ordering of W Asia chessboard

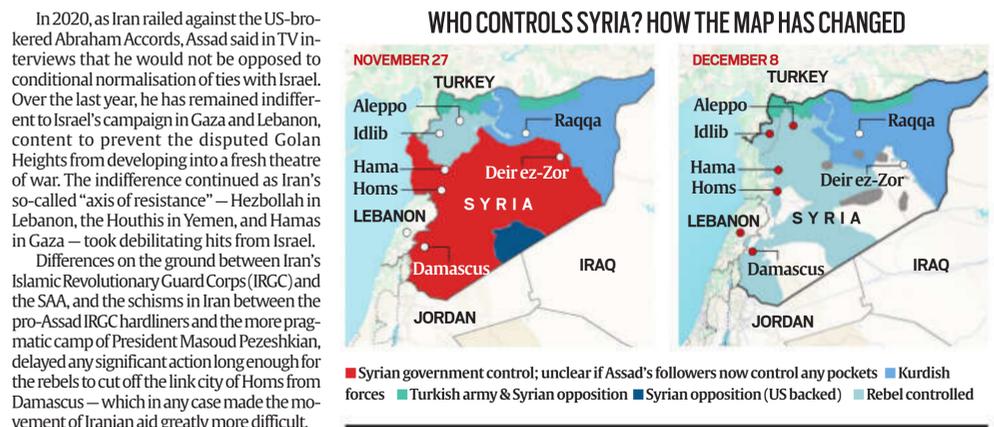
The dramatic collapse of the Assad regime in Damascus could have geopolitical consequences even more decisive than the Oct 7 Hamas attack on Israel. Iran has suffered a setback, and Turkey is now a much stronger and influential regional pole. How did all this come about, and what lies ahead for Syria and the region?

EXPERT EXPLAINS
BASHIR ALI ABBAS



Rebel commander Abu Mohammad al-Jolani speaks at the Umayyad mosque in Damascus on December 8. Reuters

AFTER MORE than a half century, an Assad — Hafez or Bashar — is not ruling Syria. Rebel fighters spearheaded by Hayat Tahrir al-Shaam (HTS) reached Damascus on Sunday, forcing President Bashar al-Assad to flee to Russia with his family.
Even in the Middle East's great ongoing tumult, the shift in Syria is seismic.
Just over a year and a half ago, Assad was viewed globally as the predominant power in his fractured country. True, the HTS-led opposition lunged at the window of opportunity that opened as Assad's allies Russia and Iran found themselves under pressure — still, how did the regime that had survived for five decades collapse in less than two weeks?



What went wrong for Assad?
On December 5, as Hama fell after Aleppo, Assad announced a 50% salary hike for serving soldiers to counter the HTS' call for them (including Assad's own Alawite ethno-religious group) to defect. It was symbolic of the desperation that Assad felt, and revealed the structural and financial weaknesses of his Syrian Arab Army (SAA).
The SAA has been infamous both for its brutality — images and videos are emerging from the now-liberated Sednaya Prison in which the regime kept political dissidents, including children — and for extracting informal taxes from Syrians to compensate for their low official pay. The financial dire straits of the army reflected the state of the Syrian economy itself — before the fall of the Assad regime, 1 United States dollar was equivalent to about 13,000 Syrian pounds.
The stagnation of the conflict over the last five years, with a Russia-Turkey détente towards the end of the earlier phase of the war preventing the SAA from attacking Idlib, was perceived and celebrated as a victory by Damascus — which left the army underprepared for any eventual counteroffensive.
More importantly, the SAA in 2024 continued to rely as much on Russia and Iran as it did in 2015 — even though Assad's relationship with these countries has been under strain, and Moscow has been stretched in Europe and Iran put under pressure in Lebanon.

to link up with the Black Sea fleet.
Turkey, on the other hand, has little to lose by cooperating with both Russia and other Arab/Gulf states to promote stability in Syria now that Assad has fallen and the Syrian National Army (SNA), the Turkish-backed armed group, can attack the Kurds in northern and western Syria more freely in the future.
On December 7, Turkey joined its Arab and Iranian partners from the Astana Process, the formal Syrian peace process hosted by Kazakhstan, in calling for a political solution in Syria that ends military operations, an increase in humanitarian aid, and the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2254 (which laid out the process of democratic transition

in Syria in 2015). The statement neither condemned the rebels nor expressed concern over Assad's precarious position. Tehran and Moscow too, signed the statement.
Turkey's rivalry with Syria is old and deep, going back to Syrian nationalist opposition to the Ottoman Empire. The large presence of Kurdish groups in Syria are an additional irritant. In 2004, Assad became the first Syrian leader to visit Ankara — but it was merely a brief geopolitical alignment due to shared anxieties over the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.
When the Syrian civil war began, Ankara rushed to bolster the armed opposition to Assad, established its own military presence in Northern Syria, negotiated a freeze in the

conflict with Russia, and eventually propelled the HTS/ SNA to the new reality unfolding in Damascus today — all over the span of a decade.
Following Assad's fall, Turkey has been quick to switch to the language of "inclusive governance" in Syria — positioning itself as an enabler of stability, and projecting the rebel takeover of Damascus as a natural and inevitable outcome after a years-long struggle.
What could the rule of the HTS look like?
HTS emir Abu Mohammad al-Jolani has worked for long, with more than just the blessings of Turkey and the US, to unify the Syrian opposition just enough to coordinate their offensives and unseat Assad.
Jolani's actions since then reflect a broader trend in Islamist Sunni political jihad. By appointing Mohammad al-Bashir to the head of the "transitional" government, the HTS has sought to follow the example of Abdul Hakim bil Hajj's Libya Islamic Fighting Group, rebranding itself as a regional, pragmatist, almost nationalist force that presents itself as an ally of the West.
In behaviour mimicking the Taliban's promises in Doha in 2020, Jolani has personally reached out to neighbouring governments in Baghdad and Beirut, calling for good relations, even offering Syria's services to the international community in identifying Assad's chemical weapons remnants. (The Taliban were quick to congratulate Syrians after Assad's fall).
As thousands of Syrians return to their country, rejoicing in the demise of Assad's tyranny, the jihadist shadow on HTS character lingers, notwithstanding Jolani's personal overtures to the country's minority groups, including Assad's Alawite base.
And what of the myriad jihadist and separatist militias that united tactically to oppose a common opponent who is now gone? Many of them have enduring intra-group differences — the HTS, in its earlier avatar of the al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, fought some of the groups that are operating currently under the umbrella of the SNA. The principal question for the "transitional" administration is this: will it be able to force the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of the armed groups in Syria today?

