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HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER



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HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER OF ASSAM

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# THE WORLD

## TOP OF THE WORLD



Pope Francis leads the Angelus prayer. AP

### Pope names first woman to head major Vatican office

Rome: Pope Francis on Monday named the first woman to head a major Vatican office, appointing an Italian nun, Sister Simona Brambilla, to become prefect of the department responsible for all the Catholic Church's religious orders. The appointment marks a major step in Francis' aim to give women more leadership roles in governing the church. While women have been named to No. 2 spots in some Vatican offices, never before has a woman been named prefect of a dicastery or congregation of the Holy See Curia, the central governing organ of the Catholic Church. The historic nature of Brambilla's appointment was confirmed by Vatican Media. AP

## 'IF I'M FIGHTING INTERNAL BATTLES, CAN'T BE BEST OPTION IN NEXT ELECTION'

# Trudeau announces plans to step down, to stay PM till Liberals name new leader

DAVID LJUNGREN & ISMAIL SHAKIL  
OTTAWA, JANUARY 6

CANADIAN PRIME Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Monday that he will step down as leader of the ruling Liberals after nine years in office but will stay on in his post until the party chooses a replacement.

Trudeau, under heavy pressure from Liberal legislators to quit amid polls showing the party will be crushed at the next election, said at a news conference that parliament would be suspended until March 24.

That means an election is unlikely to be held before May and Trudeau will still be prime minister when US President-elect Donald Trump — who has threatened tariffs that would cripple Canada's economy — takes office on January 20.

"This country deserves a real choice in the next election, and it has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election," Trudeau said.

Trudeau, 53, took office in November 2015 and won reelection



Canada's PM Justin Trudeau closes the door of his residence, in Ottawa, Monday. Reuters



tion twice, becoming one of Canada's longest-serving prime ministers. But his popularity started dipping two years ago amid public anger over high prices and a housing shortage, and his fortunes never recovered.

Polls show the Liberals will badly lose to the official opposi-

tion Conservatives in an election that must be held by late October, regardless of who the leader is.

Parliament was due to resume on Jan. 27 and opposition parties had vowed to bring down the government as soon as they could, most likely at the end of

March. But if parliament does not return until March 24, the earliest they could present a non-confidence motion would be some time in May.

Trudeau said he had asked Canada's Governor General, the representative of King Charles in the country, to prorogue parlia-

ment and she had granted that request. Trudeau had until recently been able to fend off Liberal legislators worried about the poor showing in polls and the loss of safe seats in two special elections last year.

But calls for him to step aside have soared since last month, when he tried to demote Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, one of his closest cabinet allies, after she pushed back against his proposals for more spending.

Freeland quit instead and penned a letter accusing Trudeau of "political gimmicks" rather than focusing on what was best for the country.

"Removing me from the equation as the leader who will fight the next election for the Liberal Party should also decrease the level of polarization that we're seeing right now in the House and in Canadian politics," Trudeau said.

The Conservatives are led by Pierre Poilievre, a career politician who rose to prominence in early 2022 when he supported truck drivers who took over the center of Ottawa as part of a protest against COVID-19 vaccine mandates. REUTERS

# Russia reports 'important' gains in Ukraine amid fierce fighting



Relatives of Ukrainian Marines in Kyiv, on Monday. Reuters

MAXIM RODIONOV & LUCY PAPACHRISTOU  
MOSCOW, JANUARY 6

RUSSIA SAID ON Monday its forces had made important gains in eastern Ukraine while continuing to fend off a new Ukrainian offensive inside the Kursk region of western Russia, where a second day of fierce fighting was underway.

The Russian defence ministry said its forces had captured the town of Kurakhove, 32 km (20 miles) south of Pokrovsk, a Ukrainian logistics hub towards which Russian forces have been advancing for months.

The ministry said taking Kurakhove, which had held out for many weeks, would enable Moscow's forces to step up the pace of their advance in Ukraine's Donetsk region. It also said it had captured Dachensko, a settlement within five miles of Pokrovsk.

Ukrainian monitoring group DeepState, which tracks the front line using open sources, showed most of Kurakhove under Russian control. Ukraine's Khortytsia group of forces said Russian forces continued to attack Kurakhove but Ukrainian forces were working to identify and repel Russian assault groups on that part of the front. Both sides are fighting to improve their battlefield positions before US President-elect Donald Trump, who has pledged to bring a quick end to the nearly three-year-old war, takes office on Jan. 20.

Ukraine's main achievement in the past five months of fighting has been to capture and hold on to a slice of territory inside Russia's Kursk region that could provide it with an important bargaining chip in possible peace talks. Ukraine has not revealed details of the new offensive it launched in Kursk on Sunday, though a senior Ukrainian official has said Russia is "getting what it deserves".

### Ukrainian gamble

Independent military analyst Franz-Stefan Gady said Ukraine was trying to hold on to its pocket of Kursk for as long as possible, even as Russia continued to push deeper into eastern Ukraine.

"There's a likelihood that we haven't seen the main thrust of this Ukrainian offensive operation just yet," he told Reuters. "We are essentially talking about platoon-sized, company-sized assaults with fairly limited gains thus far. It's fair to assume that there are several hundred Ukrainian troops involved in this assault."

Ukrainian and Western assessments suggest about 11,000 troops from Russian ally North Korea have been deployed in the Kursk region to support Moscow's forces. Russia has neither confirmed nor denied their presence. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday more than 1,000 North Korean troops had been killed or wounded. Reuters does not have access to the Kursk war zone and cannot verify casualty figures. REUTERS

# France's Sarkozy goes on trial over alleged Libyan campaign financing

REUTERS  
PARIS, JANUARY 6

FORMER FRENCH president Nicolas Sarkozy went on trial on Monday, on charges of having received millions of euros in illegal financing from Libya's late strongman Muammar Gaddafi for his successful 2007 presidential bid. Sarkozy, who was relaxed and chatting with lawyers and other defendants in the courtroom before the hearing started, has always denied the accusations.

Sarkozy faces charges of "concealment of embezzlement of public funds, passive corruption, illegal campaign financing and criminal conspiracy with a view to committing a crime," the prosecutor's office said.



Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives for his trial on Monday. Reuters

Investigators allege he made a corrupt pact with the Libyan government. At issue is a murky affair alleged to involve Libyan spies, a convicted terrorist, arms dealers and allegations Gaddafi provided Sarkozy's campaign with millions of euros shipped to Paris in suitcases.

## PAKISTAN

### German envoy found dead in his apartment

Islamabad: A German diplomat, serving as the Second Secretary at the country's embassy in Pakistan, was found dead in his apartment in Islamabad, police confirmed on Monday. Thomas Fielder was living in his flat in Karakoram Heights located in the Diplomatic Enclave of Islamabad. The place lies within the limits of the Secretariat Police Station. Fielder's body was discovered by embassy staff, who became concerned after he had been absent from work for two days, Express News reported. PTI

## GERMANY

### Death toll from market attack rises to six

Berlin: The death toll in the attack on a Christmas market in the German city of Magdeburg last month has risen to six as a woman succumbed to her injuries, prosecutors said Monday. Prosecutors in Naumburg said the 52-year-old woman died in a hospital, German news agency dpa reported. Authorities have said that the others who died were four women aged 45, 52, 67 and 75, and a 9-year-old boy. More than 200 people were injured in the December 20 attack. AP

## Second warrant against Hasina in Bangladesh

Dhaka: Bangladesh's International Criminal Tribunal (ICT) Monday issued arrest warrants against deposed PM Sheikh Hasina and 11 others, including former military generals and an ex-police chief, for their alleged role in incidents of enforced disappearances. This was the second arrest warrant by the ICT against Hasina, who fled to India after her Awami League regime's toppling following unprecedented anti-government protests in August last year. The tribunal has so far recorded three cases against her. "Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mojumdar, chairman of the tribunal, issued the arrest warrant after hearing a prosecution plea," an ICT official said. PTI

## AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 6

A JOINT session of Congress Monday certified President-elect Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 election, peacefully performing a basic ritual of democracy that was brutally disrupted four years ago by a violent pro-Trump mob inflamed by his lie about a stolen election.

There was no hint of a similar scene this time, although security had been stepped up at the Capitol. Unlike Trump back then, Vice President Kamala Harris has not disputed her loss in November, and unlike Republicans in the aftermath of



US President-elect Donald Trump

the 2020 balloting, Democrats in Congress made no objections during the counting of the Electoral College votes.

President-elect Trump continues to falsely claim that his 2020 defeat was the result of widespread fraud, and had warned

throughout his 2024 campaign that he harbored similar concerns, until his November 5 defeat of Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris. Unofficial results show Trump winning 312 electoral college votes to Harris's 226. His Republicans also captured a majority in the US Senate and held a narrow edge in the House of Representatives, which will give Trump leeway in implementing his agenda of tax cuts and a crackdown on immigrants living in the country illegally when he is sworn in on January 20.

Trump has also said he plans to pardon some of the more than 1,500 people charged with taking part in the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol, when a mob

fought with police, smashing its way in through windows and doors and chanting "Hang Mike Pence," referring to Trump's then-vice president, in a failed bid to stop Congress from certifying Democratic President Joe Biden's victory. In the January 6, 2021, melee at the Capitol, rioters surged past police barricades, assaulting about 140 officers and causing more than \$2.8 million in damage. Multiple police officers who battled protesters died in the weeks that followed, some by suicide.

As a result of that day's violence, Congress passed legislation late in 2022 bolstering guardrails to ensure the certification process is administered in a legal manner.

## Winners of Golden Globe Awards 2025

**Best drama, The Brutalist**  
**Best comedy or musical**  
Emilia Pérez  
**Best director**  
Brady Corbet, The Brutalist

**Best male actor, drama**  
Adrien Brody, The Brutalist



**Best female actor, drama**  
Fernanda Torres, I'm Still Here

**Best male supporting actor**  
Kieran Culkin, A Real Pain

**Best female supporting actor**  
Zoe Saldaña, Emilia Pérez

**Best female actor, comedy or musical**  
Demi Moore, The Substance

**Best male actor, comedy or musical**  
Sebastian Stan, A Different Man

## THE COUNTRY HAD EARNED ONE OF WORLD'S HIGHEST SCORES IN A GLOBAL SAFETY AUDIT

# Long before Jeju Air crash, South Korea rose to be a role model of air safety

RIVER AKIRA DAVIS  
TOKYO, JANUARY 6

JEJU AIR crash in South Korea last week, the deadliest plane accident in years, has stunned the global aviation industry. The country is regarded as a model for how to turn poor air safety practices into some of the world's best.

Three decades ago, South Korea had a dismal record of air safety. Its flagship airline, Korean Air, experienced several deadly crashes in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2001, the US Federal Aviation Administration downgraded South Korea's air safety rating for

failing to meet international standards.

Around the turn of the century, South Korea began an immense project to overhaul its aviation safety practices, drawing on the experiences of other countries including the United States. By 2008, South Korea had earned one of the world's highest scores in a safety audit conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. At the time of the crash, it was considered one of the safest countries for flying.

Air safety experts cautioned that it was premature to speculate about what caused the crash December 29 of Jeju Air Flight

7C2216, in which 179 of the 181 people on board died. It was Jeju Air's first fatal crash in its two-decade history, and the worst ever on South Korean soil.

"Over the past few decades, Korea and its airlines and government authorities have done very well in terms of implementing safety management systems," said Hassan Shahidi, president of the Flight Safety Foundation, a nonprofit that provides safety guidance to the aviation industry.

In trying to determine what caused the crash, officials have said they would look into multiple factors, including damage to the plane from a possible bird



At the time of the crash, it was considered one of the safest countries for flying. Reuters

strike. The plane had descended without its wing flaps and landing gear activated and skidded down the runway at a faster-than-normal speed. But another key subject of scrutiny is a concrete structure at the end of the runway that the airliner slammed into before exploding in a fireball.

"The one area that we will see moving forward, after this investigation concludes, is really: What about the airports?" Shahidi said. "This comes into question given the issue with respect to the concrete wall at the end of the runway," he said.

In the United States, the FAA specifies that runway safety areas

at most large airports should extend 1,000 feet beyond the runway's end and 500 feet on the sides. The International Civil Aviation Organization, a United Nations agency that sets global safety standards, recommends a standard buffer zone of about 180 to 300 meters (591 to 984 feet) from the end of the runway and ones on the sides at least twice the width of the runway.

Any structures within these zones should be "frangible," meaning they must be able to break or give way to minimize damage in the event of a crash. At Muan Airport, the hard, concrete structure, surrounded by a

mound of dirt, sits approximately 250 meters, or 820 feet, from the runway's end, according to local officials.

A series of deadly Korean Air crashes more than two decades ago helped spur South Korea to reassess its aviation safety protocols and rebuild with much higher standards.

In response, Korean Air began new efforts to improve its safety record. It brought in specialists from Delta Air Lines and Boeing to help revamp training and other practices. Korean Air also invited the Flight Safety Foundation, based in Virginia, to take a look at its operations. NYT



BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY

Make it official on Republic Day. Declare Silence as the local language.



EXPRESS NETWORK



SC-APPOINTED PANEL MEETS DALLEWAL  
PAGE 6



JANMEJAYA SINHA

SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS

RUN UP TO BUDGET 2025-26  
PAGE 10

VEHICLE TARGETED WITH IED IN BIJAPUR, CHHATTISGARH

## Maoists ambush securitymen on way back from operation, 9 killed



Security personnel at the site of the IED blast in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Monday. PTI

8 security personnel, their driver killed; ambush after road-opening party left

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU  
RAIPUR, JANUARY 6

AT LEAST eight security personnel and a driver were killed Monday after Maoists attacked their vehicle in the jungle area of Kutru in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district.

"Maoists blew up a police vehicle using an Improvised Explosive Device on the Kutru-Bedre road," Inspector General of Police for Bastar Range, Sundarraj P, said.

According to sources, the security personnel were returning after conducting an anti-Maoist operation in the Abujhmad re-



gion. The operation had started Friday, and on Saturday, an encounter broke out in Abujhmad, in which five Maoists and a District Reserve Guard (DRG) jawan were killed.

The security personnel killed Monday were identified as Head Constable Budhram Korsa and Constables Duma Markam, Pandru Ram Poyam, and Baman Sodi from the DRG, as well as Constables Somdu Vetti,

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POLL ANNOUNCEMENT IMMINENT

## Unprecedented rush to be in Delhi voter list after last date, needs greater scrutiny: CEO

AAP vs BJP over additions, deletions from electoral list

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

AHEAD OF the announcement of the Assembly election schedule for Delhi – it is expected any day now – its Chief Electoral Officer Monday flagged an "unprecedented" rush for new voter registration since December 16 and said this "needs greater scrutiny".

The office of the CEO, in a statement, said it received new voter registration applications from 5.1 lakh people after the

cut-off date of November 28. It said this was over and above the 3.08 lakh new voters added to the roll during the special summary revision in October.

"This trend of unprecedented increase... and that too after 20 days of the last date of receiving claims and objections as scheduled... is unexpected and needs greater scrutiny," the CEO said.

"Directions are issued to... scrutinise each and every form strictly as per ECI guidelines. 100% field verification shall be done... to identify the genuine eligible persons. EROs are also con-

ducting personal hearings in doubtful cases as per ECI guidelines," the statement said, adding that eight FIRs had been filed against 24 people for submission of false or tampered documents for obtaining voter IDs.

Over the past month, the AAP has accused the BJP of filing objections letters and getting the names of "bona fide voters" deleted from the voter list. The BJP, on the other hand, has accused AAP of getting names of "bogus voters" added to the list.

On Monday, locking horns

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Salman initial target, Lawrence gang shot Siddique over proximity: Police

Focus shifted due to tight Salman security: Chargesheet

MOHAMED THAYER  
MUMBAI, JANUARY 6

THE LAWRENCE Bishnoi gang had Salman Khan in its crosshairs but instead targeted his close associate, NCP leader Baba Siddique, owing to the heightened security around the actor following the shooting outside his Mumbai residence last year.

The Mumbai Police Crime Branch outlined this shift in target in an 4,590-page chargesheet



NCP leader Baba Siddique was killed on Oct 12

filed before a special court on Monday.

The gang, led by the younger brother of imprisoned gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, Anmol, has targeted Salman over his involvement in the 1998 killing of

a black buck, which is revered by the Bishnoi community.

Ruling out any property dispute, the chargesheet lists a number of reasons for the hit – the gang trying to establish its hold on the city; Siddique's proximity to Salman Khan; alleged links to Dawood Ibrahim; and the custodial death of Anuj Thapan, who was arrested over the firing outside Salman's Bandra residence.

These reasons were first

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NSA SULLIVAN MEETS PM, JAISHANKAR, DOVAL

## US eases curbs to push N-deal, 3 India entities may be off blacklist

US President to relax norms to allow tech transfer in space

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IN AN incremental step towards operationalising the Indo-US nuclear deal, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan announced Monday that Washington is finalizing steps to remove longstanding regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies.

This includes removing Indian government entities from the US entity list, The Indian Express has learnt. Sources said these could include: Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC); Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (IGCAR) and Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) – all government-run institutions.

The US Entity List is a list of foreign individuals, businesses, and organizations that are subject to export restrictions and licensing requirements for certain goods and technologies. The list – compiled by the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) of the U.S. Department of Commerce – is ostensibly used to prevent unauthorized trade in items that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



PM Modi with Sullivan in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

## 2 key hurdles: US law that bars manufacturing here, Indian law on liability

ANIL SASI  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

WHILE US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan did not spell out the details with sources suggesting that three entities may be taken off the blacklist, there are currently two key legal barriers to furthering Indo-US nuclear collaboration.