In the wider region, it is now evident that all actors in the Iranian "axis of resistance", including Iran itself, are now prioritising their own security and stability. While the Houthis continue their attacks on Red Sea shipping, Tehran's muscle in the Middle East has been weakened. However, with Turkey now emerging as a stronger pole, triggering both Arab and Persian anxieties, and Israel moving swiftly to re-militarise and occupy the Golan Heights after Assad's fall, the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East has changed even more decisively than it did on October 7, 2023.
(The author is a Research Associate at the Council for Strategic and Defense Research, New Delhi)

LIGHTNING STRIKE THAT CHANGED SYRIA REGIME

- NOV 27 & NOV 28:** Opposition groups launched a large-scale attack on government-controlled areas in northwestern Syria. They were led by Hayat Tahrir al-Shaam (HTS), an al-Qaeda offshoot that later moved away from the parent group. The rebels took *de facto* control of almost all of the Aleppo and Idlib governorates.
- The attack followed weeks of low-level violence. Turkey, a major backer of the rebel groups, said the rebels began a limited offensive but advanced as the government forces of Bashar al-Assad retreated.
- NOV 29:** Rebels entered Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, for the first time since they were pushed out in 2016. At the time, Syrian government forces had the backing of Russia and Iran. This time, the rebels met with little resistance.
- NOV 30:** Rebels announced they control Aleppo and occupy the international airport. The Syrian armed forces claimed to have redeployed troops.
- DEC 1:** The Syrian military launched a counterattack in Idlib and Aleppo.
- DEC 2-DEC 5:** Russian airstrikes helped the Syrian government recapture some territory, but the rebels swept into the city of Hama, which saw massive anti-government protests in the early days of the uprising in 2011.
- DEC 6:** Opposition forces seized towns near Homs, Syria's third-largest city, and the gateway to Damascus. Its capture also meant the government was cut off from the coast, which is a stronghold of President Bashar al-Assad's minority Alawite sect. Homs fell to the rebels the next day.
- DEC 8:** State television aired a video of a group of men saying that Assad had been overthrown. HTS commander Abu Mohammad al-Jolani visited the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, and called Assad's fall "a victory for the Islamic nation". Assad and his family were later reported to have fled to Moscow.

Where was Iran as the regime collapsed?
There have long existed significant divisions in Iran over Assad, which contributed to stymieing potentially useful Iranian assistance. Presumptions of victory in the Syrian war gave Assad the confidence to resist overbearing Iranian influence over decision-making in Damascus (as it happened in Iraq).

How Saudi Arabia secured hosting rights for the 2034 football World Cup

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

ON WEDNESDAY, FIFA will reveal world football's worst-kept secret: the winning bid for the 2034 World Cup. In what's expected to be a fairly drama-free affair, the sport's global governing body will name Saudi Arabia, the lone bidder, as the host.
Football's return to the cash-rich Gulf after only 12 years — Qatar hosted the 2022 World Cup — is a study of how a nation wove a web of influence across the world through sponsorships, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and investments to secure the biggest single-sport event.
It is also a note for India, as to what they are up against in their bid to win the hosting rights for the 2036 Olympics. Saudi Arabia — the destination for the 2034 Asian Games apart from the football World Cup — and 2030 Asian Games hosts Qatar are India's two biggest competitors in the race.
And how Saudi won the football World Cup rights unopposed could be an indica-

tion of the way the Kingdom would push for the 2036 Olympics, depending on how badly they want it.
Saudi's 910 sponsorship deals
Recently, the Danish research organisation 'Play the Game' traced the football World Cup's path to Saudi. The investigation found that Saudi Arabia had 910 sponsorship deals across 28 sports, including multisport events like the Islamic Solidarity Games.
Of these, 194 sponsorships were only in football. The Public Investment Fund (PIF), the country's billion-dollar sovereign wealth fund, was involved in 346 of the sponsorships.
Further, the country entered into 48 MoUs, which 'Play the Game' noted have been "powerful strategic ties".
"Beyond fostering goodwill, MoUs pave the way for...direct access to key decision-makers within federations. Ultimately, these decision-makers play a critical role in voting on significant agendas within FIFA, including host selection and governance issues," the report said.

For instance, on October 6, 2022, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) signed a MoU with its Saudi Arabian counterpart. According to the AIFF, it included "the provision of technological support, the organization and hosting of youth competitions for both men and women on a regular basis".
The AIFF hasn't publicly said since then how much of it has been implemented. However, on December 5, 2022, India — after spending taxpayer money on the bidding process — suddenly withdrew from the two-horse race involving Saudi Arabia to host the 2027 Asian Football

Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup. On February 1, 2023, the AFC named Saudi as the host for the showpiece event.
Partnerships with AFC
Simultaneously, the country also enhanced its relationship with the AFC through partnerships. For instance, 'Play the Game' reported that "Neom, Saudi's ambitious megacity project, became AFC's Global Partner from 2021 to 2024", a deal that was renewed for another five years.
Such deals were stepping stones to finding its seat on world football's highest table

in FIFA. In February 2023, on the same day when the AFC declared Saudi Arabia as the hosts of the 2027 Asian Cup, the country's football federation's president Yasser Al-Misehal was elected as Asia's representative to the all-powerful FIFA Council, which decides on the most important matters about world football.

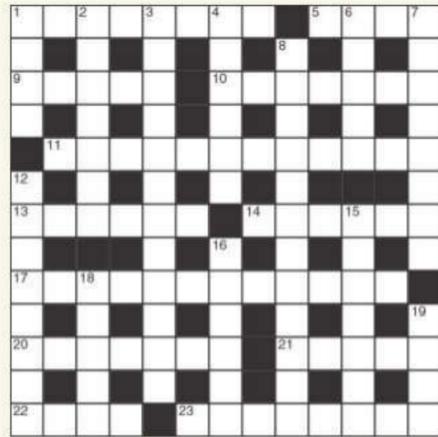
Aramco steps in
Aramco, the Saudi state-owned oil and gas company, then entered into a partnership with FIFA. The deal was widely criticised, and in October, more than 100 female footballers wrote an open letter to FIFA against it. They cited Saudi's alleged human rights violations and restrictions on women's rights as the reasons.
All this while, Saudi continued to splurge on getting the world's top footballers — including Cristiano Ronaldo — to play in their league while simultaneously acquiring teams in Europe, the nerve centre of world football. For example, Riyadh Air sponsors former Spanish league champions Atletico Madrid and the PIF owns English Premier League side Newcastle United.

Additionally, 'Play the Game' reported that Saudi royal family member Abdullah bin Mubaid Al Saud owns UAE's Al Hilal United and England's Sheffield United. In March 2021, he added India's lower division club, Kerala United, to his portfolio.
After establishing its footprint globally, Saudi made a move to host the World Cup.
Australia pulls out
In October 2023, FIFA set a 25-day deadline for countries to express interest in hosting the 2034 World Cup. Less than two hours after the announcement, Saudi officially declared its bid. A few days later, Australia entered the race but pulled out to focus on securing the 2026 Women's Asian Cup and the 2029 FIFA Club World Cup.
That left Saudi Arabia as the sole bidder. Last week, FIFA gave a glowing review of Saudi's bid, scoring it 4.2 out of 5 — more than the 2026 bid of USA, Canada and Mexico, which received 4 out of 5.
Last Thursday, Ronaldo supported the bid, writing on his social media handles: "The @Saudi2034bid is inspiring so many young footballers with the promise of #GrowingTogether..."

EXPLAINED SPORTS

DRISHTI JUDICIARY
JUDICIARY FOUNDATION COURSE
Offline (Hybrid) & Live Online (Via App)
Delhi English Medium | 09:00 AM - 01:00 PM | Admissions Open | 24 Dec | 8 AM | 10 दिवसीय | सुबह 9 बजे
Prayagraj English Medium | 09:00 AM - 01:00 PM | Admissions Open | 24 Dec | 8 AM | 10 दिवसीय | सुबह 9 बजे
8010 208 000 | 9151 115 945

CROSSWORD 5543



- ACROSS**
- Worn by soldiers for cleaning drains? (8)
 - Rustic's family deserts him - what a blow! (4)
 - A long time to muse (5)
 - He has no illusions about being on a roll (7)
 - Induced to become religious? (3,2,7)
 - Take cover (6)
 - Arrange sit-ins to make repeated demands (6)
 - With fear past, resume ins and outs of daily life (7,5)
 - Not the sort of gear for go-ahead people (7)
 - A point of view expressed in stage whisper (5)
 - Top player yet only a beginner (4)
 - Presumably he was happy while painting (8)
- DOWN**
- Harry on the guitar (4)
 - Ill-starred men of commerce (7)
 - Spirited authors? (12)
 - Invest when carried up East (6)
 - To join one goes to the capital of England (5)
 - They suffer from wrongly applied pain test (8)
 - It may result not only in the weather breaking (7,5)
 - Doesn't keep the orchestra together (8)
 - First sanction in writing (7)
 - Good when the glass is going up (6)
 - Give out the centre part of text due for revision (5)
 - Be heard to question location of clothes (4)

Solutions Crossword 5542 Across: 1 Therapist, 8 Riled, 9 Useless, 10 Parole, 11 Defect, 12 Initials, 15 Dispense, 18 Botany, 20 Roller, 21 Auditor, 22 Nitre, 23 To a degree Down: 2 Haste, 3 Relief, 4 Position, 5 Truant, 6 Also-ran, 7 Adversity, 11 Deodorant, 13 I rebound, 14 Isolate, 16 Eyelet, 17 String, 19 Noose

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.

Who sees the _____ correctly: the photographer, the mirror, or the painter? - Pablo Picasso (5,4)

NRAAE **AOTTCM**

JKYNU **DEOOFH**

Solutions: WORDS: AENA, JNKY, TOMCAT, HOOFED Answer: Who sees the human face correctly? - Pablo Picasso

SUDOKU 5800

Difficulty Level 2s 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.

2	9			5				
4	7	2						1
			1					6
		3	9			1		
9	3	2		6	4			5
	4			7	5			
5			3					
3				4		1		8
				8		2		7

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5799

9	1	6	3	7	2	4	8	5
3	8	2	9	5	4	6	1	7
7	5	4	1	8	6	2	9	3
2	7	9	4	6	1	3	5	8
4	3	8	5	2	7	9	6	1
1	6	5	8	9	3	7	2	4
5	9	7	2	4	8	1	3	6
6	2	3	7	1	5	8	4	9
8	4	1	6	3	9	5	7	2

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE
10 December 1963
Shaheed Shri Thakur Bhawani Singh, Dy Comdt of 10 Battalion of CRPF, made the supreme sacrifice while on duty during a terrorist attack in Srinagar. His bravery and devotion exemplify the highest traditions of the Force.

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE
10 December 1991
Shaheed Naik Ram Swaroop 13-02-1953 To 10-12-1991 13 Bn
On this day, 13 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Srinagar to conduct anti-terrorist operations. While on area domination patrol in Bijbehra, the troops were ambushed by terrorists who opened indiscriminate fire. Displaying remarkable courage, the CRPF personnel retaliated fiercely, forcing the militants to retreat through the maze of lanes. Amid the intense exchange, Nk Ram Swaroop, leading from the front, sustained grievous injuries and made the ultimate sacrifice. His valiant actions and the dedication of CRPF personnel will forever remain etched in our hearts.