On the American side, a significant impediment is the '10CFR810' authorisation (Part 810 of Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (Part 810) of the US

Atomic Energy Act of 1954), which gives US nuclear vendors the ability to export equipment to countries such as India under some strict safeguards, but does not permit them to manufacture any nuclear equipment or perform any nuclear design work here.

This authorisation is a clear impediment from New Delhi's perspective, which wants to participate in the manufacturing value chain and co-produce the nuclear components for atomic power projects being jointly planned to be set up in India, sources said.

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## UGC eases hiring contract teachers, opens V-C post to non-academics too

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND & RITIKA CHOPRA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IN A MAJOR overhaul of the process of appointment of leaders in higher education, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued new rules Monday which effectively give Governors in states broader powers in appointing Vice-Chancellors and opened the position to industry experts and public sector veterans, thus breaking from the tradition of selecting only academicians.

According to government sources, if approved as is, the new regulations will give Chancellors greater control over Vice-Chancellor selection. This will likely have significant ramifications for Opposition-ruled states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Kerala, where the government and Governor (who serves as Chancellor of state universities) are currently locked in disputes over the top academic appointment process.

The new draft regulations – titled 'University Grants Commission (Minimum

EXPLAINED  
A new flashpoint

THE UGC's draft norms have safely provided that Chancellors would get to control the entire process of appointing V-Cs in state universities. Some state governments led by non-BJP parties have already proposed that the CM – and not the Governor, who is appointed by the Union government – should be the Chancellor. The new norms could become a new flashpoint.

Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025' – have also removed the cap on contract teacher appointments.

The 2018 regulations had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## 9 men trapped in flooded coal mine in Assam, rescuers race against time

SUKRITA BARUAH  
GUWAHATI, JANUARY 6

AT LEAST nine workers had been trapped for over 12 hours in a coal mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district as of 10 pm on Monday, reportedly after it was flooded in the morning.

On Monday night, the state government released a list of the workers, aged between 26 and 57. One of them is from Nepal, one is from West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, one is a local from Dima Hasao, while the rest are from different parts of Assam such as Darrang, Kokrajhar and Sonitpur.

The site of the incident is in the Kalamati area in Umrangso, in the hilly district of Dima Hasao. The area is remote – around 150 kilometres from the district headquarters Haflong – and the Superintendent of Police, District Collector and other senior government functionaries were yet to reach the site as of 8:30 pm.

"The incident took place in the morning, and rescue teams were rushed there as soon as we were informed. The rescue operations have been ongoing for about seven hours now," the SP

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## His ratings down, Trudeau announces resignation, opens a window to reset ties

Task easier said than done given Ottawa's hard line against New Delhi



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces his resignation in Ottawa on Monday. AP

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

FACING LOSS of support within his party and low popularity in polls, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Monday that he will resign as party leader and PM, but will stay on as the PM until the Liberal Party chooses a new leader.

On Trudeau's request, Governor General Mary Simon agreed to prorogue Parliament until March 24. This will give the Liberal Party time to hold a shortened leadership contest.

From New Delhi's perspective, Trudeau's time was up and

the assessment, going by opinion polls, was that he would have possibly lost the elections after being in office for 10 years – he became the Liberal Party's leader in 2013 and PM in 2015.

Trudeau is seen as someone who has taken a "scorched earth policy" in terms of India-Canada ties, especially after his allegation in September 2023 that Indian government agents were involved in the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada.

Delhi has rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd" and "politically motivated", and accused his government of sheltering

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## IIT: Placements dip, students look beyond campus too

PAGE 1  
ANCHOR

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IN AN indication of the changing hiring trends from the Indian Institutes of Technology, at least four older IITs have seen a decline in their campus placement percentages in recent years, even as surveys indicate the number of students getting jobs inde-

pendently may be on the rise.

The trends, based on data obtained by *The Indian Express*, come against the backdrop of a shifting tech landscape, global economic uncertainties, and an increasing number of IIT graduates competing in a dynamic job market.

Five of the seven first-generation IITs responded to *The Indian Express's* request under the RTI Act for placement data spanning six years, from 2018-19 to 2023-24. IIT Madras and IIT Guwahati did not share details and instead referred to their an-

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annual reports.

Among the institutes that disclosed placement rates (the percentage of students receiving job offers) across undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programs, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur, and IIT Roorkee recorded declines ranging from 5 to 16 per-

centage points (see chart).

IIT Bombay provided data only for 2022-23 and 2023-24, showing a drop from 82% to 75%. While IIT Guwahati's placement percentage for 2023-24 (71%) is higher than the pre-pandemic level of 2018-19 (67%), it is seven percentage points lower than the previous year, 2022-23 (78%).

IIT Delhi is the only institution that bucked the trend, maintaining a consistent placement percentage of 84% to 85% since 2018-19, except for fluctuations during the pandemic

years of 2020-21 (80%) and 2021-22 (75%).

The factors – and some riders

While the IITs refused to comment on the record, students and teachers associated with the campus hiring process attributed the drop to a combination of factors: the aftereffects of post-Covid mass hiring in 2022, a slowdown in key sectors like tech and software, and increasing batch sizes.

"In 2022, there was a spike in placement percentages as the

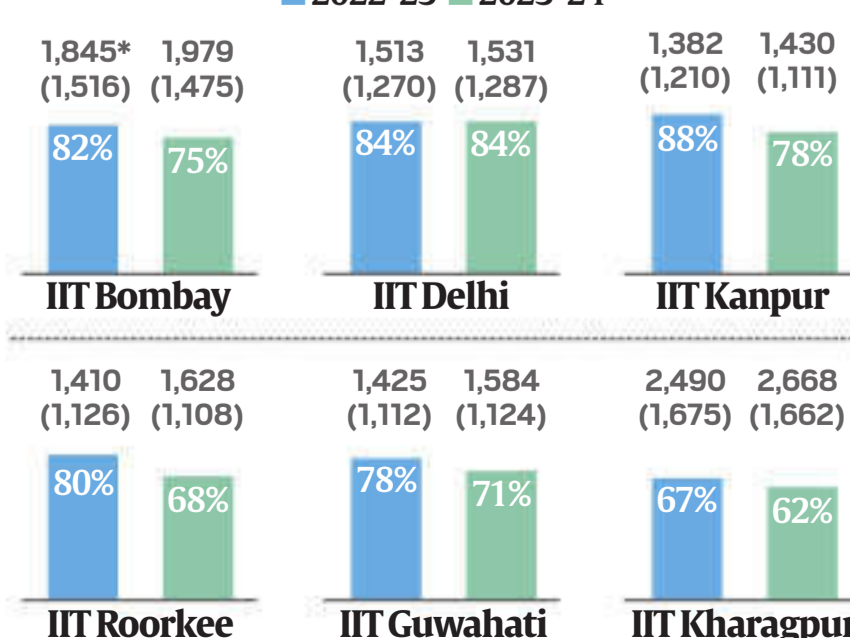
market recovered after Covid, with rates exceeding 85%. This spike followed a two-year hiring freeze. Hiring in 2023 was more conservative, with fewer top MNCs coming in and a decline in software and tech recruitment. Placements this year might improve over last year, but are unlikely to match 2022 levels. The numbers may normalise by 2025," said a source from IIT Kanpur.

Another person associated with placements at IIT Kharagpur pointed to growing batch sizes as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### REGISTRATIONS vs PLACEMENTS

2022-23 2023-24



\*Registered (vs Placed), Placement in %

On December 12, AAP chief lakh from 1.55 lakh.

Earlier in the day, after his meeting with Sullivan, Jaishankar acknowledged Sullivan's "personal contribution" towards a stronger India-US partnership.

publication counts. The 2025 regulations discontinue the API-based shortlisting and adopt a more qualitative approach, allowing selection committees to assess candidates holistically based on their notable contributions and broader academic im-

Deputy Inspector General of      cles and to use motorbikes.

City hospitals must be ready in case of surge in respiratory illnesses: Delhi govt on HMPV

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IN THE wake of two Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases being detected in Karnataka, Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj Monday directed the health department to ensure hospitals are prepared as per the advice of the Union Health Ministry to handle any potential increase in respiratory illnesses.

He also instructed the Health Department to stay in touch with the Union Ministry to get timely updates about preparedness in the capital. "No need to delay action, bring issues to me immediately over (the) phone if directives (are) needed," he added.

He further instructed the health secretary to inspect three hospitals daily and submit reports to the department.

The health secretary has also been asked to report essential drug lists, medicine and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed availability, condition of equipment and pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants, among others, daily.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has also asked all chief district medical officers, medical directors and superintendents to ensure timely reporting of all influenza-like illnesses and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) cases on the Integrated Health Information Platform of the Union Ministry of Health.

Officials have been instructed to liaise with private hospitals in their respective districts to ensure proper reporting and treatment.

"Ensure availability of the following: Paracetamol, anti-histamines, bronchodilators, cough syrups etc. for alleviating symptoms in mild cases; availability of oxygen and other support consumables," the directions added.

## ODISHA WOMAN RAPE CASE: CHARGESHEET FILED GPS data, 700 CCTV clips used by cops to build case

SAKSHI CHAND  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

LAST OCTOBER, a 34-year-old mentally ill woman from Odisha was found bleeding and wandering near Sarai Kale Khan in Southeast Delhi. Three men had chanced upon her on a road and allegedly raped her.

A team of officers then pieced together evidence to build their case. Relying on footage from 700 CCTVs, they reconstructed her route on the day of the crime -- from Sarai Kale Khan where she was found after police received a PCR call at 3.15 am on October 11 to Old Delhi Railway station where she exited the waiting hall at 10.14 am the previous day. Phone locations further put the accused at the scene.

Police also gathered CCTV footage from other locations falling on the stretch -- Kashmere Gate, police post at Red Fort, DCP office Daryaganj, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Rajghat,

New Delhi railway station, Mathura Road, PWD headquarters, ITO building, and petrol/CNG pumps.

This extensive technical roadmap is among the major pieces of evidence that police put forward while filing the chargesheet in the case last month. The court has taken cognizance and the case is at the stage of scrutiny of documents. The Delhi Police will also file a supplementary chargesheet in the coming days.

The woman, meanwhile, continues to be under treatment at AIIMS. The three accused -- auto driver Prabhu Mahto (28), scrap shop owner, Parmod (32), and a physically challenged beggar, Mohammad Shamsul (29) -- were arrested three weeks after the incident and continue to be in judicial custody.

According to police, Mahto was passing by in his vehicle on the night of October 10 when he saw two men assaulting the woman at ITO. He joined them. Police said after they were done,

Mahto took her to another location -- Sarai Kale Khan -- in his auto where he allegedly assaulted her again and abandoned her in a deserted area.

The chargesheet, which runs into over 400 pages, lists 32 witnesses. Twenty of them were policemen who had examined the victim, taken her to the hospital, jotted down her statement, and were a part of the team that arrested the accused men among other things.

The auto-rickshaw used in the crime, the blood-stained clothes of the victim, and the clothes the accused wore during the commission of the crime were some of the things that the police had recovered and are also on record in the chargesheet. Officers said the stains on the clothes of the accused matched those on the clothes of the victim.

Earlier, police had said it took them several days to gain the woman's trust before she revealed information about the assault.

## Air pollution high in Delhi despite 71% reduction in farm fires: Report

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

DEEPER SYSTEMIC changes are required to cut the round-the-year emissions from a variety of sources in Delhi and the surrounding region, highlights the latest study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) that underlines that the Capital has seen a surge in air pollution despite a decline in farm fires in Punjab and Haryana. Despite a 71.2% drop in stubble fire incidents between October and December last year, "the winter pollution remained high in the Capital," as per the study.

"There was a 37.5% drop in

2024 in the total annual fire counts in Delhi, Punjab, and Haryana. Even though Punjab recorded a 75% decline and Haryana farm fires reduced by 37%, the air pollution remained high in the city," read a statement by the CSE, highlighting the findings. The study, which was released on Monday, flagged an upward trend in the annual levels of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), which is said to cause the largest health impacts globally, in 2024; a surge in pollution peak levels by 26%; and a notable decline in the number of good air quality days in Delhi in comparison with 2023, among other findings.

The study, authored by Anumita Roychowdhury, execu-

tive director, research and advocacy, CSE, and Sharanjeet Kaur, programme officer with CSE's Urban Lab, stated that the Capital's annual PM2.5 levels rose to 104.7 micrograms per cubic meter marking a 3.4% increase, compared to 2023.

"Delhi seems to be losing its air quality gains from past actions. Local and regional sources of pollution including vehicles, industries, open burning of waste, use of solid fuels, construction and dust sources have offset the gains -- undermining the longer term progress over the past decade," Roychowdhury has been quoted as saying in the official CSE statement giving details of the latest report.

## Woman's body found inside bed box, husband killed her over suspicion of affair

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

LAST WEEK, 24-year-old Deepa's mother -- like she did every day -- was out to feed the parrots close to her daughter's house, who lived nearby when she smelt something foul. As she got closer to Deepa's rented home in West Delhi's Janakpuri, she saw it was locked from outside. Tensed about the well-being of her daughter, she realised something was off. She called the police. The lock was broken, and as police searched the house, they found Deepa dead -- inside the box of her bed, her mouth covered with duct tape. The body

had decomposed, and a few days had passed since the killing. "On reaching the spot, a foul smell came out of the bedroom, which led to the discovery of the decomposed body," a police officer said.

Ashok Chauhan, Deepa's father, later told police her daughter's phone had been switched off since December 29. Her husband, Dhanraj, was missing. An FIR was registered and the needle of suspicion pointed towards the missing husband, who worked with a ride-hailing company, said officers. A search was launched to trace him.

With his arrest on Monday, officers said, police were able

to connect the dots -- he allegedly killed his wife because he suspected she was having an affair.

"Dhanraj suspected that Deepa was having an affair with a 28-year-old man who worked with a delivery app. He taped her mouth and strangled her to death. He then put the body inside the bed box," the officer said. After allegedly killing her and locking the body in the bed cabinet, he fled.

Prima facie, it appears that Deepa was killed on January 1, 72 hours before the body was discovered, the official said.

After killing Deepika, Dhanraj allegedly went to his friend's house. While having alcohol

with him, he admitted that he had killed his wife, said police.

"His friend revealed that Dhanraj had admitted to the murder. When Dhanraj learnt that his friend has been questioned by the police, he contacted another friend and took his help to flee," the officer said.

Dhanraj was eventually arrested from Karnal in Haryana.

"Deepa and Dhanraj had been married for five years. Their two-year-old child is currently living with his maternal uncle," DCP (Dwarka) Ankit Singh had earlier said.

The police are now questioning Dhanraj to get further details about the murder case, police said.

## Over 3 years, how oldest method of lifting fingerprints helped Delhi cops solve crime

SAKSHI CHAND  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IN THE last three years, the number of cases that the Delhi Police solved with the help of its Finger Print Bureau (FPB) has increased. From 130 cases in 2022, the number stood at 257 last year.

The cases from 202 include 103 of burglary, 95 of unidentified dead bodies, 36 of theft, seven murders, and two rapes.

One such case was the murder of Swiss national Nina Berger last year. Berger, 36, was killed in Delhi on October 18 and her body was found two days later with her limbs tied with locked chains behind an MCD school in West Delhi.

The crime scene was examined and six chance prints were lifted; a search through the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System yielded no results. By then, police had a few suspects; the prints of one of them, a friend of the victim, were a match for four chance prints.

Established in 1987, the FPB is a specialised forensic unit



Fingerprint data of more than 5 lakh arrested/convicted persons have been updated on the state-level database. Credit: Komal

that provides infallible scientific evidence to investigation officers by comparing fingerprints obtained from crime scenes with existing records.

This helps identify potential suspects and establish connections between different criminal activities, said police.

Inspector Sudhir Bhalla, who has been working with the Bureau for the last 30 years, said with the introduction of

NAFIS, the percentage of solving cases has increased. "NAFIS has databases of other states as well so the chances of finding a match are higher... Plus, if the accused was earlier in Delhi and is now arrested and lodged in prisons of other states, then that information is also available," Bhalla said.

Located in the Kamla Market police station building in Central Delhi, the Bureau has a staff of 43 against a sanctioned strength of 77. The rest have either retired or quit.

Sanjay Jha, Director of the FPB, which functions under the Crime Branch, described the process of lifting prints.

He said, "First, our experts reach the crime scene and look for all possible locations where there could be a fingerprint. Rough surfaces don't yield fin-

gerprints so one has to look for plain surfaces and smooth areas. The quality of fingerprints also depends on atmospheric conditions (dry or wet), articles on which they are found etc."



Devesh Srivastava, Special CP, Crime, said, "After implementation of new technology, many more cases are solved through modern databases like NAFIS and AFPIS. Since the inauguration of NAFIS in September 2022 by the Home Minister, searches have been made on this system and a large number of crimes have been solved."

"Fingerprint data of more than five lakh arrested/convicted persons have been updated on the state-level database i.e. AFPIS and the national database of NAFIS," he further added.

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Tripura University invites online applications from the eligible Indian Nationals for filling up various vacant teaching positions of Tripura University.  
The filling up of online application form will start from 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. Last date of Submission is 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. Details are available in the Tripura University website: [www.tripurauniv.ac.in](http://www.tripurauniv.ac.in) and <https://eurec.samarth.ac.in> (NB: Hindi version is available at T.U. website)

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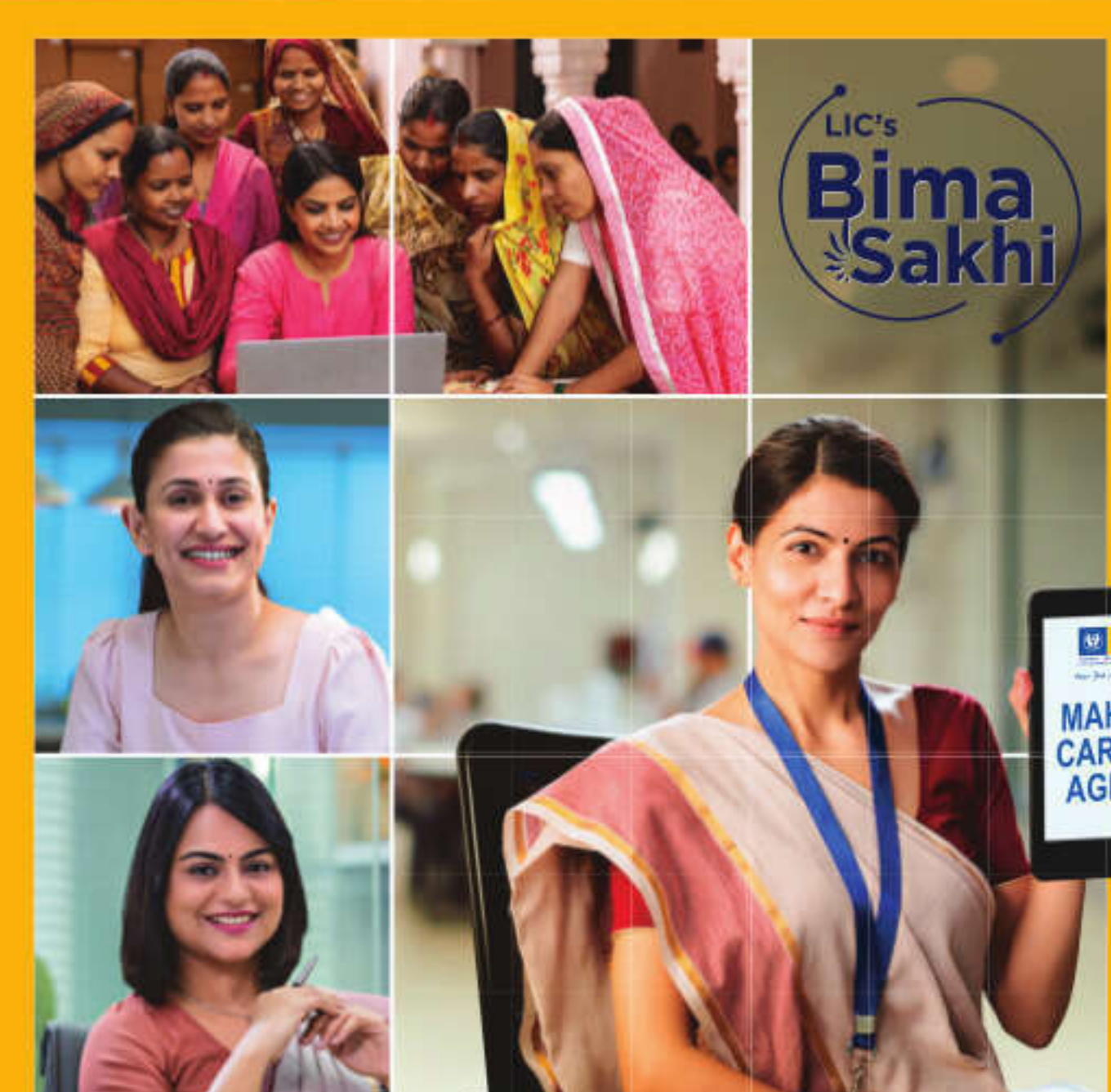
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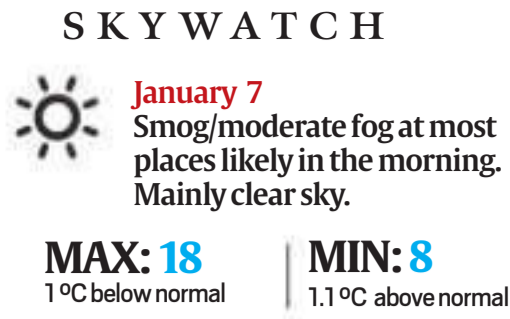
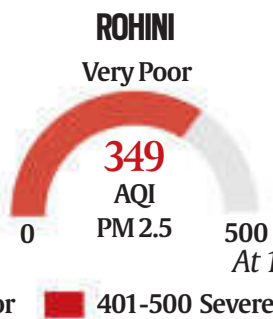
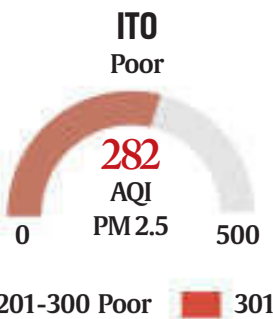
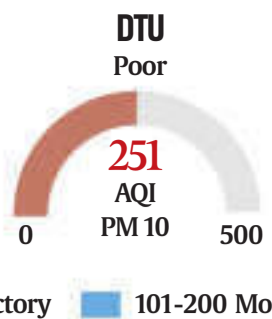
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FLAGS 'POLITICAL INTERFERENCE'

# AAP exerting pressure, says election officer

Atishi writes to CEC for another round of verification of voter deletion in New Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

AHEAD OF the Assembly polls, the District Election Officer (DEO) of New Delhi Monday flagged concerns about “political interference” and “operational disruptions” as he claimed attempts by the AAP to “exert pressure” on him. DEO Sunny K Singh sought security measures to ensure smooth conduct of electoral duties. The ruling AAP, meanwhile, rejected the claims.

The New Delhi constituency will see AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal go up against BJP's Parvesh Verma and Congress's Sandeep Dikshit. Kejriwal has won three consecutive elections from the seat — in 2013, 2015, and 2020.

This development comes after the Election Commission released its revised voter list for Delhi, prompting political sparring. The AAP alleged “large-scale voter deletion fraud” is taking place in New Delhi constituency. The Delhi BJP, on the other hand, claimed AAP failed to “register fake voters” this time.

On Monday, Chief Minister Atishi wrote to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and sought another round of verification of the voter deletions in New Delhi. In her letter, the CM said as per the rules, when deletion requests are more than 2%, then the ERO (election registration officer) has to personally verify each deletion request. “These rules have to be followed in this case as more than 2% votes are sought to be deleted in New Delhi. However, it is not being followed,” the letter read.

The DEO, meanwhile, in a January 4 letter to Delhi's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Alice Vaz wrote about multiple visits by AAP leaders — including party MPs Raghav Chadha and Sanjay Singh — to his office on December 21, 28 and 29, and January 3.

“There have been attempts on their part to exert pressure on me

by asking for personal details of objectors and other such information that falls outside the purview of routine operations,” he wrote.

He also flagged summons from CM Atishi. “The CM... has been calling me for meetings without a specified agenda... in the past, discussions regarding electoral rolls were held without prior notice,” he wrote.

He also asked the Delhi CEO if he was allowed to attend meetings called by the ruling government “without a prior agenda”.

Sunny K Singh, the District Magistrate also raised similar concerns in a letter to the Officer On Special Duty (OSD) to the Chief Minister, dated January 4, and requested that the meeting agenda be shared in advance.

Pointing out that issues regarding the electoral roll were discussed in the meeting, he wrote, “At 1.01 pm, a WhatsApp message from your office directed me to attend a meeting called by the CM at 2 pm. The agenda of the meeting has not been conveyed, making it difficult for me to come prepared.”

Additional District Magistrate Nishant Bodh wrote to the area DCP, seeking police intervention to maintain order at the DEO's office. “Recently, several incidents of ruckus and intimidation have taken place, creating an atmosphere of tension and disrupting the smooth functioning of the DEO's duties,” the letter stated.

The AAP, meanwhile, said it was an attempt to exert pressure. “Our leaders, CM Atishi, Raghav Chadha, and Sanjay Singh, have highlighted that the so-called petitions (who submitted applications for voter deletion) have disowned any link to these applications. When will the Election Commission take note of this? Now, when the issue has been raised, they are trying to exert pressure by sending a backdated letter. This casts serious doubt on the Commission's impartiality,” it said in a statement.

## AAP-BJP tussle over Kejriwal's official CM residence continues

New Delhi: The BJP Monday alleged that the “real” cost of renovation of AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal's official residence when he was CM “remains unknown” and the cost of items found at the property must be included in the CAG report. AAP MP Sanjay Singh retaliated, alleging the BJP “lecturing on corruption is like Osama bin Laden preaching peace”.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said, “The construction of a house for the CM was far beyond the planned bungalow cat-

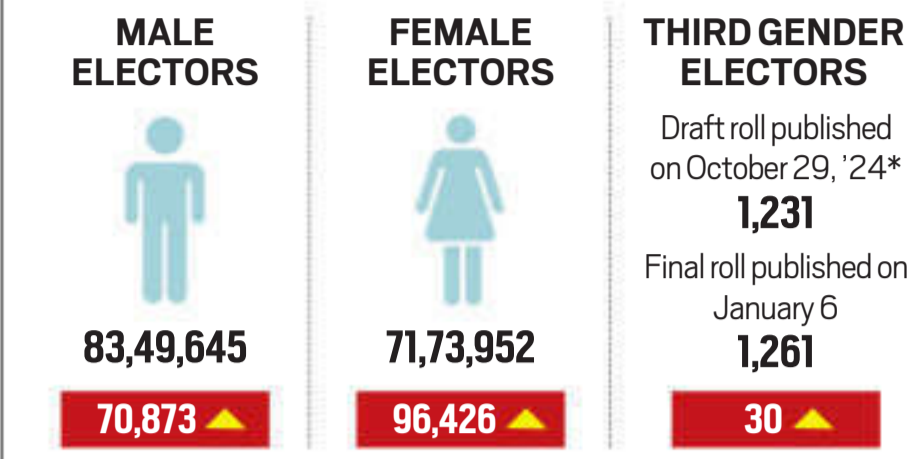
egory assigned to him... PWD inexplicably declared this an emergency project and issued the work order on September 1, 2020, while the rest of us were struggling with impact of Covid...”

Singh alleged: “The CAG report comes in a sealed cover and has not yet been tabled. Meanwhile, the BJP is using forged documents to push its narrative. However, recent CAG reports have exposed massive corruption under BJP-ruled states.” **ENS**

## Assembly polls: Breaking down voters stats

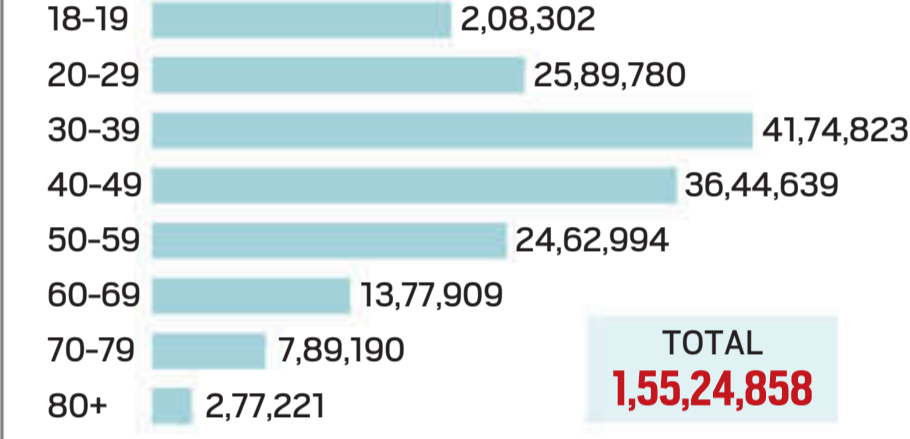
Delhi's revised electoral roll has 1.55 crore voters, an addition of 1.67 lakh since Oct 29, 2024. Of this, 83.49 lakh are men and 71.73 lakh are women. The number of voters in the 18-19 age bracket stands at 2.08 lakh

### Change in electoral roll between October and January



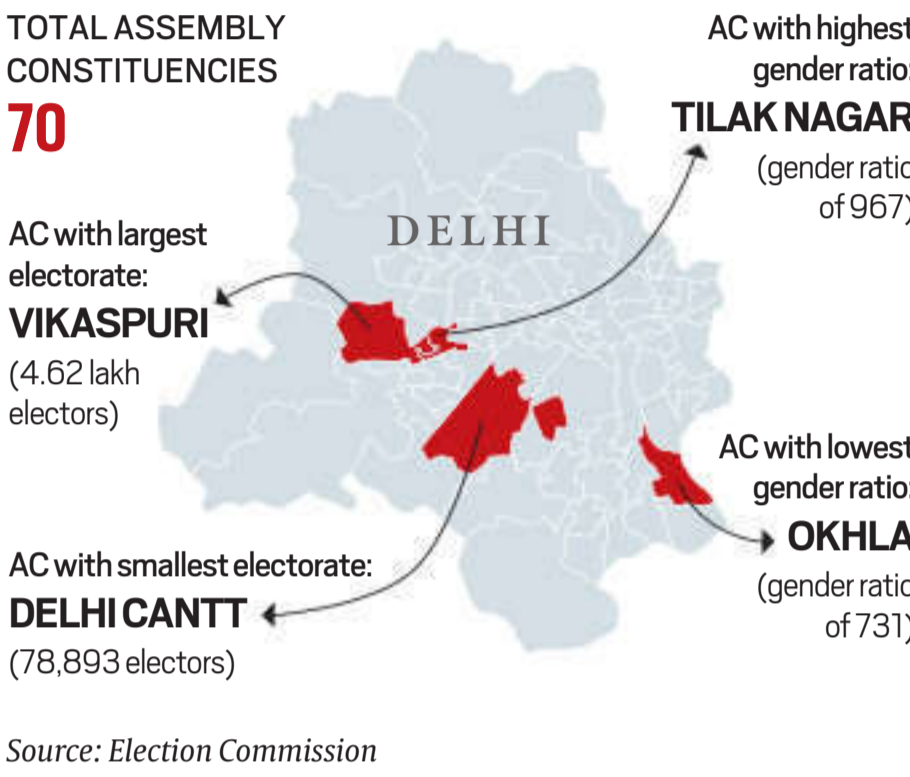
Category	Final roll published on Jan 6, 2025	Change (+/-)
Total electors	1,55,24,858	(+) 1,67,329
Service voters	12,799	(-) 21
18-19 age group electors	2,08,302	(+) 52,554
PwD	79,436	(+) 730
EP Ratio	71.45	(+) 0.85
Gender ratio	859	(+) 4
EPIC/PER	100%	—

### Electors as per final roll published on Jan 6, 2025



The Assembly polls are likely to be held in Feb. Archive

### Biggest and smallest electorates



## ‘Bidhuri seeking votes by abusing my father’: CM Atishi breaks down

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

A DAY after BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri's comments on Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra sparked off a huge row, the CM Monday broke down at a press conference while objecting strongly to Bidhuri's remarks on her father.

On Sunday, Bidhuri, while referring to the Delhi CM's decision to stop using her surname 'Marlena', said during a public address in Rohini's Japanese Park, “Marlena has become Singh... She has changed her father. She was Marlena earlier, but has become Singh now.” The former South Delhi MP, who is now contesting against Atishi and Congress's Alka Lamba from Kalkaji in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, was speaking before Prime Minister Narendra Modi started his address at an event to launch development projects.

Asked about Bidhuri's comments, Atishi said on Monday, “My father is a teacher. He has taught several children from economically weaker sections. He is 80 years old; he is unwell... can't walk without support. Is this the level that you will stoop to to win an election? Will you



Abhinav Saha

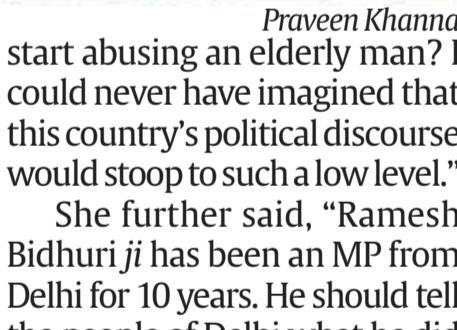


CM Atishi tears up during a presser, Monday; (top) Ramesh Bidhuri's residence was targeted for his 'anti-women' comments.

past five years. He should seek votes based on the work he has done, instead he is seeking votes by abusing my elderly father.”

On Monday, Delhi BJP media department head Praveen Shankar Kapoor in a statement said political leaders should refrain from making “personal gender-related or family-related comments” against others.

He, however, added that “Atishi Marlena”, while seeking an apology from Bidhuri, should ponder on the issue and “come forward and condemn her father for supporting Afzal Guru...”



Praveen Khanna

start abusing an elderly man? I could never have imagined that this country's political discourse would stoop to such a low level.”

She further said, “Ramesh Bidhuri ji has been an MP from Delhi for 10 years. He should tell the people of Delhi what he did for the people of his constituency. He should show that his work in 10 years is better than mine in the

## Riots and demography in mind, small parties focus on NE Delhi

SAMAN HUSAIN  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

MARKED BY the 2020 riots, and by its diverse demography, comprising significant Purvanchali, Muslim, Dalit and OBC populations, Northeast Delhi is seeing a rash of regional outfits like the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM, Mayawati's BSP and Nitish Kumar's JD(U) try their luck for the coming Assembly polls.

AIMIM, which will make its debut in the Delhi Assembly polls, has fielded former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain from Mustafabad, which falls under Northeast Delhi and was hit by the riots.

The party's Delhi unit chief, Shoaib Jamai, said AIMIM is planning to contest 10-12 seats where Muslim population holds significant sway. “Discussions are on regarding multiple constituencies. We will likely field candidates from those seats where Muslims make up 30% of the electorate, but those seats where the community makes 25% of votes are also under consideration. However, our prime focus is on areas in Northeast Delhi. Our second list is likely to be out in the next few days,” he told *The Indian Express*.

The Northeast Delhi Lok Sabha seat comprises 10 Assembly segments, of which AAP won seven

while three of the BJP's eight seats came from the region.