जन सूचना
जिला स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण समिति, फरीदाबाद
जिला स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण समिति, फरीदाबाद के अधीन दिनांक 31.03.2025 तक एन एच एम के तहत पूर्ण रूप से अनुवन्ध आधार पर Medical Officer (UPHC's, FRU's, UHWC's & DR.TB Site), Staff Nurse (HDU, UPHC, FRU, Maternal Health & SNCU), Multi Rehabilitation Worker (NPHCE), TBHV (RNTCP), Homeopathic Pharmacist, MPHS, Anesthetist, Consultant Medicine/ Physician (NPHCE), Early Intervention cum Special Educator (RBSK), LMO's for EMO (HDU) & STLS को नियुक्ति की जाती है। जिसकी विस्तारपूर्वक जानकारी स्वास्थ्य विभाग की वेबसाइट www.nhmharyana.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है। वेबसाइट पर दी गई योग्यता रखने वाले इच्छुक उम्मीदवार सिविल सर्जन फरीदाबाद के कार्यालय में दिनांक 26/12/2024 को सायं 05:00 बजे तक अपना आवेदन पत्र, फोटो, सभी शैक्षणिक योग्यता एवं रिहायशी प्रमाण पत्रों की सत्यापित फोटो प्रति सहित जमा करवा सकते हैं। साक्षात्कार के लिए अलग से सूचना नहीं दी जायेगी। आवेदन का प्रारूप वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध है।

Sd/-
Civil Surgeon
Faridabad
NO. 30939/HRY

उदयपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, राणस्थान
No. :- F-2(01)Acct/Contract/2024-25/186-188 Date: 06/12/2024
ई-निविदा संशोधन सूचना
उदयपुर विकास प्राधिकरण द्वारा जारी ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या: 47 / 2024-25 के निविदा कार्य संख्या- 01 (Development Nehru Garden as Theme Based Park on Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode), की तिथियों में निम्नानुसार संशोधन किया गया है, ऑनलाईन निविदा प्रपत्र डाउनलोड/अपलोड एवं EMD, Tender Fee & Processing Fee Online तिथिक: 24.12.2024 को सायं: 6:00 बजे तक जमा की जा सकेंगे एवं दिनांक: 26.12.2024 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे तक निविदा खोली जायेगी। अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।
अतिरिक्त अधिकृत - विद्युत उदयपुर विकास प्राधिकरण
पत्र संख्या/दि/24/8822

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

Letter No: 1087 Tender Notice Date: 09/12/2024
Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil) SHP, Maneri, Uttarkashi invites sealed tender from interested parties. Brief summary of tender are given below:
Name of work: - Construction of Play Ground and its Protection work of Govt. Primary School at Piliang Village in Bhatwari Distt- Uttarkashi.
Estimated cost : Rs. 20,22,072.00 (Excluding GST)
Date of availability of bid document on website : 10-12-2024
Last Date for submission of bids: 02-01-2025 upto 17: hour
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com"

Executive Engineer (Civil) SHP, Maneri
"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

DEENDAYAL PORT AUTHORITY
MARINE DEPARTMENT
No.MR/PS/2024(SM) Date: 05.12.2024
ENGAGEMENT OF 09 NOS. SIGNALMAN AND 03 NOS. SAFETY INSPECTOR IN MARINE DEPARTMENT ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS FOR 03 YEARS
Deendayal Port Authority, a leading Major Port under the administrative control of Ministry of Shipping, Port & Waterways, intends to engage 09 Nos. Signalman and 03 nos. Safety Inspector in Marine Department on contractual basis for 03 years.
For details of eligibility, qualification, experience, remuneration, terms & conditions of contract, etc., please visit the Recruitment Section of DPA website at www.deendayalport.gov.in
Deputy Conservator
Deendayal Port Authority

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD
(POWER WING)
CORRIGENDUM-IV (CANCELLATION)
The tender notice against E-NIT No - 03/2024-25 Dated: 30.09.2024 Work for Mtc. of non-residential building and its allied works at 220 kV S/Stn. BBMB, Narela is hereby CANCELLED due to non-receipt of minimum bids as per terms & conditions. The detail of corrigendum may be seen/downloaded from website www.bbmb.gov.in or <https://etenders.gov.in> in Sr. Xen O&M Divn. BBMB Delhi-110035.
1584-PR TS-4 For your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today

The Rajasthan State Co-operative Bank Ltd.
DC-1, Lalkothi Shopping Center, Opposite Nehru Balodyan, Tonk Road, Jaipur-302015. Ph.: 2744814, 2744475. Website: www.rscb.org.in
Tender Notice No. RSCB/Purchase/2024-25/02
Online tenders are invited on eProcurement Portal, Government of Rajasthan (<https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>) from eligible bidders for following:-
1. RSCB/NRGTGS/24-25/01 - Request for proposal for AMC of Payment Hub Management System, UMIC tool subscription, NDS-Call, NDS-OM, CROMS, CCIL reporting IBM MQ latest version license subscription, ISO 20022 NEFT messaging along with 24x7 resident engineer support for SFMS & CCIL applications.
Tentative Schedule for tenders:-
S.No. Events Particulars Date & Time for tender
1 Start date and time of download of e-bid 10.12.2024, 10 AM
2 Last date and time of download of e-bid 29.12.2024, 5 PM
3 Last Date of submission of e-bid with Bid security 29.12.2024, 5.00 PM
4 Opening of Technical bid/e-bid 30.12.2024, 11.30 PM
5 Websites where tender is available <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> <https://rscb.org.in>, <https://sppp.raj.nic.in>
General Manager (P & D)

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रॉन्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड
ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना (2024-25)
विद्युत जानपद परीक्षण मण्डल आगरा
1. अत्युपलब्ध ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या-41/वि0जा0पा0म0/आगरा/2024-25-132 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र सिकन्दाराज, जनपद हाथरस पर 01 अदद 33 के0वी0 SMC Agri Ltd. 'बे' के निर्माण सम्बन्धी जानपदीय कार्य, समय अवधि 02 माह, धरोहर धनराशि ₹0 6,900.00 निविदा मूल्य ₹0 500+90= 590.00 निविदा प्राप्त करने की अन्तिम तिथि 26.12.2024। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण, विस्तारीकरण शुद्धिकरण इत्यादि की सूचना ई-टेंडर की वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है, जिसको वेबसाइट के माध्यम से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। बैंक खाता अधिशासी अभियन्ता (जानपद) अलीगढ़ A/C No.-10975837739, IFSC Code-SBIN000604 Payable at S.B.I. Main Branch Aligarh Through NEFT/RTGS. अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत जानपद परीक्षण मण्डल, उ0प्र0 पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि0, 220 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र सिकन्दरा आगरा। "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचायें" पत्रांक: 1019-वि0जा0 पा0म0आ0/निविदा प्रकाशन/दिनांक:09.12.2024

National Games Secretariat
Department of Sports (Govt. of Uttarakhand)
Maharana Pratap Sports College, Thanu Road, Raipur, Dehradun-248008
Date-9/12/2024 RFP References- 46/2024
Notice Inviting Tender
The National Games Secretariat Department of Sports, Uttarakhand on behalf of the Governor of Uttarakhand invites bids from reputed and experienced firm/agencies/ companies for:
Sr. No Activity Description Date
1. Request for Proposal for Procurement (Supply and Installation) of Squash, Netball and Lawn Tennis Equipment for 38th National Games, Uttarakhand INR 60,000 46/2024
1. Request for Proposal for Retender for Procurement (Supply and Installation) of Squash, Nethall and Lawn Tennis Equipment for 38th National Games, Uttarakhand:
Sr. No Activity Description Date
1. Issue of RFP 09.12.2024
2. Starting date for submission of Bids 14.12.2024 @ 15:00Hrs
3. Last date of submission of queries 11.12.2024 @ 15:00Hrs
4. Last Date for Submission of Bids 23.12.2024 @ 12:00Hrs.
5. The date for Opening of Technical Bids 23.12.2024 @ 14:00Hrs
6. The date for Opening of Financial Bids 25.12.2024 (tentative)
All the information/Corrigendum/ addendum related to the project shall be published on the website <https://uktenders.gov.in> and the authority shall have the right to reject the bid partially or fully without assigning any reasons whatsoever.
CEO
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Londa-Miraj section Rs. 32,31,48,990/-
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Last date for Submission of bids : Upto 15.00 hrs on 30.12.2024
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विज्ञापन नोटिस-2
एटीएफ योजना सोनीपत के अंतर्गत वित्त वर्ष 2024-25 के लिए पूर्णतः सविधा आधार पर नियुक्त होने के लिए इच्छुक और योग्य उम्मीदवारों से 12.10.2024 के दैनिक जागरण व Indian Express अखबार के माध्यम से एनएचएम के अंतर्गत अनुबंध आधार पर प्रकाशित की गई थी। जिसमें Medical Officer एक पद (General), Post Graduated Counsellor (Total-02), Nurse (ANM) (Total-01 UR) व Data Manager (Total-01 UR) विज्ञापित की गये थे। जिनके दस्तावेज दिनांक 16.10.2024 को सत्यापित किए गए थे। दिनांक 12.10.2024 के विज्ञापन में सभी पद व्यसन उपचार सुविधा योजना सोनीपत के अंतर्गत हैं।
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हस्ता/-
सिविल सर्जन कम मेम्बर सेक्रेटरी (जी०)
No. 30923/HRY डी०एच०एफ०डब्ल्यू०एस०, सोनीपत।

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Bablu Sharma S/o Manish Sharma R/o 42, Khair Road, Ram Nagar Colony, Aligarh (U.P.) has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. 64/20, dated 30.07.2020, U/s 411 IPC, PS Kalindi Kunj, South-East Distt., New Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Bablu Sharma can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Bablu Sharma has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Bablu Sharma of Case Case FIR No. 64/20, dated 30.07.2020, U/s 411 IPC, PS Kalindi Kunj, South-East Distt., New Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 09.01.2025 at 10:00 AM.
By Order
Sh. Azad Sehrawat
Judicial Magistrate First Class-10
South East Distt. Room No. 307,
Third Floor, Saket Courts, Delhi

SIRAJ, HEAD SANCTIONED

Adelaide: Mohammed Siraj and Travis Head have been slapped with demerit points for their bust-up in the second test between India and Australia while the Indian fast bowler was also fined 20% of his match fee, the International Cricket Council said on Monday. **REUTERS**

ADELAIDE'S EVERYMAN HERO

Head for a reason

Considered a larrikin in his home city, anyone who messes with him is given a hard time by the crowd, as Siraj found out



EXPRESS IN AUSTRALIA

SRIRAM VEERA
ADELAIDE, DECEMBER 9

CALLUM FERGUSON, who has played 30 ODIs and a Test for Australia, recalls the shuddering moment when he saw his South Australian teammate Travis Head hit by a speeding car. It was a decade ago, and Head had just waved to Ferguson outside a pub in Adelaide, and was looking to find his mate's car when he was hit.

"I feared the worst when I reached him. The car had taken an awfully long time to stop and by the time I got to Trav, he was unconscious. Frankly, I thought that was it. Luckily, by the time the ambulance came, he was conscious though not quite there yet." Ferguson and his mates took Head to the hospital, and he remembers the moment in the hospital room after the doctors had done their thing. "It's almost as if nothing had happened. I was still shaking a bit but he went, 'mate, my head is going to look better now, won't it?' He was heavily stitched up, wrapped up in bandages at that point.

"That's Travis for you, it was a shocking moment, but the kind of guy he is, he found some humour to lighten up. As if he was more worried about us than himself and felt he should put us at ease," Ferguson recalls.

Not that he needed that life-threatening episode to know about Head. Ferguson remembers the teenager, 10 years younger than him, coming into the South Australian team. "You could see he was a touch rough around the edges, and has become far more polished now, if I could use that word, with his stunningly beautiful home at the Adelaide foothills that overlook the city, but essentially though he is still the same Trav that we used to joke around with. That essentially is why the Australian public too love him: somehow he has retained that larrikin in him, that everyday Australian bloke. He came from a humble neighbourhood in North Adelaide and emerged from a club called 'Tea Tree Gully'."

Lee Matthews, 75, has just returned from batting on a hot day at the picturesque ground at Tea Tree Gully cricket club, north of Adelaide. He removes his white cricket jersey, and sits under a tree, enjoying the veterans' game between Tea Tree Gully and Goodwood Eastern Rangers club.