AIMIM's move to nominate Hussain, who was expelled from AAP after being named as an accused in the riots, has triggered strong reactions from his former party, which claimed it could “benefit BJP”. Jamai defended the move and claimed it was a “symbolic gesture”. “AAP nominated Naresh Yadav (he was later replaced by Mahender Chaudhary), who was convicted in a Quran desecration case but Tahir, who was only accused in the riots, was expelled. This speaks a lot about the party. We will raise this ‘two-faced’ nature of AAP during the campaign,” he said.

Alluding to Owaisi's “*haqq* and *izzat* (rights and respect)” comment during a recent rally at New Mustafabad, Jamai said the party's campaign will revolve around it.

Unlike AIMIM, BSP has been contesting the Delhi Assembly polls since 1993 and fielded candidates in all 70 seats the past four times, and is planning to do so again. In 2008, it had won two seats — Badarpur and Gokalpur — with a vote share of around 14%. But since then, its electoral fortunes have been on the decline with the party securing just 0.71%

of the votes in the 2020 polls.

Nevertheless, in 2015, BSP candidates played spoilsport as they garnered more votes than the victory margins in 17 seats, four of them located in Northeast Delhi, including Gokalpur.

Delhi BSP president, Lakshman Singh, said it was “too early” to announce candidates. “However, aspirants are currently being interviewed. Some fresh faces are also in the mix. One can say Northeast Delhi is a focal point but we are going to fight elections with our full might,” he said.

Keeping the significant chunk of Purvanchali voters in mind, Bihar-based JD(U) is keen on throwing its hat in the ring and has accused AAP of not doing enough for Purvanchalis during the pandemic, the issue around which it is expected to build its campaign. “We're in talks (over seat-sharing) with BJP... While we are hopeful of getting seats like Palam and Badarpur too, our focus will be on Northeast Delhi,” JD(U) working president Sanjay Jha told *The Indian Express*.

In 2020, it contested from Sangam Vihar and Burari, both with significant Purvanchali bases, and secured 28% and 23% of votes.

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## ACCUSED IN DELHI RIOTS CASE, FORMER JNU STUDENT WAS OUT ON 7-DAY INTERIM BAIL

# Family savours week with Umar Khalid: Sleep, home food & Campa Cola

NIRBHAY THAKUR  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

IT WAS Umar Khalid's second visit home since he was jailed four years ago in the “larger conspiracy” case related to the 2020 Delhi riots. And it was a visit that left the 37-year-old former JNU student leader's family in that twilight zone between worry and hope.

“He seemed a bit weak this time. All of us noticed that,” Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas told *The Indian Express* at their home in Jamia Nagar, hours after his son's seven-day interim bail to attend a relative's wedding ended on January 3.

“There was some weight loss... There was also the anxiety and excitement of interim bail,” said Banojyotsna Lahiri, a Delhi-based researcher and Khalid's close friend, speaking to this newspaper over the phone.

But then, both are hopeful, too. From someone who was anxious and disturbed two years

ago, Ilyas said he saw a changed man in Khalid this time. “This time, he's optimistic that he will get bail soon. He thinks the fake charges against him can't go on forever,” the father said with a smile while sipping tea.

“We know this will be over soon. We all are optimistic,” said Banojyotsna. She added that despite the weight loss, “he is doing fine”.

Khalid's imprisonment in the riots case has been controversial, with his family and supporters calling the charges “fake” even as the prosecution has described him in the chargesheet as a “veteran of sedition” mainly in reference to his alleged remarks as an activist.

Khalid, along with others, is facing allegations of a “larger conspiracy” to allegedly cause the riots in Northeast Delhi between February 23 and 25, 2020, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured. He has been booked for offences under the Indian Penal Code, Prevention of Damage to Public Property

(PDPP) Act, Arms Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Khalid's bail pleas have been rejected thrice — twice by the Karkardooma court and once by Delhi High Court. Khalid was granted interim bail once before — on December 23, 2022 — for a week.

“How can staying in a cage for four years be easy for someone who loves being out in public all the time... He was savouring every ray of sunlight. It was as if he had returned to the city from a cave in a jungle... he was so happy to have escaped the dark and entered the light,” Ilyas said about his son.

For Khalid's mother, meanwhile, his brief return was also about preparing the food he likes. “She cooked non-vegetarian food for him every day... he's very fond of mutton. His friends got burgers, pizzas and cakes for him. He also likes cold drinks a lot,” Ilyas said, adjusting his spectacles.

But the activist's father had



Umar Khalid with his father, Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas, at their Noor Nagar home in Delhi last week. Express

his own red lines, too. Ilyas is a critic of the US and Israel, and avoids Pepsi and Coca-Cola. The fridge was, therefore, full of Campa Cola. “Khalid has never been fussy about food. He can survive even on *dal* and *roti*... but you know how it is in jail... you

get watery *dal*... I wish he was allowed home-cooked food inside,” Ilyas said.

Apart from food, the family was also happy that Khalid could get “sound sleep for six hours every day”. “In jail, he would sleep on the floor with cold winds en-

tering his cell,” said Ilyas.

According to the interim bail conditions, Khalid could only meet family members, relatives and friends, and had to remain at home “or at places where the ceremonies of marriage as mentioned by him will take place”. He was also barred from using social media.

However, Ilyas said “these restrictions were moderate compared to those imposed when he was last granted interim bail two years ago”. “He was just confined to the house. He couldn't sleep without medication,” the father recalled.

Khalid's time in Tihar has also been taxing in other ways, said Ilyas. “There is a conception among others in jail that my son is a terrorist. It is not easy to convince them otherwise... But whenever any prisoner has court-related queries or difficulties comprehending English, they seek his help. Some of the money we send to Khalid, he donates to the poorer prisoners,” said Ilyas.

Ilyas and his wife prefer video-calls — three every week — than travelling to Tihar to see their son. Seeing his hazy image behind the glass after hours of travelling affects them emotionally, said Ilyas. “Tihar has so many restrictions, too,” he said.

Regarding the family wedding, Ilyas said updates about guests were conveyed to Khalid over video call. “Khalid's sisters came from the UAE and London to meet him... many relatives travelled from Mumbai and Nagpur just to see him,” Ilyas said.

The family, meanwhile, had a message for all those well-wishers and supporters who wanted to meet him, according to Ilyas: “Leave Umar for his family.”

He added, “Other than his relatives, only his close friends, including those from JNU, got the opportunity to spend the week with him. His friends have been very supportive.”

Banojyotsna, too, referred to those moments. “Every day, a few friends would gather and we would just laugh. We tried to

keep the mood light,” she said.

As he left home Friday evening, Ilyas said all Khalid took with him was a small bag with clothes, especially kurtas and pyjamas. “He donates so many of his clothes,” he said.

Finally, turning to the case against Khalid, Ilyas knows what his son is up against. The dates when Khalid's bail was argued are on his fingertips and the reasons for adjournment are etched in memory. He also remembers arguments of the defence and the prosecution. But what he recalls most clearly are the allegations against his son, which he calls “absurd”.

“There are hundreds of witnesses... The trial might even take 10 years. Let's say an acquittal takes place. The people who spent years in jail would have already lost their social identity and real lives by then,” he said.

According to Banojyotsna, interim bail “is a difficult thing”. “A week gets over in two days and the pain that follows feels like it lasts forever,” she said.



Govt notifies appointment of 2 HC judges

New Delhi: The Centre on Monday notified the appointment of two advocates as judges of the Delhi High Court (HC). A Supreme Court Collegium, headed by former CJI D Y Chandrachud, had recommended the elevation of three advocates — Digpaul, Shankar and Shwetashree Majumder — as Delhi HC judges on August 21, last year. Majumder’s recommendation has not been notified by the Centre.

ENS

High Court flags crevasses, landslide risks in Bageshwar, suspends soapstone mining

AISWARYARAJ  
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 6

CALLING IT ironic that trained officers have permitted mining operations at the base of a hillock when there are habitations in revenue villages at the top, the Uttarakhand HC Monday suspended all mining operations in Bageshwar until further orders. The decision was taken after court-appointed commissioners submitted a report on soapstone

mining in the district. “The report is not merely alarming but is also shocking. The report and the photographs clearly demonstrate complete lawlessness by the miners and are proof of local administration turning a blind eye to the transgression. Further, the report and the photographs, prima facie, demonstrate that further mining operations... are likely to result in landslides and definite loss of lives,” said the order. The report states that there

were alarming levels of land subsidence and “soapstone mining in the region is leading to critical environmental and socio-economic issues for which the community is at the receiving end”. The court said photographs indicate huge crevasses, indicating impending landslides that could lead to the loss of many lives. “Hence, pending further orders, all mining operations in Bageshwar district shall stand suspended with immediate effect,” the court said.

The report also said that there was illegal tree felling, unauthorised use of forest land by mine operators, employment of foreign labour from Nepal and flouting of labour laws. It also pointed to pollution and drying up of springs. The issue of land subsidence was found in villages of Kanda-Kanyal, Kanda and other mining sites. As per a report submitted in the NGT by Centre, the area’s flora includes oak, cedar and cypress, and the wildlife includes leopard, wild boar, and fox.

CCI ANTI-TRUST PROBE

SC transfers pleas against Amazon, Flipkart to HC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday transferred all petitions pending before various courts against the antitrust probe by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) into the activities of e-commerce majors Amazon and Flipkart to the Karnataka High Court where a single-judge bench is hearing similar pleas. On being informed that five more petitions on the matter have been filed before high courts after CCI moved the Supreme Court, the bench of Justices A S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan directed that they, too, be transferred to the Karnataka High Court. CCI had ordered a probe into alleged malpractices by Flipkart and Amazon India in January 2020 on a complaint by MSME body Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh. The body claimed that the retail-

ers were engaged in deep discounting and preferred selling mobile phones and related accessories “which have led to a foreclosure of other non-preferred traders or sellers from these online marketplaces”. The firms challenged this before the Karnataka HC where a single judge and a division-bench turned down their prayer. On appeal, the Supreme Court refused to interfere with the high court order. In its probe, which concluded in August 2024, CCI found the e-commerce companies violated local competition laws. Subsequently, petitions were filed before different high courts, including Karnataka, by sellers associated with the e-commerce giants, challenging various aspects of the CCI probe.

ENS

2002 MURDER OF TWO RSS/VHP WORKERS

SC: Can’t acquit solely because of faulty probe

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

STATING THAT an accused cannot seek acquittal solely on faulty investigation, the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed an appeal against the April 12, 2011, Kerala High Court judgment upholding the conviction of five men for murdering two RSS/VHP workers.

“On appreciation of the evidence, we are unable to find any fault with the judgment and order dated 12.04.2011 passed by the High Court of Kerala at Ernakulam in Criminal Appeal...Accordingly, we arrive at the conclusion that the present appeal deserves to be dismissed,” a bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Prasanna B Varale ruled.

The Supreme Court also pulled up the Kerala Police for not investigating the case properly but added that the accused cannot take benefit of that, especially so when there is enough evidence to nail the guilt of the accused.

“A cumulative reading of the entire evidence on record suggests that the investigation has not taken place in a proper and disciplined manner. There are various areas where a proper in-

vestigation could have strengthened its case.... the principle of law is crystal clear that on the account of defective investigation, the benefit will not inure to the accused persons on that ground alone,” the apex court ruled.

“It is well within the domain of the courts to consider the rest of the evidence which the prosecution has gathered such as the statement of the eyewitnesses, medical report, etc. It has been a consistent stand of this court that the accused cannot claim acquittal on the ground of faulty investigation done by the prosecuting agency. As the version of eyewitnesses in specifically naming the appellants have been consistent throughout the trial, we find that there is enough corroboration to drive home the guilt of the accused persons,” said the judgment.

Though the counsel for the accused alleged material contradictions in the testimonies given by the prosecution witnesses, particularly the eyewitnesses, the court said “though there is a variance in the statements of the witnesses, it is minor and not of such a nature which would drive their testimony untrustworthy”. It said that the deposition of prosecution witnesses 1, 2 and 4 was “honest, truthful, and trustworthy”.

Lokpal disposes of corruption complaint against former CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

THE ANTI-CORRUPTION ombudsman Lokpal has disposed of a complaint alleging corruption against former Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud for being “barred by jurisdiction”, according to an official order.

A complaint was filed on October 18, 2024, “against the sitting Chief Justice of India (CJI) as on that date, for alleged abuse of office, amounting to corruption and malicious exercise of power to favour and protect a certain politician and political party”, it said.

CJI Chandrachud demitted office on November 10.

The Lokpal examined in detail if a sitting CJI or a Supreme Court judge was amenable to its jurisdiction under Section 14 of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act and decided to “eschew from dilating upon the diverse allegations contained in this complaint running into 382 pages”.

“...we dispose of this complaint as being barred by jurisdiction,” said the order by Lokpal chairperson Justice A M Khanwilkar and five other members.

The order said the complainant was free to pursue other remedies, as permissible in law. “We may not be understood to have expressed any opinion on the merits of the allegations, one way or the other including about the maintainability of the legal remedies to be resorted to by the complainant,” it added.

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA  
PANAJI, JANUARY 6

POLICE ON Monday booked prominent Goan writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee Datta Damodar Naik on charges of hurting religious sentiments after receiving complaints that he labelled temple priests “looters” in a recent interview.

Naik (70), who is also a businessman, said he is a “staunch atheist” and is not scared by the development.

According to police, one complaint was filed at Canacona police station by Satish Bhat, who alleged that in an interview to a regional news channel, Naik made derogatory remarks about Shree Samsthan Gokarn Partagali Jeelvottam Math, which is in Partagali, South Goa.

“In an interview, Naik referred to temple priests as dacoits and looters. In our culture, we respect everyone’s opinion, whether someone is an atheist or not. But through these remarks, he has deliberately hurt religious sentiments and insulted our culture,” Bhat told *The Indian Express*.



Datta Damodar Naik

of citizens) and an investigation has been initiated.

Naik told *The Indian Express*, “I am a staunch atheist and I have been in public life for several years. At a recent event... I said that temple priests looted money from people... Later, I clarified that I meant to say they ‘extracted’ money... It is true, temples are extracting money. I questioned what was built with this money? Have they built any schools, hospitals? Where is all this money going?”

He said he was aware that a police complaint had been lodged against him. “I do not know whether it has been converted to an FIR. Anyway, I am not scared. What will they do? Arrest me? I have the freedom to express my opinion and I am not afraid. What about my sentiments as an atheist? The space for rational thinking and dialogue is shrinking,” he said.

Naik has written in Konkani, Marathi and English. He won the Sahitya Akademi award in Konkani in 2006 for his collection of essays, *Jai Kai Jui*. In the early 1990s, he founded Samata Andolan, a group for rationalists from across Goa.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU KRISHI VISHWA VIDYALAYA,  
JABALPUR (M.P.)-482004  
No./COA/2024-25/046  
Date: 06 January, 2025

CORRIGENDUM  
With reference to Advertisement No./IPRO/COA/2024/87 dated 19.12.2024 for walk in Interview for the post of Research Associate- RS & GIS (Sl. No. 2), Senior Research Fellow-RS & GIS (Sl. No. 4) in the project entitled "Development of Climate, resilient, Bio-fortified HYV of Paddy for Madhya Pradesh in collaboration with IIRRI " has been postponed due to some representations. Interview for the post of Research Associate (RS & GIS) & SRF (RS & GIS) will be conducted later and shall be updated on JNKVV Website.

Sd/-  
Dean, College of Agriculture,  
JNKVV, Jabalpur

नियम 92 (1) (क) (ii)  
ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना का प्रारूप  
मध्यप्रदेश शासन,  
नगर पालिक निगम ग्वालियर  
जलसंयंत्र RO क्रमांक 9  
नगर, आर्.टी. क्र. 2025\_UAD\_393015\_1

नया दिनांक: 03/01/2025  
दिनांक: 06-01-2025

कार्य	समय व दिनांक	संभावित राशि	पूर्ण अवधि (माह)
Supply of 3.3 Cubic metre capacity Four Wheeler CNG Closed Garbage Tipper- 30 Nos. of make TATA/MAHINDRA BOLERO/ASHOK LEYLAND of equivalent chassis and as per attached Technical Specifications. Registration of Vehicle from RTO Gwalior M.P Minimum One Year Zero Depreciation and Comprehensive insurance of each Vehicle from reputed Company Approved by IRDA One Year under warranty Vehicle Service at relevant Company Service Centre at Gwalior (Minimum 03 Services per vehicle in one year) File No. 135/24x2/10 1st Call	प्रतः 10:30 बजे दिनांक 04.01.2025 से सार 5:30 बजे दिनांक 03.02.2025 तक	3,27,00,000/-	30 दिन

1. शुद्धक बोली दाता वेबसाइट <http://emc.mptenders.gov.in> पर एनभाईटी देख सकते हैं।  
2. एनभाईटी में संशोधन यदि कोई होगा है, तो वेबसाइट पर प्रकाशित किया जाएगा और समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित नहीं होगा।  
3. किसी भी स्पष्टीकरण की आवश्यकता हो तो कृपया नगर पालिक निगम, ग्वालियर में सम्पर्क करें।  
नोटल अधिकारी, एस.बी.एस./एस.डब्ल्यू.एस., नगर निगम ग्वालियर

‘Message to critics’: Patnaik joins stir against price rise

SUJIT BISOI  
BHUBANESWAR,  
JANUARY 6

AS THE results of last year’s assembly polls continued to cast its long shadows over his party, BJD president took to the streets of Bhubaneswar Monday to protest the rising prices under the Mohan Majhi-led BJP government.

Speaking at his first protest rally in the last eight years, Patnaik lashed out at the “double-engine” BJP governments at the Centre and the state, saying that the Majhi government had “no control over the market” and was in “deep slumber” even as the price of essential commodities skyrocketed. The rally comes at a time when the party’s poor showing at last year’s Assembly polls and its relegation to principal Opposition party after being 24 years in power appears to set it on shaky grounds, sparking an exodus within the party. The party was reduced to 51 MLAs in the 147-member House, a significant downgrade from the 113 it won in 2019.

“In the seven months of BJP’s rule in Odisha, people have only heard long speeches, but no action is being taken to control the price rise. The government claims to be a people’s government but it seems it has no concern towards their well-being,” Patnaik told the rally. The BJP has assumed power by making false promises to the people, he said. “The BJP showed a rosy picture in the trailer but when the film released — the MM (Mohan Majhi) Sarkar is like Mahanga Mada (price rise) sarkar,” said Patnaik. “Double engine... double mada (blow)... hitting people from two sides—price rise and the GST.”

But it isn’t just for Patnaik that the rally is significant: this is also the first such public agitation against the state government for the BJD in over two decades. Party insiders said the rally was a “show of strength”, with Patnaik’s presence aimed at boosting workers’ morale.

बिहार सरकार  
कर्मयोगी भारत  
लोकहितं मम कर्णयोगम्  
बिहार लोक प्रशासन एवं ग्रामीण विकास संस्थान  
BIHAR INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
Hosts  
Mission Karmayogi Workshop for CTIs, State ATIs & State Governments  
on  
07<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
Chief Guest  
Mr. Adil Zainulbhai  
Chairman, Capacity Building Commission & Representatives of CTIs, State ATIs & Secretaries/ Principal Secretaries from across the States  
Mission Karmayogi, envisioned by the Hon’ble Prime Minister, aims to transform civil servants by shifting their approach from rule-based to role-based public service delivery.  
This workshop will bring together CTIs, State ATIs along with Secretaries/ Principal Secretaries from across the states. It will play a pivotal role in :-  
Disseminating knowledge  
Driving Mission Karmayogi's implementation at the state level.

PR No. 016440 (B&C)D, 2024-25  
07<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025  
BIPARD CAMPUS, GAYA (BIHAR)

NORTHERN RAILWAY  
(E-Auction Notice)  
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites bids through e-Auction through IREPS (<https://ireps.gov.in/>) for the allotment of Automated Teller Machine/Digital Banking Unit/ Banking e-Lobby Contracts, at following Railway stations/locations:-

E-Catalogue No.	Date & Time of bidding	Railway Stations/Locations/Sites
DLI-ATM-01-2025	20.01.2025 at 11.00 Hrs.	Vivek Vihar (VVB)-1, Anand Vihar (ANVT-1), Nizamuddin (NZM-1), Karainthi (KHV-1), Delhi Shahdara (DSA-3), Tilak Bridge (TKJ) - 2 Sites), Shivaji Bridge (CSB) - 2 Sites, Samar Gopalpur (SMF)-1, Kinana (KIU)-1, Julana (JNA)-1, Nllokheri (NLKR)-1

Website particulars where complete details of E-Auction can be seen : <https://ireps.gov.in/>  
All bidders who intend to participate in the e-auctions conducted through E-Auction Leasing module of IREPS should fulfil following mandatory requirements before they can submit their bids:  
- Registration on IREPS for E-Auction Leasing module - Active IREPS User Account for E-Auction Leasing Module.  
- Payment of One Time Registration Fee; Current Account in State Bank of India; Integration of SBI Bank Account with IREPS Account; Lien Marking of Funds; Updation of Turnover Details.  
- A new mechanism namely Virtual Account Number (VAN) has been introduced now for E-Auction Leasing module, which can be used by the bidders as an alternative to Lien Marking Mechanism.  
- The bidders are free to switch between Lien Marking Mechanism (if activated) and VAN mechanism at any point of time, before entering the bidding room.VAN mechanism does not require the bidder to have a current account in State Bank of India. The users are free to transfer money from any of their existing bank accounts in any bank to their VAN account, which enables them to participate in IREPS E-Auctions.  
- Contractors who do not have IREPS account for any module of IREPS can submit their online request for registration by clicking on New Vendors / Contractors (E-Tender /E-Auction Leasing) link on IREPS Home page.  
Railway Authority to contact, in case of any query : Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial Branch, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055. Email: [publicitycelldli@gmail.com](mailto:publicitycelldli@gmail.com), Tel: 011-23743084  
No.: 3PUB/ATM/DLI-DIV/E-auction/2022 Date: 01.2025  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUBLIC NOTICE  
This is to inform the general public that Radhika Heights Limited, Radicura Infra Limited, Cabana Construction Private Limited, Nirmala Buildwell Private Limited, Sunanda Infra Limited (Companies), have revoked the General Power of Attorney dated 10.12.2019, executed by them in favour of Bestech India Pvt Ltd., 51, Sector-44, Gurgaon, Haryana alongwith its Directors, Mr. Dharmendra Bhandari r/o A 126 Sushant Lok, Gurugram, Haryana and Shri Sunil Satija, r/o A 125 Sushant Lok, Gurugram, Haryana (‘Attorney’) and registered at the office of Sub registrar, Harsaru, Haryana, under Vasika number 40 on 12.02.2020.  
The aforesaid General Power of Attorney is no longer valid and stands cancelled vide Revocation/ Cancellation of General Power of Attorney registered vide Vasika No. 151 dated 02.01.2025 at the office of Sub Registrar, Harsaru, Haryana and aforesaid Attorney is no longer authorized to act, represent, or make decisions on behalf of Companies regarding any matters covered under the aforementioned General Power of Attorney.  
The general public and all concerned parties are warned to take note of this cancellation/ revocation. Any transactions or actions undertaken by Attorney on behalf of Companies, post cancellation of aforementioned General Power of Attorney will not be binding on aforesaid Companies and they shall not be held responsible for any such acts.  
On behalf of Radhika Heights Limited, Radicura Infra Limited, Cabana Construction Private Limited, Nirmala Buildwell Private Limited, Sunanda Infra Limited.  
VIVEK BHANDARI  
ADVOCATE  
PUNJAB AND HARYANA  
HIGH COURT CHAMBER NO. 27  
Ph: +91-7814447555 | 0172-25444000  
Date : 06.01.2025  
Email: [bhandari\\_bharat@aol.com](mailto:bhandari_bharat@aol.com)

# 6 GOVT & POLITICS

## How \$1 million prize for deciphering Indus Valley script is a chapter in Stalin government’s ‘Dravidian’ narrative

**ARUN JANARDHANAN**  
CHENNAI, JANUARY 6

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister M K Stalin’s offer of a \$1 million prize for anyone who deciphers the Indus Valley script serves a purpose beyond solving the lingering mystery regarding the 5,000-year-old civilization.

The announcement on the back of a study by the state Archaeological Department showing many similarities between the signs and graffiti found in Indus Valley and those discovered during digs in Tamil Nadu bolsters attempts by Stalin to recast himself as an upholder of “Dravidian interests” — and to position himself and his party as a staunch opponent of the BJP and its ideology.

Authored by researcher K Rajan, and R Sivananthan of the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, the study ‘Indus Signs And Graffiti Marks of Tamil

Nadu – A Morphological Study’ involved documentation, digitisation and categorisation of over 15,000 graffiti-bearing pot shards from 140 archaeological sites across Tamil Nadu. These were then compared against 4,000 artefacts recovered from Indus Valley sites, including seals.

As per the study, 42 ‘base signs’, 544 ‘variants’ and 1,521 ‘composite forms’ were identified at the Tamil Nadu sites. “Out of 42 base signs and their variants, nearly 60% found parallels in the Indus script,” the authors wrote. Furthermore, “more than 90% of the graffiti marks of South India and the graffiti marks of the Indus Valley Civilisation had parallels”.

The researchers explicitly state that theirs is a “morphological approach” and not linguistic, focusing on physical comparisons, with their observation being that the Indus script may not have disappeared but evolved into different forms. “Extensive

comparative study of graffiti marks and Indus scripts... suggests that both are undeciphered signs,” the authors wrote.

The key excavation sites in Tamil Nadu where the researchers focused were Keeladi, Sivagalai and Thulukarpatti. As per the study, Thulukarpatti alone yielded nearly 5,000 graffiti marks, while in Keeladi, just southeast of Madurai, hundreds of inscribed pot shards were found. These included carnelian beads, agate, black and red ware, and high-tin bronze objects.

The occurrence of identical graffiti marks at Indus Valley and South India sites, the study says, suggest a cultural contact between them. The study also says that recent chronometric dates indicate that when the Indus Valley was going through the Copper Age, South India was in the Iron Age (that is, a more ad-

vanced period).

“In this sense, the Iron Age of South India and the Copper Age of Indus are contemporary. If both are contemporary, there is a possibility of cultural exchanges either through direct or intermediate zones,” the study says, adding that more material proof and tangible data were needed to support the view.

**How does it fit into Tamil Nadu govt’s larger plank?**

In 2019, a DMK government-supported advanced carbon dating of Keeladi artefacts concluded that the Tamil Brahmi script dates back to 600 BCE, much earlier than the previously accepted date of 300 BCE. The Stalin government has claimed that the Keeladi excavations hence narrow the gap between the Indus Valley Civilization and Tamil Nadu settlements.

The dating of the scripts was



surrounded by a row as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had earlier not proceeded with the advanced carbon-dating tests, with an ASI researcher who initiated the study transferred out of the state.

T Udhayachandran, the Tamil Nadu Finance Secretary who is also in-charge of the state Archaeological Department, is a key face behind the Stalin government’s push for these digs. However, the preceding AIADMK government had also persisted in this in the face of alleged dragging of feet by the ASI.

Proof that civilization developed in the South parallelly with Indus Valley counters the dominant Aryan-centric narrative of the subcontinent’s history — particularly when the BJP dispensation has put its weight behind the theory that Aryans were not “outsiders”.

Two years ago, before he launched the study that has come out with its findings now,

Stalin said in the Assembly that his party’s goal was to establish, through scientific methods, that the history of India be rewritten from the Tamil land. He then announced the state Archaeology Department would begin work on a comparative study of graffiti found in Keeladi and the signs of the Indus Valley Civilization.

On Sunday, while talking about the findings of the study, he tied it to broader symbols of Tamil identity, particularly linking Indus Valley seals with the image of the bull to the Tamil tradition of bull-taming sports like Jallikattu.

“There were bulls in the Indus Valley. Bulls are Dravidian symbols. Bulls spread from the Indus Valley to Alanganallur (a village near Madurai famous for Jallikattu). Ancient Tamil literature has rich references to bull-taming sport and one of the Indus Valley seals has impressions of a man trying to tame a bull,” Stalin said.

## Ahead of first train to Kashmir, PM launches Railway division for Jammu

**ARUN SHARMA**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 6

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Monday virtually inaugurated the Jammu Division of Indian Railways — a move that fulfils a long-pending demand from the region. This comes weeks before the Modi government launches the first direct train service to Kashmir in six decades.

Modi, who described the move as a “monumental step”, inaugurated the division through a video link as part of a series of new Indian Railway projects. The new Jammu Division, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is the Indian Railways’ 70th overall and the sixth under Northern Railways after Ambala, Delhi, Lucknow, Moradabad and Firozpur.

The inauguration of Jammu Division of the Indian Railways comes ahead of the official inauguration of the Katra-Reasi railway section and the official launch of the Vande Bharat train up to Srinagar. The rail section, trial runs for which is ongoing, will formally establish a railway link to the Kashmir Valley and, seen in conjunction with the likely inauguration of Vande Bharat train services to Kashmir on January 26, could give a significant economic boost to the region.

Speaking at the event, Modi said the government’s new railway initiatives, which include expansion of the country’s metro rail network to over 1000 km, and Nammo Bharat train in Delhi-NCR, are “further testimony to the fact that the nation is moving forward together”. Modi also inaugurated the new Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana and laid the foundation stone of Rayagada Railway Division Building in Odisha at the same event.

“The Jammu railway division will not only benefit J&K but also Himachal Pradesh and several cities of Punjab and Leh-Ladakh,” he said. “Jammu and Kashmir is achieving new milestones in railway infrastructure, with the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla



**PM Modi launches railway projects virtually, Monday. PTI**

rail line, which is being discussed all over the country today.”

The Jammu Division has a total rail network of 742.1 km, with sections such as Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla (423 route km), Bhogpur-Sirwal-Pathankot (87.21 route km), Batala (excluding)-Pathankot (68.17 route km) and Pathankot-Joginder Nagar (narrow gauge section, 163.72 route km) coming under it.

Thus far, these sections were part of the Firozpur Division of the Northern Railways.

Currently, the railway line runs up to Katra and Reasi in Jammu. Once opened, the 62-km-long track between Katra and Sangaldan, Reasi, in Jammu will also boast the world’s highest bridge over Chenab.

Meanwhile, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari highlighted various highway development projects in the union territory — including the construction of a four-lane stretch of road on NH-44. The road is meant to bypass Banihal town in Ramban, which would see frequent traffic jams.

“In J&K, we have successfully completed a 4-lane, 2.35 km bypass to Banihal town at a cost of Rs 224.44 crore. Strategically located on the Ramban-Banihal section of NH-44, the bypass features 4 viaducts spanning 1,513 meters and 3 culverts, effectively addressing the persistent bottleneck caused by roadside markets and shops,” said Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in his post on X.

## Dhami invites PM to National Games 2025

**Dehradun:** Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and invited him to the National Games 2025 to be held in the state from January 28. The CM also said that the first phase of the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail project is progressing rapidly, and the survey for the Tanakpur-Bageshwar rail project has been completed. He sought approval and full financial support from the Centre for its execution. He also proposed the closure of the old railway station in Rishikesh and requested that all train operations be shifted to the new Yog Nagari Railway Station.

He also updated the PM on the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission. **ENS**

## DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



**KANCHAN VASDEV & ANANTHAKRISHNANG**  
CHANDIGARH, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

THE FARM protest impasse continued Monday as the high-powered committee formed by the Supreme Court met fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who declined medical aid.

The committee’s chief, retired Punjab & Haryana HC judge Justice Nawab Singh, told the 70-year-old leader: “(SC Judge Justice Surya Kant) is worried about your health. On every date of hearing, he keeps issuing directions to ensure your good health.”

But Dallewal, whose fast at Khanauri border between Punjab and Haryana entered Day 52 Monday, responded that the committee should press the SC for a direction to the Centre: “I re-



The panel members at Khanauri on Monday. Harmeet Sodhi

spect Justice Surya Kant but how do I ask him why he does not give any direction to the Centre, when our issue is to be sorted by Centre? When the Punjab Advocate General (AG) asks him to direct the Centre, then Surya Kant ji does not listen. Union Minister (Shivraj Singh Chouhan) says if the SC tells them, they will

comply with orders. If SC is not ready to give this direction to the Centre, then we do not have hope from anywhere.”

Dallewal said he would break his fast if the Centre accepted the demands of the farmers protesting at Khanauri and Shambhu border points. The demands include a legal guarantee for the

MSP for crops.

The discussions came hours after Punjab, represented by Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, informed the SC that the protesters had agreed to a meeting with the committee — which also comprises former DGP BS Sandhu, economist RS Ghuman, agriculture expert Devinder Sharma and Punjab Farmers’ Commission chairperson Sukhpal Singh.

The bench of Justices Surya Kant and N K Singh then adjourned the hearing on a plea on compliance with its directions to the state to shift Dallewal to a hospital. It fixed January 10 as the next date of hearing.

Meanwhile, late Monday, doctors from the NGO attending to Dallewal, claimed his pulse rate was falling steeply late Monday. A team of doctors from Rajindra Medical College and Hospital was examining Dallewal at press time.

## Governor walks out of TN House over anthem row

**ARUN JANARDHANAN**  
CHENNAI, JANUARY 6

IN AN extraordinary turn of events, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi abruptly walked out of the state Assembly Monday morning, citing a breach of protocol after the national anthem was not played at the beginning of the session.

The incident has deepened the rift between the Governor and the state government, reigniting debates over constitutional propriety and political one-upmanship.

According to TN Assembly protocol, the Tamil Thai Vaazhthu, the state’s official song, is performed at the opening of proceedings, while the national anthem is sung at the end of the day’s session. The Raj

Bhavan’s insistence on changing this protocol is seen as an over-reach by the DMK government.

The drama unfolded when the Assembly convened for its first session of the year. As per tradition, the session began with the recital of the Tamil Thai Vaazhthu. However, the absence of the national anthem triggered objections from the Governor, who reportedly appealed to Chief Minister M K Stalin and Speaker M Appavu to ensure its inclusion. His request was declined, prompting Ravi to leave the Assembly less than five minutes after the session began.

In a statement released on social media shortly thereafter, the Raj Bhavan accused the state government of “brazen disrespect” to the Constitution and the national anthem.

“The Constitution of Bharat



Governor R N Ravi, Chief Minister M K Stalin



and the National Anthem were once again insulted in the Tamil Nadu Assembly today. Respecting the National Anthem is among the first fundamental duties as enshrined in our Constitution. It is sung in all the state legislatures at the beginning, independent of the BJP and the Sangh, the sarsangchalak was seen to be sending a signal to the Uttar Pradesh CM.

When PM Modi recently sent a chadar for the shrine at Ajmer Sharif, he underlined a sentiment similar to the one Bhagwat expressed. And both were in sync with the Supreme Court’s direction barring civil courts from registering fresh suits challenging the ownership and title of any place of worship or ordering surveys of disputed religious places until further orders.

However, Adityanath has kept bringing up the issue and forward to ensure the BJP’s victory in Haryana and Maharashtra.

Mohan Bhagwat’s recent statement that the time had come to stop looking for mandirs under every masjid took many by surprise. With Yogi Adityanath seeming to be fashioning a political line, and following, independent of the BJP and the Sangh, the sarsangchalak was seen to be sending a signal to the Uttar Pradesh CM.