Inside the clubhouse, having his lunch, was the curator and the club senior team's vice-captain Tom Van der Jeugd, who had moved from playing for Kensington club to here a while back. "The best thing about this place is that there are no hierarchies. The senior grade cricketer would talk the same way to the junior team's kid as he does to his own teammate. I am eagerly awaiting January actually as Travis is throwing a party for the 10th anniversary of our club's win in league cricket. Knowing Travis, you can never tell what's going to happen!"

More than a couple of decades ago, when he was just 8, Head would have walked on the same ground, with his mother Ann, to bat at the nets for the first time.

Ann tells a lovely story about it in the local press. How she had enough about her son pestering her to allow him to go to the



AP photo

club and how one Sunday she took him there, hoping that the club would reject him because of his age. Instead, she was surprised to see her son happily jaunting across to her after his stint at the nets, and the coaches telling her that he can join the colts as he seems good and confident.

It's the image of Head, the man who bashed the living daylights out of the Indians not just in the Adelaide Test but also during a home series in India last year, last year's World Test Championship final and the 2023 ODI World Cup decider that Peter Sleep, former Australian spinner and a coach at the Tea Tree Gully club, remembers.

"He would have been 10 when I joined the club and he was this very confident kid. And he had that cut shot that the Indians know more than most these days, cutting it from the stumps! Not as powerful but the basics were there."

Not long after came the first little big moment for the youngster. He was also a wicket-keeper then but Sleep decided to step in. "I had to tell him that there are six batting spots and just one spot for a 'keeper. Leave the wicket-keeping gloves alone, and focus on batting."

Young Head, Sleep remembers, was "disappointed". "You know how kids are, I guess he enjoyed the process of being a wicket-keeper, but as a coach, I had the responsibility to look ahead into the future and give him some direct frank talk. I had to tell him he had to be outstanding as a 'keeper, but he wasn't that. But he can be outstanding as a batsman. To his credit, he understood it after a while."

It was Sleep who decided to hasten the process of introducing Head into the senior



Bat signed by Travis Head and his grade cricket teammates at his boyhood South Australian club. *Express photo*

league. He was just 14, the under-16s was an obvious option but Sleep believed the boy was ready to play with the men in senior grade cricket. "With some kids, you can sense that. I had played with Darren Lehmann too and he had played grade cricket at 14-15 years of age. I saw something similar in Head, and pushed. His father Simon was pretty protective, understandably, but he saw my point of view. We had to see how Trav would cope. And you will never know unless you put him in that spot."

Sleep recalls a specific moment from 4th grade cricket as the time when he was convinced he had made the right decision. "I also played that game with Travis and he hit 30-odd runs. But his demeanour, the shots he played, the courage he showed, and the general sense he gave as if he belonged with that level convinced me. I remember telling him that if he played his cards right, he had the potential to go all the way."

Going all the way is one thing, but to become a cult hero in South Australia, the home of the Chappell brothers and Lehmann, is another. Or for that matter even across the country. At the Adelaide Oval, in the Test

against India, Head received the biggest ovation from the crowd when he walked into bat with the game in the balance. Any Indian who messed with him - be it a stare, a few words or angry gestures like Mohammad Siraj would come up with - were booted. In Adelaide, no one messes with Head.

In the morning, a group of Australian fans had walked into the stadium in black T-shirts with 'Bring back Boof!' printed on them, in reference to Lehmann, whose nickname was Boof, a cult hero from South Australia.

And so we turn to 42-year old Tyson Baird, an occupational therapist who incidentally spent six months in Bihar as a volunteer, born and raised in Adelaide, to understand why Head is such a cult hero in these parts.

"He comes across as a teddy bear! To use a cliché, someone who I can see myself having a drink with at a local pub and laughing a lot. He really is the everyday bloke, a larrikin as we call in these parts."

This impression holds despite Head having a home worth three million dollars in the foothills of the Adelaide hills, plus other properties in the city. Baird laughs. "Oh yes, because we almost feel happy and proud that one of us has made it big. He has never come across as this posh private-school kind of a guy. He is from North Adelaide, not particularly known for rich posh people."

That region, just beyond Head's neighbourhood, is one of the more lower-income group regions of the city. As one goes further away from Head's childhood neighbourhood, places like Elizabeth Park, 10-15 kms away from the Tea Tree Gully club, is one of more crime-infested regions of Adelaide.

"He is also a straight shooter. The way he speaks in media interactions. In these times of what seems to be severely-coached cricketers, he speaks his mind. And in our language, the way we speak in our everyday life," says Baird. "Lehmann was a bit like that. And he is a big legend in these parts. Look, after the Chappells, we really didn't have too many Test cricketers from these parts. There was Jason Gillespie, Greg Blewett, David Hookey, Lehmann ... and then a dry spell. Finally, came our Travis!"

Head's relationship with Australian fans, particularly in South Australia, is a touch different from what they had with Lehmann. Incidentally, on Sunday night, well past midnight, Lehmann walked into a pub at Hindley street, not far from the ground, and the smiles on the faces of the already punch-drunk patrons was something to savour. There was no stiffness in body language, awe or being starstruck, but lovely warm smiles all around.

With Head, it's a bit different. "We feel protective about him. Lehmann was the kind of a guy who led the sledges to the opponents, who can be a bit abrasive, who knew what sort of a legend he was to the local public, and what was his stature. With Travis, we feel almost protective. He is mild-mannered and likes to chat but I can't say it would be fierce sledges. More like a mate in the pub, fooling around," says Baird.

A sentiment backed by Ferguson. "Perfectly put by that fan. Heady is like that. I remember this one pre-game incident from a long time ago for South Australia. There was this domestic tournament and different teams had assembled at the airport with their proper team jackets, shoes etc. And I remember Travis walking into our terminal. Not long before that he had become the youngest captain of the South Australian team. And there was our skipper walking in with flip-flops (sandals), and white shirt that you would play a game in. Why? Because he couldn't find his proper official team gear! Classic Trav! To be fair to him, just like his batting, he didn't make that kind of mistake again. He always learns and changes. Though of course it could be a new mistake he might make!" Ferguson laughs. "You got to love him, wherever you are from."

Ferguson also brings up Head's confrontation with Siraj during the Adelaide Test. "See, after his initial statements to the press, he sought to defuse it the next day." Head would tell ABC radio how he thought Siraj was a "sweet guy" and it was "time to move on".

The Adelaide crowd's reaction also excited Ferguson. "It's the reaction of a crowd that feels protective about him." Baird, the cricketing fan, agrees. "It's not a reaction per se against Siraj, but a reaction towards Head. He raises that kind of sentiment in us. I would say even for a neutral non-Aussie, it would be difficult to dislike him. I would be shocked if the cricketing fraternity doesn't like him."

Just like Sunil Gavaskar after Head hit the brilliant game-turning hundred at Adelaide. Before the start of play, when teams were warming up, Gavaskar approached Head to congratulate him. He also pulled out his phone to show him a photograph from his playing days, from a 1980s game against the Australians in India after he had hit a hundred. Allan Border can be seen in the background, and in the front was Gavaskar holding his bat up to acknowledge the crowd's applause after a hundred. On top of that bat was his sunny floppy hat. In Adelaide, Head would almost repeat the visual, just that he had the helmet instead of the hat. Both cricketers, an Indian legend and an Australian larrikin, would laugh and high-five.

Essentially, he is still the same Trav that we used to joke around with. That is why the public too love him: somehow he has retained that larrikin in him, that everyday Australian bloke"

CALLUM FERGUSON

FORMER TEAMMATE

VENKATA KRISHNA B

WTC SCENARIOS

Proteas one win away from final

SOUTH AFRICA'S 109-run win over Sri Lanka at Gqeberha on Monday have put them on the verge of their maiden World Test Championship final appearance. They are now one win away from confirming their spot for next year's title clash at Lord's.

When the 2024/25 season began, five teams - India, South Africa, Australia, Sri Lanka and New Zealand - were in with a chance to make the WTC final. Thanks to their series defeat against England, New Zealand are now out of contention. Sri Lanka have very slim hopes of qualification. As a result, the remaining three Border-Gavaskar Trophy Tests have gained more significance as it has become more or less a knockout contest between India and Australia for the WTC final spot.

Here are the scenarios and where each of these teams stand:

■ South Africa

At the start of the year, when a second-string South African side travelled to New Zealand, a place in the WTC final seemed a long shot. But here they are, needing only one win from their two home Tests against Pakistan to seal a spot. After just one win from their first five Tests, they have won five on the bounce and are topping the table with a 63.33 percentage. If they win both the Tests against Pakistan, they finish on top. If they lose both, there is a good chance of India and Australia setting up a repeat of their 2023 WTC final clash. It will also reignite Sri Lanka's qualification hopes as they still have a two-match Test series against Australia at home.

Remaining Tests: Two vs Pakistan at Centurion, Cape Town.

■ Australia

They have dropped to second spot, but the outlook looks bright. If they win two of their last three Tests against India, even a series loss in Sri Lanka won't prevent them from finishing in the top two. If the Border-Gavaskar Trophy ends 2-2, Australia need to win at least one Test in Sri Lanka to finish above India. If Australia lose 2-3 to India, both their Tests in Sri Lanka will be must-win matches.

Remaining Tests: 3 vs India at Brisbane, Melbourne & Sydney; 2 vs Sri Lanka at Galle

■ India

A third successive WTC final berth was within their reach at one stage. It still is, but it isn't going to be easy. Having lost four of their last five Tests, India still have their destiny in their own hands. If they win two of the remaining three Tests and draw one, they can finish in the top two even if Australia wins the series against Sri Lanka 2-0. But if India win the BGT 2-1, Australia can still overtake them by winning both the Tests in Sri Lanka. If India lose the series, they will be out of the reckoning. In case the series ends 2-2, India will need help from Sri Lanka, who need to draw both their Tests against the Aussies. In that scenario, India and Australia will be level, but the former will make it to the final on the basis of more series wins (3 to India, 2 to Australia.)

Remaining Tests: 3 vs Australia at Brisbane, Melbourne & Sydney.

■ Sri Lanka

Their chances are very slim as they need a lot of other results to go their way. By the time Australia come calling on their shores for the first Test starting on January 29, Sri Lanka will know if they are still in the race. If they are still in contention by then, winning both the Tests at Galle will take them to Lord's.

Remaining Tests: 2 vs Australia at Galle.

South Africa overpower Lanka to sweep series

REUTERS
GQEBERHA, DECEMBER 9

SPINNER KESHAV Maharaj took five wickets as South Africa secured a 109-run victory over Sri Lanka on the last day of the second test at St George's Park on Monday and a 2-0 sweep of the series.

Maharaj finished with figures of 5-76 as South Africa took 70 minutes to dismiss Sri Lanka for 238 in a game that had been set up for a thrilling finale as both teams required a win to keep them in contention for a place in next June's World Test Championship final.

Sri Lanka resumed on 205-5 needing 143 for victory and the home side required five wickets but it proved an anticlimax as the hosts ran through the batting line-up to add to their 233-run victory in the first test in Durban.

It took South Africa seven overs to make a breakthrough on Monday, ending a 97-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Kusal Mendes caught by Aiden Markram



Keshav Maharaj spun his side to victory with a five-wicket haul. *AP*

off Maharaj. It was sharp catch for Markram and only given out after a check by the television umpire to see whether it was cleanly taken.

Mendes made 46 and was followed shortly after by captain Dhananajaya de Silva, who got a healthy edge to a quick delivery from Kagiso Rabada to depart

for 50. That left the tail exposed and South Africa wasted no time with Maharaj grabbing the wickets of Prabath Jayasuriya, caught at extra cover by Temba Bavuma, and Vishwa Fernando, who slogged it up into the sky to be caught by Marco Jansen.

Jansen took the last wicket of Lahiru Kumara to ensure South Africa moved to the top of the WTC standings.

"That was what test cricket is all about," said South Africa captain Bavuma, who was named man of the series for his batting performances.