When PM Modi recently sent a chadar for the shrine at Ajmer Sharif, he underlined a sentiment similar to the one Bhagwat expressed. And both were in sync with the Supreme Court’s direction barring civil courts from registering fresh suits challenging the ownership and title of any place of worship or ordering surveys of disputed religious places until further orders.

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Duty and fervently appealed to the Hon’ble Chief Minister who is the Leader of the House and the Hon’ble Speaker for singing the National Anthem. However, they cussedly refused.

“It is a matter of grave concern. Not to be a party to such brazen disrespect to the Constitution and the National Anthem, the Governor in deep anguish left the House,” the statement read.

Speaker Appavu continued

the session by reading the Governor’s customary address, prepared by the state government, in Tamil. The address, a highlight of the opening session, traditionally outlines the government’s agenda for the year.

However, the Governor’s absence overshadowed the proceedings, triggering protests and walkouts by legislators across party lines.

While Congress MLAs, wearing black badges, condemned the Governor’s perceived interference in state affairs, the BJP and PMK MLAs protested what they described as inaction in the Anna University sexual assault case and the suppression of opposition voices in the Assembly.

Evicted by the Speaker, AIADMK legislators protested demanding justice in the sexual assault case at Anna University.

Again, much will depend on what Pawar’s Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) decides to do. Will it reunite with Ajit Pawar’s NCP? Talks are afoot to bring this about and it will naturally have implications for national politics.

player who cannot be easily dismissed. That is why both the BJP and the Congress want him to lose and both see him as enemy number one. His victory will boost Mamata Banerjee’s claim for the leadership of the INDIA bloc, putting the Congress at a disadvantage. Sharad Pawar and Lalu Prasad have also welcomed the idea of Banerjee in the lead role.

Will Priyanka have an impact? Premature though it is to talk about this, the “P or Priyanka” factor will also be at play in 2025. Will there be a face-off with Modi? Going by her debut

speech in Parliament and her ability to catch eyeballs, much will depend on the role the Congress leadership assigns her. Knowing her potential, BJP has already initiated its counter-attack. Its Wayanad candidate Navya Haridas has filed an election petition challenging Priyanka’s election and the matter is likely to be taken up in January.

The year promises to be far from uneventful. But then again, Indian politics is rarely dull. The Census is due to be held this year and the government will have to take a call on whether to go ahead with Rahul Gandhi’s demand for a caste census, bringing the controversial “C” factor to the centre stage.

(Neerja Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, The Indian Express, has covered the last 11 Lok Sabha elections. She is the author of How Prime Ministers Decide)

## 3 HMPV cases confirmed, Govt says ‘virus not new’

**New Delhi:** The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Monday confirmed three cases of human metapneumovirus (HMPV) — two in Karnataka and one in Gujarat — even as the Union Health Ministry said the virus was “not new” and there was “no reason to worry”.

In Karnataka, the infection was detected in a 3-month old girl and an 8-month old boy who were being treated at the Baptist Hospital, Bengaluru, and had no

international travel history.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said he had instructed the state Health department to “take appropriate precautionary measures”, adding, “People need not panic about the virus. It is enough to be cautious.”

In Gujarat, the HMPV case was reported in Chandkheda area, where a two-month-old child from Rajasthan was admitted to a private hospital in Chandkheda for treatment. **ENS**

# From Sangh-BJP ties to Priyanka factor: 5 trends to watch out for in 2025



**THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN**

Weekly insight into what’s changing in national politics — and why

TO PREDICT anything in a country like India is a risky proposition. However, last year’s developments point to certain trends — I would like to point to five — that may influence the country’s trajectory in 2025.

### Women voters

On top of the chart are women, a potent political currency. Women have become a vote bank that no party can ignore and that was apparent in the Maharashtra Assembly elections and earlier in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

In Delhi, both the AAP and the Congress have promised monthly

allowances for women — the Arvind Kejriwal-led party Rs 2,100 under the Mahila Samman Yojana and the grand old party Rs 2,500 under the Pyaari Didi Yojana — if they come to power.

For many women, receiving money is empowering, increasing their economic worth and strengthening their sense of autonomy. As a result, these women are ready to vote even differently from their spouses. Political parties view women as “labharthis (beneficiaries)” but even this has its limits.

Increasingly, women will demand their due place under the sun and not just be satisfied with “revidis”. In the immediate run, women will be decisive in both the Delhi elections and in Bihar towards the end of the year. Women played a decisive role in the victories of both Arvind Kejriwal and Nitish Kumar in the last few elections. They are among the few constituencies today that cut across religion and

caste affiliations.

### The ‘D’ factor

Dalits have been an established vote bank of different parties at various times. Of late, parties, always quick to smell the direction of the wind, have realised the growing, not diminishing, import of Babasaheb Ambedkar. BJP and Congress MPs even had a scuffle in Parliament over Ambedkar during the recent Winter Session.

Both Modi and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi will be expected to sharpen their pitch this year to win over Dalits. The speed with which the community reacted in the Lok Sabha polls to the possibility of the “400 paar” narrative ending reservation showed how well-networked young and educated Dalits are today. They were instrumental in robbing the BJP of a clear majority.

### Sangh-BJP ties

The “S (Sangh)” factor will be

watched with great interest as the RSS centenary celebrations get underway and the power-play in the larger Hindutva family resets the BJP-RSS agenda.

A recalibration of the relationship between the Sangh and the BJP may well be on the cards in 2025 as they may face new challenges from within the larger Hindu ecosystem. Whatever the Sangh’s reservation to “vyaktivaad (personality cult)” — an allusion to the support Modi enjoys — it is not likely to rock the Modi boat and do anything that strengthens Gandhi.

But it would like to ensure that personality-oriented politics does not develop in the BJP anymore and the party goes back to “collective leadership”. The selection of the next BJP president will indicate how much of the Sangh’s concerns the party brass has been taken on board. Some have clearly been addressed as the RSS cadre put their best foot





The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A STRONGER STEM

More women in IITs is reason for cheer. It is important to ensure that passage from classroom to workplace remains unhindered

THE INCREASING REPRESENTATION of women in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) marks a pivotal moment in the journey toward greater inclusivity and gender equity in India's premier institutions of higher education. It is also welcome affirmation of the larger and irreversible shift in society that top-down institutional reforms can help make deeper and wider. Data obtained by this newspaper under the Right to Information Act has revealed that six years since the implementation of a supernumerary quota of 20 per cent for women in undergraduate engineering programmes, in which extra seats were created instead of reserving them within the existing pool, IITs are witnessing a significant surge in female students. At IIT-Kanpur, the number of women rose from 908 in 2017 to 2,124 in 2024; IIT-Roorkee saw a 76.36 per cent jump between 2019-20 and 2024. IITs in Chennai, Mumbai, Guwahati and Kharagpur, too, saw commensurate jumps in enrolment.

The upsurge reflects a positive correlation between individual ambition and availability of opportunities that is a result of good-faith affirmative action. Initiated in 2018, the quota in IITs goes beyond numbers in reshaping an academic space that has historically been male-dominated. There have been infrastructure upgrades in the form of more hostels, washrooms and recreational facilities for women. Some campuses have a special open-door policy for female aspirants and their parents to learn about campus life. These are all welcome departures from a masculine imagination of the classroom where women were expected to man up or ship out, where safeguards against everyday sexism were few and far between. The change challenges the old narrative that STEM is a field for men, and signals a future where women's voices, ideas, and innovations will be indispensable in shaping the country's intellectual and technological future. Given that of the total enrolled students in engineering and technology — according to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for 2021-22 — women still comprise only 11.3 lakh, while 27.6 lakh are men in the undergraduate programmes, it is crucial to bridge the gap.

But as with medicine, where for every 100 men there were 100 women enrolled in medical colleges in India in 2020-21, the increased presence of women in IITs can only be counted as a job well begun. It underscores the need for greater systemic support to ensure that the progress of women does not stall, that the passage from classroom to workplace remains unhindered. The focus must now shift to ensuring that the IITs continue to create an environment where women can thrive free from biases, and are equipped with all the support and resources they need to succeed. The India Human Development Survey, by the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research, that has tracked changes in the lives of Indian households between 2004 and 2024, shows that despite ongoing transformations in their lives, one area where women continue to be let down is in terms of economic opportunities. With more women poised to enter the workforce, it is time to ensure that gender-neutral policies, mentorship, and a culture of inclusivity allow them to realise their potential more fully.

READING THE FALL

Stock markets are weighed down by global, domestic factors.

For investors to reassess positions, more clarity is needed

ON MONDAY, STOCK markets crashed, with the BSE Sensex ending the day down 1.6 per cent. The Indian markets were, however, not an outlier. Some of the other Asian markets also witnessed weakness. The Nikkei index was down 1.5 per cent while the Hang Seng fell by 0.4 per cent. In the Indian markets, the selling pressures were broad-based, not just limited to the larger companies. The BSE Midcap index fell by 2.4 per cent, while the Smallcap index declined by more than 3 per cent. The Nifty VIX, a fear gauge, was up 15.6 per cent.

The triggers for the fall appear to be both global and domestic. On the global front, investors are apprehensive about the possible changes to US policy after Donald Trump is sworn in as president on January 20. Concerns over the possibility of higher tariffs weigh heavy. The policy stance of the US Fed is of equal concern. The first meeting of the Fed which will be held later this month will provide greater clarity on how tight its monetary policy is likely to be. This will have implications for the dollar and the rupee. On the domestic front, after a depressed earnings quarter (July-September), there are concerns over the performance of the corporate sector in the just concluded quarter (October-December). While some are hopeful of a bounce back, others are circumspect, expecting earnings to be subdued. There is a view that after the slump in the second quarter, the economic momentum has picked up, what is less clear is the extent of the pick up. Government spending also remains weak. The Centre's capital expenditure, which has been a key driver of growth in recent years, has been waning — during April-November it was actually 12 per cent lower than last year — and foreign investors appear circumspect. In the first few days of the new year, foreign portfolio investors have been sellers with (net) investments of -\$836 million. Some reports suggest that investors may have also been spooked by the virus outbreak in China.

Clarity on some of these issues will emerge over the next few weeks, prompting investors to reassess their positions. Alongside, how the upcoming Union budget and the February meeting of the monetary policy committee provide support to the economy will also influence sentiment.

THE COMEBACK

After a rough few years, the Golden Globes is doing what it does best: Getting the party going

WHO DOESN'T LOVE a great comeback story? The Golden Globes certainly does. On Sunday night, Demi Moore's return to the zeitgeist with *The Substance* was recognised with the Best Female Actor (Musical or Comedy) award — the first such honour for the actor in her 45-year-long career. Recalling the day when the script for the Coralie Fargeat film came across her desk in her acceptance speech, Moore said, "The universe told me, 'you're not done yet.'"

The universe might well have whispered these words to the Golden Globes which, after a rough few years, appears to have recovered some of its lost mojo. Never quite as prestigious as the Academy Awards or the Emmys — the other two major events at which Hollywood celebrates itself — the Globes ceremony was, nonetheless, the glamorous party that set the tone for the rest of awards season. Scandals, including allegations of corruption and racial bias within the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA, the body that ran the Globes) and sexual assault accusations against a former HFPA president, led to a boycott by the industry's biggest names in 2021 and broadcast cancellation in 2022. Steadily declining viewership only seemed to ensure the Awards' consignment to irrelevance, and the ratings for the 2024 ceremony were among the worst in its eight-decade history.

With the 82nd ceremony, the Golden Globes has scripted its own comeback. Hollywood seems to have thawed towards the event and the red carpet was as glamorous as could be hoped for. The awards themselves, for both film and television, were predictable and uncontroversial, even if some snubs, such as to Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* (nominated for Best Foreign Language Film), sting. This year's ratings, unlike the chartbusting song from *Wicked* (winner of the Cinematic and Box Office Achievement award), may not be "defying gravity", but the Globes has done what it's always done best: It's got the party going.

Hindutva's Ambedkar puzzle



ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

Hindu unity, Savarkar's project, was the opposite of what Babasaheb sought

A VIGOROUS DEBATE in the recently concluded Winter session of Parliament has brought into the limelight one of the most important political issues of our times. What is the relationship between Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution, and Hindutva?

Two contradictory impulses appeared in the debate. The BJP's principal claim was that it had done more than any other major party, targeting the Congress in particular, to restore the justly great status of Ambedkar in the national public realm. However, the speech of Home Minister Amit Shah seamlessly slipped into the claim that the iconisation of Ambedkar had become too much of a political fashion, and if only similar attention was paid to God, one would earn a place in heaven. The former was an attempt to embrace Ambedkar politically, the latter was barely concealed ridicule. Which of the two truly represents the core of Hindu nationalism?

Perhaps one could begin with how the original thinkers of Hindu nationalism saw the relationship, going all the way back to the 1920s and 1930s. For those early years, there is no better guide for us than VD Savarkar, the father of Hindutva.

Luckily, a new book — *Savarkar and the Making of Hindutva* (Princeton University Press, 2024) by Janaki Bakhle, Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley — gives us novel insights into Savarkar's thinking. Ten years in the making, Bakhle's book comprehensively examines Savarkar's voluminous writings in Marathi, including his plays, poems and essays, which are well-known in Maharashtra but not having been translated in English, little known outside. Savarkar wrote copiously about caste, religion and nationhood, and also commented on Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar.

As Vikram Sampath's biography of Savarkar had also earlier noted, Bakhle emphasises that Savarkar was a persistent critic of caste. But Savarkar's position was different from both Gandhi and Ambedkar. Gandhi's unrelenting focus was on untouchability, a "sinful" denial of basic dignity to millions of Indians. As for the other castes, hierarchy was the problem, not caste per se. While untouchability required eradication, the four-varna-based caste system simply needed reform. Minus the hierarchy and untouchability, the

Though critical of caste, Savarkar never argued that the caste system was a centuries-long structure of dominance and oppression, and a birth-based, radically unequal, distribution of group dignity was built into it. Anti-Brahmin arguments, ruling many intellectual and political circles in Bombay and Madras Presidencies at the time, did not draw his sympathy. Indeed, he argued, the project of Hindu unity could be pursued under 'enlightened Brahmin leadership'. Thus Savarkar 'attempted to have it both ways: To enact radical reform without completely alienating the privileged elite'.

caste system, according to Gandhi, could simply function as a division of labour, given the historical links of castes with occupations.

Ambedkar disagreed. The entire caste system required annihilation, not just untouchability. The caste hierarchy and its horrors were anchored in religious texts, without which Hinduism was inconceivable. Brahminism was as big a problem as untouchability. Ambedkar was born a Hindu, but did not want to die as one. Before his death, he converted to Buddhism with his followers.

Bakhle shows that Savarkar's views on caste were located somewhere between Gandhi and Ambedkar. He was constantly critical of Sanatana Dharma. To him, caste was "an enduring structure of stupidity, naivete and even innocence"; rituals were a mere idiotic superstition; and "the cow, Vedic chants and prayers were themselves not sacred". But Savarkar also believed that Brahmins deserved no special ire for their behaviour. Rather, prejudice and oppression ran through the entire system. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas oppressed everyone beneath them; upper Sudras lorded over the lower Sudras; the "untouchable Mahars", a caste to which Ambedkar was born, did not look kindly at those below them in the hierarchy. These "rules of bad behaviour" can be altered if we change our minds. The "untouchables", according to Savarkar, can and should be given access to Vedic rituals and embraced by all castes.

But why should all of this be done? Though critical of caste, Savarkar never argued that the caste system was a centuries-long structure of dominance and oppression, and a birth-based, radically unequal, distribution of group dignity was built into it. Anti-Brahmin arguments, ruling many intellectual and political circles in Bombay and Madras Presidencies at the time, did not draw his sympathy. Indeed, he argued, the project of Hindu unity could be pursued under "enlightened Brahmin leadership". Thus Savarkar "attempted to have it both ways: To enact radical reform without completely alienating the privileged elite".

This equivocation allows Bakhle to make a key argument. Savarkar's criticism of caste was "instrumental". It was "primarily motivated by what he saw as an urgent and immediate need to unite Hindus against Muslims (in marked contrast with Gandhi whose critique of caste was primarily related to the need

for a unified nationalist movement against British rule)". Over time, opposing British rule became less important to Savarkar than creating a united Hindu community against the Muslims, who might rise again and dominate the Hindus, but whose disloyalty to India was, to him, far too evident. If the "untouchables" and lower castes are not incorporated in the Hindu family, they "will join forces with the Muslims", whose demographic numbers needed contraction, not expansion by conversion. To put it in modern social science terms, Savarkar's project of Hindu unity meant merging all castes into a singular Hindu ethnicity.

To Ambedkar, Hindu unity was exactly the opposite of what his own project sought. He wanted to "annihilate" caste and leave Hinduism altogether. Though Savarkar initially had some sympathy for Ambedkar, the fundamental clash between the two projects became all too obvious. Savarkar's final judgement was unambiguously clear. He called Ambedkar "a man... burning with hatred against Hinduism".

The Home Minister's Ambedkar ridicule is arguably rooted in Savarkar's ultimate judgment of Ambedkar as a Hindu hater. But so is Hindutva's Hindu unity strain embedded in Savarkar. *Batenge toh katenge* (if divided, we will be decimated), the new political refrain of Hindutva, is a perfect contemporary illustration of Savarkar's Hindu unity project, to be pursued without an attack on caste hierarchy, but with Muslims as an enemy.

The electoral significance of Dalits stems from their numbers. They are numerically larger than the estimated demographic size of Brahmins, if not all upper castes together. Ambedkar's status has become so great that large proportions of Dalits not only view him as an icon, but they also see the Constitution, made under his leadership, as an emblematic canon. A fuller incorporation of Dalits into the Hindu unity project is not possible if Ambedkar and "his" Constitution are threatened. However, since Ambedkar had no interest in Hindu unity, Hindutva's Ambedkar ambivalence continues, and is not easily resolvable.

The writer is Sol Goldman professor at Brown University, where he also directs the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia at the Watson Institute. Views are personal

BUDGET AND THE FARM

Uniform taxation across agri-markets, research funding, can turn sector around



AJAY VIR JAKKHAR

IT'S SAID THAT mistakes don't kill us but persisting with them can be fatal. The government should introspect on why farming seems to be imploding. In the pre-budget discussions on agriculture with the Finance Minister, I suggested that the government order an audit of its programmes by beneficiaries. The government acknowledges the need, but given the bureaucratic obduracy, this critical audit is bound to get sidestepped.

I have pondered for years as to why the FM should be meeting farmer representatives, especially when the budget allocations are made at the specific request of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare. Most of the suggestions are either repeated annually or have no relevance to the budget. But I must acknowledge the FM's remarkable patience to engage with critics for hours in these "consultations with farmers and economists" where, invariably, representatives of agro-industry find their way in.

It was heartening to learn that the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare met farmer representatives prior to the budget session, possibly the first Union minister for agriculture to do so. The Indian agricultural research system has consistently failed to meet expectations in terms of closing the yield gap in crop productivity. Part of the blame is on the lack of funding support and the tendency to spread scarce resources thinly over all crop types/classes such that a critical inertia for transformative change is not achieved in any

The GoI does not even have the data on revenue collection for later years. Even optimistically, if the collections doubled over five years, it would not exceed Rs 2,000 crore. Short-termism of financially constrained states would make them reluctant to forego revenue and label such a nudge as an assault on the federal structure.

crop. The legacy of ticking all boxes is not tenable; it never was.

To consider three nutritionally vital crops with the potential to double the yield and where India is excessively dependent on imports, we proposed to the FM that the government deploy Rs 1,000 crore per year on gram/chickpea in pulses and in oilseeds, soyabean (kharif) and on mustard (rabi) for eight years. That is the time to achieve a research breakthrough. India cannot continue to invest as it has been doing and expect sharp improvements in agriculture productivity. Nearly 45 per cent of Indian farmers grow only field crops (no horticulture or animal husbandry) and over a decade, have witnessed near zero or negative growth rates in value of output. They are distraught. Meanwhile, problems around marketing of perishable horticulture produce remain unresolved. Broadly, even a 5 per cent increase/decrease in production can lead to an inverse 50 per cent fall/rise in farm-gate prices. Cognisant of the problem, the government had tried to literally ram through reforms to un-regulate agricultural markets. Since then, the complexities around reforming the sector, governed by the states, by enacting new laws or councils, have only increased. Equally, uniform taxation in agricultural markets across India (like GST) will pave the way for improved governance, mitigation of food inflation and price fluctuations. Most importantly, the expectation is that this will ignite entrepreneurial spirit to drive regulated com-

petition to benefit farmers and consumers.

The market fees and other charges from horticulture produce collected by all the states vary and collectively amounted to Rs 908 crore in 2018-19. The GoI does not even have the data on revenue collection for later years. Even optimistically, if the collections doubled over five years, it would not exceed Rs 2,000 crore. Short-termism of financially constrained states would make them reluctant to forego revenue and label such a nudge as an assault on the federal structure. The Bharat Krishak Samaj proposed a smarter way forward — that the Centre, through the 16th Finance Commission, could offer to financially compensate the states for five years for the reduction in their fees and charges on horticulture produce to 0.1 per cent. A nominal fee should be charged for purely administrative reasons like collecting and mining real-time data. This is in line with the proclamation of the benefits of "One Nation, One Tax".

The stakes for India couldn't be higher, especially when past budget allocations regarding agriculture prove that strategic thinking on the use of land for meeting competing objectives is missing. This has left the nation unprepared for climate change or making Bharat "viksit". So, even as I am optimistic about India, as far as its farmers are concerned, there are reasons for pessimism. As a farmer, my approach is try and fail, rather than not try at all.

The writer is chairman, Bharat Krishak Samaj

JANUARY 7, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

STALEMATE ENDS

AKALI DAL WILL respond favourably to any initiative from the Centre for an amicable settlement of the Punjab problem, elements in the Akali leadership claim. The realisation has grown among the Akali ranks that continuance of the stalemate and adoption of a negative attitude towards a positive initiative from the Centre would complicate matters further.

PM ON PUNJAB

PRIME MINISTER RAJIV Gandhi has said that the Army could be withdrawn from Punjab when its internal security duties are ended.

But "the time schedule for the Army's withdrawal depends a lot on the response from the Sikhs," and "the Army has to come out, and the sooner its internal security duties are ended there the better," said Gandhi.

US-SOVIET ARMS TALK

US SECRETARY OF State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko arrived in Geneva for talks on re-opening arms negotiations between the two superpowers. The talks between Shultz and Gromyko will be the first known discussions since the Soviet Union walked out of negotiations on medium-range nuclear missiles in November 1983 in

protest over the US deployment of new missiles in Europe. "I hope (the talks) will set our countries on a path toward new negotiations on equitable and verifiable agreements," Shultz said.

BJP POLL STRATEGY

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY has left to its state units to hold talks on seat adjustments for the forthcoming assembly elections with other non-communist opposition parties. This was indicated by BJP general secretary L K Advani after the conclusion of the party's national executive. The party was anxious to avoid the division of Opposition votes, Advani said.

# MSP guarantee is feasible

Those opposing it paint an unfair picture of its financial burden



DESHKAAL  
BY KAVITHA KURUGANTI, KIRANKUMAR VISSA AND YOGENDRA YADAV

IS A LEGALLY guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) to the farmers an idea whose time has come? Today is the 43rd day of the indefinite fast on this issue by farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal. In the midst of this fast, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing (with a majority of MPs from the ruling NDA) has made an unprecedented recommendation of “legally binding” MSP. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the largest platform of farmers’ organisations, is likely to announce a major action plan with the same demand as the farmers protesting at Khanauri.

However, the Union government seems to be in no mood to consider this demand. Notwithstanding the PM’s repeated assertion — “MSP hai aur rahega” — the government has not even initiated a dialogue with the protesting farmers. The PM’s “New Year gift” to the farmers — a stale declaration about continuing crop insurance and subsidy on fertilisers — bypasses the MSP. On the contrary, the government’s recently released draft “National Framework for Agricultural Marketing” for the next 10 years does not even mention the MSP, let alone consider legally binding MSP.

In the midst of this deadlock, the farmers continue to suffer. Take Merta, an important major agricultural market in Rajasthan where moong (green gram) is a major kharif crop. The officially declared MSP for moong is Rs 8,682 per quintal. However, during December 2024, the average price was only Rs 6,467. The farmers had to sell at a loss of Rs 2,215 per quintal, below the official MSP. Thus, the total income lost by farmers in this one market for this one crop in one month was over Rs 10 crore. In the market at Jalana, Maharashtra, the average price of jowar (sorghum) received by farmers in December was Rs 2,456 per quintal, Rs 915 below the official MSP of Rs 3,371. Maize price in Madhya Pradesh markets was Rs 1,980, whereas the MSP is Rs 2,225. The average market price for soybeans during the three months between October and December was Rs 4,076 in Maharashtra and Rs 4,148 in Madhya Pradesh, while the MSP was Rs 4,892. Herein lies the MSP story and the rationale for the farmers’ demand.

The government officially declares MSP for 23 crops every year with a fanfare that makes public believe that the government has done a great favour to the farmers. In reality, the government does precious little to ensure that farmers get this “minimum” price. If the government does not take any action when the market price goes below MSP, the words “minimum” and “support” become meaningless. Clearly, an MSP that is not guaranteed is no MSP. The farmers simply want the government to redeem its promissory note.

However, every time the farmers’ demand comes up for discussion, an outcry is orchestrated in the mainstream media, portraying it as unreasonable, operationally impossible or a fiscal disaster. Much of this criticism is either directed at an earlier version of this demand that the farmers’ movement has outgrown or is deliberate scaremongering. The demand for legally binding MSP is logically



C R Sasikumar

coherent and operationalisable. What is more, the country can afford it. Here is how it can be done. (We draw upon our article ‘A question of how, not why’, *Frontline*, March 22, 2024).

Let us begin by getting rid of the idea that legally binding MSP entails that the government must procure the entire produce of all the crops, or at least those crops that sell below the official MSP. This is neither feasible nor necessary. It is also not simply a matter of declaring any trade below MSP as illegal and relying on a punitive mechanism. This has been attempted and such a legal provision by itself does not work.

The basic principle of a legally binding MSP is very simple: Farmers must have a legal entitlement to receive — and the state would have a corresponding legal obligation to ensure to farmers — at least a remunerative MSP for all agricultural produce. The point of this definition is that the state’s obligation is to “ensure” that the farmers receive the statutory price for their produce, not necessarily to “purchase” the farmers’ produce. Correspondingly, the farmers’ entitlement is to “receive” the statutory price, irrespective of who they receive it from.

This principle can be operationalised through three main mechanisms: Expanded procurement, effective market intervention and assured deficit payment. Let us examine these three.

Expansion and fine-tuning of the existing procurement operations would be the first step in this direction. Higher procurement of millets, pulses and oilseeds and expanding their inclusion in the food security schemes would help redress the present imbalance in procurement. The second modality can be smart market interventions. This can take multiple forms: Limited purchase whenever prices start dipping below the MSP, setting the floor price in APMC market auctions to MSP, fine-tuning international trade policy, improving the existing warehouse receipt scheme and strengthening the Farmers Producer Organisations (FPO) to bolster the capacity of small farmers to hold their crops until prices rise. Finally, if these methods do not succeed in keeping the market price at or above the MSP level, the government would be legally required to compensate the farmer for the difference between the MSP and average market price. The legal guarantee of a fall-back “price deficiency payment” would ensure that farmers’ entitlement to receiving

Is a legally binding MSP affordable? The scaremongers use a deliberately misleading calculation to flash astronomical figures like Rs. 14 lakh crore and paint the MSP demand as a ridiculous or impossible ask. These calculations assume that the government would need to purchase every single quintal of every crop. As we have seen above, that is not what the farmers’ demand entails. Besides, the actual expenditure incurred by the government would be the difference between the price at which the government purchases and the price at which it sells the crop. Moreover, not all commodities require an intervention; any government intervention is required only when the market price is below the MSP.

the MSP becomes a legal right. Is a legally binding MSP affordable? The scaremongers use a deliberately misleading calculation to flash astronomical figures like Rs. 14 lakh crore and paint the MSP demand as a ridiculous or impossible ask. These calculations assume that the government would need to purchase every single quintal of every crop. As we have seen above, that is not what the farmers’ demand entails. Besides, the actual expenditure incurred by the government would be the difference between the price at which the government purchases and the price at which it sells the crop. Moreover, not all commodities require an intervention; any government intervention is required only when the market price is below the MSP.

We calculated the total cost of legally binding MSP for the top 15 crops (that account for more than 95 per cent of the value of crops for which MSP is declared) for the marketing year 2022-23. The total deficit for all the crops that sold below the announced MSP came to Rs 26,469 crore. This is for the MSP at the rates announced by the government, using a partial cost [(A2+FL)+ 50 per cent] concept. We also performed the same calculations considering the MSP demanded by farmers (or Swaminathan MSP), which is based on Comprehensive Cost (C2+50 per cent). The total deficit below the demanded MSP came to Rs 2,00,710 crore.

The actual expenditure would be less than that. Timely market intervention and all other measures mentioned above can ensure that market prices would automatically be close to MSP, and thus the deficits would be significantly lower. At the present rates, a legally guaranteed MSP would cost about 0.5 per cent of the Union budget. Even if we consider the higher rates demanded by the farmers, the total cost would be 4.2 per cent of the Budget, about 0.6 per cent of GDP. Considering the additional purchasing power this would put into the hands of agricultural households in the country setting off positive growth in the economy, this expenditure is eminently justified. It is now a matter of political will.

Kuruganti is co-convenor of Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA), Vissa is co-founder of Rythu Swarajya Vedika, a farmers’ organisation in Telangana and AP, and Yadav is member, Swaraj India, and national convener of Bharat Jodo Abhiyaan

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“While some leave the country due to persecution, the vast majority are economic migrants, many hailing from relatively prosperous parts of Punjab. Victims have said economic hardship made them opt for illegal migration, while others are inspired by compatriots who made it ‘big’ in Europe.” — DAWN, PAKISTAN

## How not to criticise Nehru

Certainly, he could have done more in primary education. But he did quicken a moribund economy, a historic achievement



PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

IT IS A measure of India’s rising confidence that there is now a critical gaze upon all aspects of our past and present. One area that has received attention recently is the performance of the economy in early independent India, and Jawaharlal Nehru’s role in it. Into the 21st century, we are in a good place to examine these, for three reasons. We have the quantitative methods that allow us to identify turning points in economic history without resorting to judgement; we have the theoretical models that help us understand how an economy grows; and we have the experience of the rest of Asia to compare our own past policies and achievements with.

For Nehru, the single-most important goal of economic policy was to increase the level of income, which was unacceptably low for the overwhelming majority of Indians. This is evident in the statement he made in parliament in May 1956 when the main vehicle of the Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy for development, the Second Five-Year Plan, was launched. He said “The whole philosophy... is to take advantage of every possible way of growth and not to do something which suits some doctrinaire theory or imagine we have grown because we have satisfied some text-book maxim of a hundred years ago.” It would be difficult to detect ideology in this; actually, it is not only pragmatic but cautioned against taking an ideological approach to the economy. And what was the impact of Nehru’s stated objective? In one sphere at least, it was nothing short of remarkable.

From the work of S Sivasubramonian, an early student of India’s national income accounts, we find that the average annual rate of growth in Nehru’s time was 4 per cent as opposed to less than 1 per cent in the last half-century of the British Raj. This is lower than the approximately 6 per cent growth achieved in the last decade, but the performance should be seen in perspective. It would be naïve to imagine that an economy can leapfrog from 1 to 6 per cent without traversing the intermediate growth phase, especially when emerging from two centuries of exploitation by an external power. For an international comparison — in Nehru’s time, India grew slower than Korea but faster than China.

What about the economy’s performance during 1950 to 1965 has received particular criticism? The allegations are, first, that agriculture was neglected in the craze for industrialisation. Second, that the public sector was a blackhole, sucking the nation’s savings without yielding any returns. Third, that the licensing of private investment repressed the private sector.

Sivasubramonian’s data shows that agriculture was the sector that performed the

best during Nehru’s time, leading the transition to a permanently higher growth path. To understand this, it would be useful to recognise that agricultural production benefits from industrial inputs and the spread of publicly-provided infrastructure. Public policy towards agriculture itself was forward-looking, seen in the invitation to the world’s leading agricultural scientist Norman Borlaug to visit India in 1963. The Green Revolution followed soon after.

I turn now to the performance of the public sector. Most interestingly, the savings of the public sector grew faster than that of the private corporate sector, both of which drew upon savings of the household sector. This record of the public sector need not surprise. The planner Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis had actually imagined public enterprises as a potential source of revenue to step-up public investment. Their subsequent degeneration is entirely due to the dispensation that followed Nehru, which succeeded in turning them into welfarist traps.

Finally, on the alleged repression of the private sector due to controls. Going by their investment record, the private corporate sector, taken as a whole, flourished under Nehru. The private corporate investment rate surged, growing at least as much as that of the public sector. Again, this need not surprise at all. While a certain narrow understanding of the “market” views it purely as an institution for exchange, the original economists saw it as the aggregate demand for goods. Thus, in the 1950s, as public investment stepped-up, it expanded the market for the private sector which could now meet demand for their products that may not have arisen otherwise. (The data referred to here are presented in my book, *India’s Economy from Nehru to Modi: A Brief History*).

So, was economic policy under Nehru optimal? Far from it. There were errors of commission and omission. As an economist, I am perplexed most by the absence then of a mission-mode approach to spreading primary education, and getting older children, especially girls, into school given the abysmally low literacy rate in 1947. If there is one feature that distinguishes India from East Asia which has been far more successful in raising income levels and ending poverty, it is schooling. It is not as if alarm bells had not been rung early. Bombay University’s B V Krishnamurti had pointed to the meagre outlays on education the very moment the second five-year plan was launched in 1956. Later, Amartya Sen in the 1960s and the educationist J P Naik in the 1970s flagged this continuing neglect. What is troubling about it is the visible class bias. It left the vast majority of Indians without the human capital to raise their productivity and the freedom to pursue the life they value. This is a monumental democratic deficit to contemplate. For sure, Nehru could have done more here, but he did quicken a moribund economy, a historic achievement without which there could not have been much human development anyway.

The writer is honorary visiting professor, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### EMPLOYMENT CRISIS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Behind jobs data’ (IE, January 6). The India Employment Report 2024 shows several problems exist on the nation’s employment front. It is estimated that about 83 per cent of the unemployed population of India are young. What is more appalling is the claim by the chief economic advisor that the government cannot be expected to solve the employment problem. Such a remark is unacceptable given the serious consequences of unemployment on economic growth. It is high time that the Modi government devises a well-thought-out, forward-looking employment policy.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

### INDIA-US TIES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Old and new’ (IE, January 6). The strategic relationship between India and the US has seen tremendous progress. During the Trump and the Biden administrations, Indo-US ties moved forward albeit some hiccups. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan’s visit is a significant step in strengthening bilateral relations, demonstrating continuity regardless of changes in US leadership. A particularly important development is the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, which marks a pivotal enhancement in defence collaboration. It is yet another win for India even as uncertainty about Trump’s second term gains momentum.