"It is rare to play for five days and also rare when the game is always in the balance and both teams are in contention. Sri Lanka asked the right questions with an intimidating batting line-up. Sri Lanka are now out of contention for the WTC.

Brief Scores: South Africa 358 & 317 beat Sri Lanka 328 & 238 (De Silva 50, Mendis 46; Maharaj 5/76, Paterson 2/33) by 109 runs.

SMAT: Shami stars, looks bowling fit, in Bengal win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, DECEMBER 9

SHOWING NO signs of rust, Mohammed Shami carried Bengal to the quarterfinals of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy by smashing a game-changing 17-ball-32 and bowling 13 dot balls in his four overs that paved way for his team's thrilling three-run win against Chandigarh, here Monday.

With no clarity over his international comeback, the 34-year-old played his eighth SMAT T20 game in 16 days and has bowled his full quota in almost all the games.

On the day, he first used long handle to a good effect, taking 19 runs off seasoned Sandeep Sharma's final over as Bengal reached 159 for 9 after tottering at 114 for 8. He crunched two sixes and three fours, mostly flashing through point region but the final wicket stand of 21 off 10 balls with

Sayan Ghosh proved crucial.

Veteran Kolkata Maidan slinger Ghosh (4/30), who is known to be a death overs specialist, bowled a brilliant final over where 11 runs were required as Nikhil Sharma's planning went all awry. Chandigarh were restricted to 156 for 9.

Having already warmed up nicely by facing 17 deliveries, Shami bowled a very good first spell and removed opener Arsalan Z Khan off the very third delivery, caught by Shakir Habib Gandhi.

Compared to his first Ranji Trophy game against Madhya Pradesh where he looked overweight and slightly paunchy despite bowling 42 overs, Monday's Shami looked leaner and the famous upright seam presentation was very much there.

During the Ranji match, many experts debated how his follow-through, which is pretty straight post delivery, was ending towards cover which is an indication that he was unable to complete his action.

Ding bounces back after slip

With just two games left and nothing to choose between the players, the prospect of a tie-break seems increasingly likely

AMIT KAMATH
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

AS D Gukesh hunkered down over the chessboard, head in hands trying to find his way out of the complication in the miniature battlefield in front of him, Ding Liren took a moment to stretch his arms behind his chair. Then, despite everything — the match situation, the tension of the game, the attacking ability of his opponent — the Chinese world champion yawned.

The teenager across the table was scrambling at that point, both on the clock and on the board, needing to make 24 moves in 34 minutes. The evaluation bar was snaking upwards, indicating that Ding had a chokehold on Game 12. Gukesh's pieces had no good squares to jump on. When Ding had made his 17th move (17.Qd2), Gukesh had almost an hour on the clock. By the time he responded, he had just 33 minutes left.

Even after spending all that time, it was not the kind of move that unlocked a door for escape. In fact, LeelaZero, a neural network chess model, raised Ding's chances of winning the match from 38.2 percent to 51.9 percent immediately after Gukesh's 17th move (17...Bg6).

Barely an hour later, Gukesh threw in the towel. For the fourth time in two years, Ding had pulled a rabbit out of the hat just when he needed to: winning a game at the world championship when he was trailing after a defeat.

The Chinese grandmaster did this three times to Ian Nepomniachtchi to force the battle into the tiebreaks, where he eventually prevailed. He has now done it to the 18-year-old from India right after losing to him in Game 11 on Sunday. With two games remaining in the 2024 world chess championship, the prospect of tiebreaks appears increasingly likely as both players are deadlocked on six points each with two wins each. How does he keep doing this time and again?

"Just by chance," Ding told grandmaster Maurice Ashley at the post-match press conference when asked how he finds the strength to bounce back time and again.

"Yesterday was a difficult game to deal with since I was much better at one point and just spent too little time at critical moments and spoiled a very good position. I continued my normal routine. Had dinner, slept earlier and got refreshed for today's game." Ding's predecessor Magnus Carlsen has predicted that the most likely scenario after his defeat in Game 11 was that Ding Liren would "crumble". Even before the world championship started, many elite grandmasters had said that they feared it would turn out to be a "massacre".



D Gukesh at the post-game press conference on Monday. FIDE/Eng Chin An

Rising to the challenge

But Ding showed he is made of sterner stuff, even if he had not played his best chess in Singapore.

"This is Ding's best game in the past two years. This is his real strength when he is in good form. What a statement to make after a horrible blunder yesterday!" said Susan Polgar on X. "For those who said that Gukesh would destroy, demolish, humiliate, and massacre Ding, they were all wrong! As I said all along, this will be a close match, and it will be."

It was one of those games where Gukesh didn't really make any massive mistakes. It was death by tiny inaccuracies and marginal gains made on every move that eventually added up to a massive advantage on the board.

The evaluation bar could only offer up the following four moves from Gukesh as inaccuracies: 20...Bf6?, 22...Bg5?, 26...Qd7? And 36...Rc4?!

But so clinical was Ding on Monday that by the middle game, Gukesh's pieces were almost running out of good squares to be on while the

champion had control of the central files. "I just put pressure on my opponent the whole game — I did not slip like last game!" smiled Ding at the post-match press conference.

For Gukesh there is still some solace. "Obviously, this game is a bit of a disappointment. Thankfully, it is a rest day tomorrow. Nice to know the score is still tied and that this game is not a huge blow to my chances. Will just try to play good games in the remaining two games," said the usually unflappable Gukesh, who for once needed time to compose himself after resigning. Over the past three weeks, it has been a cagey battle in Singapore. Ding won the first game. Gukesh won Game 3. After that, seven straight games ended in draws.

But the world championship sprung to life after Gukesh's win in Game 11. Ding, who has been largely content to play out draws — even offering split points in Game 6 and Game 8 when in a superior position on the board — has only now started to feel the urgency to win. And win he did, not due to chance, as he tried to brush it off.

Dutch grandmaster Anish Giri, while speaking on Chess24 about the way the Ding vs Gukesh battle has shaped up over 12 games, said: "This reminds me of the movie Tenet — I completely lost the plot, but I'm just enjoying the ride!"

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