Megha Kumar, Ahmedabad

### DATA-DRIVEN POLICY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Playing with spectres’ (IE, January 4). Illegal immigration has been a topic of intense debate across India. It presents significant challenges, especially in border states, but inflammatory rhetoric cannot be the way forward. The government must take urgent steps to collect data regarding the affected regions. With this data, effective measures such as better border control, enhanced surveillance, and cooperation with neighbouring countries can be implemented. There must be appropriate legal frameworks for those who have entered the country illegally.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

### BUILD COMMUNITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Imagine a trust-based society’ (IE, January 6). Political trust is crucial for public institutions. The erosion of trust can lead to disharmony and lessen the impact of welfare programmes. Times of crisis, especially the recent COVID-19 pandemic where global leaders influenced the masses to take vaccinations and precautionary measures, show that trusting governing bodies is key. There is also a pressing need for transparency and dialogue in leadership decisions. This will increase the legitimacy of institutions, promote meaningful investments in human resources and new employment opportunities and foster a sense of community.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh



SHRADDHA UPADHYAY

There is a “notable people” section on Wikipedia pages about cities. I was obsessed with Gwalior’s list: Tansen, Nida Fazli, Kartik Aaryan. Which Gwalior did they inhabit? In my city, fame meant clearing exams and earning merit. How did the same city produce musicians and poets and actors? Fazli had returned to Gwalior and his interview took the entire back page of the weekend city edition of the leading Hindi newspaper. When asked why he left Gwalior for Mumbai, he didn’t mention riots or lack of opportunities. He romantically recited, “Apni marzi se kahaan apne safar ke hum hain/ Rukh hawaan ka jidhar ka udhar ke hum hain” (My journey is not determined by my choice, I go where the direction of winds takes me). I reminisced about this ghazal for years and sobbed in a foreign city.

But Gwalior felt distant even when I lived there. It was replete with monuments not mentioned in our history textbooks. It was brimming with myriad forms of culture — moving bookstores, Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, concerts and plays, and the Gwalior Vyapar Mela. Yet, it was merely a prelude for a different end. Our engagement with art and litera-

## Home lies in between

In Gwalior, I ached to get away. In the big city, I long for belonging

ture remained focused on facilitating the single-minded pursuit of escaping. Chasing an unknown object of undefined desire. Like Vivian Gornick writes in *The Odd Woman and the City*, “From earliest adolescence, I knew there was a center-of-the-world and that I was far from it.” I wanted to seize the centre; little did I know, the “centre does not hold”.

I worked hard to reach the centre. I coaxed merit to feature in my stars so that I could get away from my restricted girlhood in Gwalior. The anonymity provided by the big city allowed me to participate in political

rallies with strangers, give speeches in protests, sleep in monuments, watch films alone at midnight, chat away with men on long dates. This life seems unthinkable in Gwalior. But my shadow lives back home: What if I did not escape? What if I could live the same life at home?

On some days, I pull up Gwalior’s map, so much wider than the one I imagine. I wonder, in which area would children feel safe on the roads? I learnt where you could buy straw bas-

kets in the big city. I wondered where one could find straw baskets in my city. During heritage walks in other cities, I have stopped and wondered about the lanes of Gwalior. My experiences remained limited, not inclusive of sunrises and night skies. A friend from home once lamented, “We don’t even know a good *chai ki tapri* in this city.”

In the big city, I longed for a sense of belonging. I noted the similarities and differences of language with diligence. An easy familiarity develops between migrants in the metropolitan. Whenever I hear my language on anyone’s tongue in autos, cabs, construction sites, beauty salons, I ask them where they are from and make sure that they know that I’m not from the big city. I want to belong to this homelessness at least.

How many years does it take to belong somewhere? The illusion of merit carried me here, merit’s more meritorious cousin marriage has made my migration legitimate. But I still feel suspended in the interim. Inauthentic in this city and inexperienced in

the one I come from. I can humour myself by believing that home is still a possibility, one I can put together, a road not taken — or I can pride myself on this escape: I have made it! I have buffets to choose from, instead of *bhandaras* where you have a messy mash of only what you are served.

Every visit back home chips away at the ambition of coming back. Because the current location and destination are both moving points. Fazli says in the documentary Yeh Kahan Aa Gaye Hum, “*Shehar jaane waale ka kuch din rasta dekhta hai aur jaane waala jab waapas nahi laut ta to shehar khud apni jagah se door chala jaata hai. Aur jab wo lautne waala waapas aata hai to itni der ho chuki hoti hai ki uska shehar apne hi shehar mein nahi milta.*” (A place waits for the person who leaves only for a few days, but when the person doesn’t come back, then the town itself goes off to some other place, and when the person comes back, by then it is so late that his city cannot be found in his town).

Upadhyay is a writer and researcher based in Delhi

FOREIGN INVESTORS SOLD ₹2,575.06 CR OF DOMESTIC SHARES ON MONDAY

# Sensex, Nifty plunge over 1.5% on FPI selling, new virus scare

HITESH VYAS  
MUMBAI, JANUARY 6

DOMESTIC STOCK markets witnessed a sharp decline on Monday, with Sensex and Nifty falling by 1.6 per cent on concerns over outbreak of human metapneumovirus (HMPV), muted corporate earnings during the third quarter and continued selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).

The BSE's 30 share Sensex tanked 1,258.12 points, or 1.59 per cent, to close at 77,964.99. The index declined by 1,441.49 points during intraday trades. The Nifty 50 lost 388.7 points, or 1.62 per cent, to finish at 23,616.05.

The market capitalisation, or the total value of all listed shares, of the BSE-listed firms declined by Rs 10.98 lakh crore to Rs 438.79 lakh crore.

"Fears related to the new human metapneumovirus (HMPV) have added to the bearish sentiment, triggering fresh rounds of selling after the recent counter-trend pullback rally," said Santosh Meena,



File

head of research, Swastika Investmart.

Two cases of the HMPV infection in India were detected in a three-month old girl and an eight-month old boy in Bengaluru. A three-month-old baby tested positive for the HMPV in Ahmedabad, making it the third case to be reported from the country.

Analysts expect the market to remain volatile until concerns over the new virus eases.

Heavy selling in the market by investors was also in anticipation of slower corporate earnings in the third quarter.

"There are already concerns that the forthcoming third quarter earnings could be muted for several sectors due to weak government spending and subdued demand, which is pushing investors, especially the FIIs (foreign institutional investors), to further slash their domestic equity bets," said Prashanth Tapse, senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

On Monday, foreign investors sold Rs 2,575.06 crore of domestic shares. This was balanced by buying by domestic institutional investors who purchased Rs 5,749.65 crore of

**EXPLAINED**

## Fear of weak corporate earnings

CONCERNS OVER weak corporate earnings for the third quarter, outbreak of human metapneumovirus (HMPV) and continued selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) led to a sharp sell-off in the markets.

local equities, the BSE's provisional data showed.

In January so far (until January 6), overseas investors have sold Rs 7,160 crore worth of Indian shares, according to the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) data. The sell-off by FPIs is due to strong dollar, higher US bond yields and on expectation of lacklustre quarterly corporate results.

Among the sectors, all major sectoral indices witnessed profit booking at higher levels, with the public sector banks and capital market indices lost

the most, shedding over 3.5 per cent.

On Monday, both Nifty and Bank Nifty slipped below their 200-day moving averages (DMA). Nifty PSU Bank index dropped 4 per cent.

"We believe that the current market texture is weak but oversold; therefore, level-based trading would be the ideal strategy for day traders," said Shrikant Chouhan, head equity research, Kotak Securities.

For day traders, as long as the market is trading below 23,750/78,200, weak sentiment is likely to continue. Below this level, it could retest the 23,500/77,600 mark. Further downside may also occur, potentially dragging the index down to 23,400/77,300. Conversely, if it rises above 23,750/78,200, the market could bounce back to the 23,900-23,950/78,600-78,800 range, he said.

Investors will now focus on the next month's Union Budget announcement and the government's action plan to boost demand and measures to overcome global challenges.

## BRIEFLY

### 'Services sector growth hits 4-mth high in December'

New Delhi: India's services sector growth touched a four-month high in December, supported by new business inflows on strong demand conditions and easing inflationary pressures, a monthly survey said on Monday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index, rose from 58.4 in November to 59.3 in December, highlighting the strongest rate of expansion in four months. In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. **PTI**

### FIU-IND signs MoU with Irdai

New Delhi: Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) on Monday signed a MoU for sharing of intelligence and information to check money laundering. The MoU was signed as part of continued coordinated efforts in effective implementation of requirements of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and Rules, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. **PTI**

### 'IIFCL can grow book size by ₹1 lakh cr in next 3 years'

New Delhi: Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju has said state-owned infra financier IIFCL has the potential to grow its book size by Rs 1 lakh crore in the next three years. **PTI**

### Adani teams up with Thailand's Indorama

New Delhi: Gautam Adani's group has teamed up with Thailand's Indorama Resources Ltd for a foray into the petrochemical business as the ports-to-energy conglomerate looks to expand in adjacent areas. Adani Petrochemicals Ltd, a subsidiary of the group's flagship Adani Enterprises, "has completed the incorporation process of a joint venture company namely Valor Petrochemicals with Indorama Resources Ltd, Thailand," Adani Enterprises said in a stock exchange filing. **PTI**

## PRE-BUDGET MEETING WITH FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

# Realty sector seeks higher tax benefit on home loans, urges focus on rental housing

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

THE REAL estate sector has requested the government to pay greater attention to the expansion of rental housing and provide higher tax benefit on home loans, in a pre-Budget consultation with the Finance Minister on Monday.

"Until now we are only talking about ownership housing but a focus needs to be given to rental housing as well," managing director of Hiranandani Group and chairman of the National Real Estate Development Council Niranjan Hiranandani said after the meeting.

In the last Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced that rental housing with dormitory-type accommodation for industrial workers would be facilitated in the public-private partnership mode with viability gap funding support and commitment from anchor industries.

"So our idea is that we need to expand it to other people," he said, adding that even in the richest country in the world, the United States, 50 per cent of

the people live in rental housing.

The pre-Budget consultation was attended by representatives from the infrastructure, energy and urban sectors, besides senior officials.

There were also discussions on giving infrastructure status to the housing sector and making funds available so that more affordable housing can come up.

Another proposal made at the meeting was increasing the exemption limit on interest on housing loans to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2 lakh.

The meeting also discussed redevelopment of slums in Mumbai. Besides Hiranandani, business chairman of GMR Group B V N Rao, managing director of Afcons Infrastructure S Paramasivan, and head indirect taxes at Larsen and Toubro Gurinder Pal Singh attended the consultations on infrastructure.

Representatives from the energy sector included chairman of ReNew Group Sumant Sinha, CEO of Waree Energy Pawan Kumar Agarwal.

The urban development group had seven representatives. **FE**



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary and Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey at the pre-Budget consultation with trade union members in New Delhi. **PTI**

## Trade unions seek minimum EPFO pension at ₹5,000/mth

New Delhi: Trade unions on Monday pressed for increasing minimum EPFO pension 5 times to Rs 5,000 per month, immediate constitution of the 8th Pay Commission and higher taxes on super rich in the upcoming 2025-26 Budget.

In their customary pre-Budget meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, trade union leaders also demanded an increase in income tax exemption limit to Rs 10 lakh per annum, social security scheme for gig workers, and restoration of old pension scheme (OPS) for government employees. After the meeting TUCC national general secretary S

P Tiwari said the government should stop all privatisation and corporatisation of PSUs and impose an additional 2 per cent tax on super rich to fund social security for informal workers. Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh organising secretary (Northern Zone) Pawan Kumar said minimum pension under EPS-95 should be increased from Rs 1,000 per month to Rs 5,000 as a first step and subsequently linked to the variable dearness allowance.

CITU National Secretary Swadesh Dev Roye also demanded that the 8th Pay Commission should be constituted immediately. **PTI**

## Govt eases conditions for specialty steel PLI

New Delhi: The government on Monday relaxed conditions of the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for specialty steel and reopened the application window for companies to attract investments in product categories that saw no or low participation in the first round. Steel and Heavy Industries Minister H D Kumaraswamy launched the scheme at an event at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.

The application window will

close on January 31. The reopening was accompanied by easing of conditions for companies willing to invest in making cold rolled grain oriented electrical steel, also known as electric steel.

"The new version of the scheme follows extensive consultations with the industry since August last year where it was felt that there was a scope for more applications," secretary in the ministry of steel Sandeep Pondrik said. **FE**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella during a meeting in New Delhi. In a post on X, PM said, "It was indeed a delight to meet you, Satya Nadella! Glad to know about Microsoft's ambitious expansion and investment plans in India. It was also wonderful discussing various aspects of tech, innovation and AI in our meeting". **PTI**

# Non-veg thali prices rise by 12%: Crisil

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 6

THE REPRESENTATIVE cost of home-cooked vegetarian thali rose by three per cent and that of non-vegetarian thali by 12 per cent on a year-on-year in December, rating firm Crisil said.

The increase in non-vegetarian thali cost was driven by an estimated 20 per cent on-year rise in the price of broiler, which accounts for 50 per cent of a non-vegetarian thali cost. The sharp surge in broiler prices is attributable to a low base of last year, when production was high, Crisil



File

said. Crisil said the rise in vegetarian thali cost was driven by an increase in tomato and potato prices, which collectively account for 24 per cent of the cost of a thali. Tomato price rose 24 per cent to Rs 47 per kg in December 2024 from Rs 38 per kg in December 2023. Potato

price surged 50 per cent on a low base last year to Rs 36 per kg in December 2024 from Rs 24 per kg in December 2023 due to an estimated 6 per cent on-year December line in production, Crisil said.

Adding to the cost was a 16 per cent on year jump in vegetable oil prices due to import-duty hike, coupled with higher demand during the festive and wedding seasons.

However, an 11 per cent on-year drop in LPG fuel cost (to Rs 803 per 14.2 kg LPG cylinder in Delhi from Rs 903 last year) provided a partial offset.

A veg thali comprises roti,

vegetables (onion, tomato and potato), rice, dal, curd and salad. A non-veg thali has the same elements except for dal, which is replaced by chicken (broiler).

The average cost of preparing a thali at home is calculated based on input prices prevailing in north, south, east and west India. The monthly change reflects the impact on the common man's expenditure. The data also reveals the ingredients (cereals, pulses, broilers, vegetables, spices, edible oil and cooking gas) driving the change in the cost of the thali, Crisil said.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

# Make all pay for water, give a laptop to kids from 8-18, measure Indian missions by tourists from those countries

I HAVE five wishes that I would like to see in the Budget of 2025-26. They are:

**1. Fiscal deficit:** I would like the gradual consolidation path that the Finance Minister has charted since Covid on fiscal consolidation to continue. It has allowed us to have some weapons in our armory in a very uncertain world. So, achieve 4.9 per cent this year and target 4.5 per cent next year but no more than that.

**2. Water:** The most urgent and profound crisis that India faces is the shortage of water. India's current water consumption stands at 1,385 m<sup>3</sup> per capita, is a third of the global average and below that of low-income countries.

Water requires a GST-level council to create consensus on water pricing. All sectors including agriculture need to pay for water. In addition, the Centre should create a fund to provide low-cost loans for building and maintaining sewage treatment plants in all cities that are close to water bodies — sea, rivers or lakes; and to municipal corporations to replace all old pipes supplying water in their municipalities.

**3. Ease of doing business (EODB):** It would be wonderful if we change the metric to capture ease of doing business in India by State.

Construction is well recognised to be one of the highest employment creating businesses in India. Anecdotal I have been told that to construct a 42-story building in Mumbai takes 4 years though it takes less than one year in China. My friends in the business tell me that they provision around two years to just obtain government clearances, and the additional one year is on account of the lower productivity of our manpower.

The right target to check EODB should be time taken to construct and deliver a building by State (from start to occupancy certificate date) and published. It will give a truer picture of EODB by State.

**4. Computers for children between 8-18:** India is going to supply manpower for the world given age demographics and aging in the



JANMEJAYA SINHA

CHAIRMAN, BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP, INDIA

## SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS



**RUN UP TO BUDGET 2025-26**

rich world including China. Our education outcomes are currently very poor. We must supplement learning efforts and prevent digital apartheid by providing a free computer to all children between 8-18 with pre-loaded learning programs.

There should also be a building in each *tehsil* or village with 24-hour power and wifi connections, and learning competitions should be introduced as incentives for children.

**5. Encouraging tourism:** Tourism is a big employment creator. India is doing very poorly in attracting international tourists. Of even the 10 million international tourists that come to India most are non-resident Indians or business travelers. The genuine international tourists are unlikely to be more than 3 million.

We need to act on multiple fronts. Firstly, given how hard it is to get tourists to come to India when here we must get full value from them,

so the mantra should be "ek din aur" before we try to get "ek tourist aur." A tourist should not go see the Taj Mahal and return to Delhi the same day, there should be a night programme too.

The government must address the root causes. Why does Patna have no good hotels?

Land acquisition and land leases for constructing hotels are a nightmare. Getting to important Buddhist sites like Bodhi Gaya, Nalanda and Rajgir is hard. It needs to be easier. In fact, coming to India itself should be simplified. We should provide 15-day visa free entry for international tourists from selected countries based on tourism potential and not reciprocity.

We should also consider a tax holiday for private players to encourage them. GST rates for hotels and restaurants need to be moderated. The government should conduct a cost benefit analysis of its GST collections from hotels versus the tourist earnings foregone. In fact, a bureaucrat friend told me he chose to go to Bentota in Sri Lanka, rather than any Indian location because it was cheaper to do so (including flights).

Finally, all Indian missions should also be measured on the number of tourists that have come from that country. Each state should identify its message for international tourists as Kerala had done with its "God's Own Country" campaign. Bihar might consider religious sites for Buddhist and Jain, Rajasthan its places, other states may focus on historical monuments, temples, medical tourism, beaches, hill resorts, wildlife, plantations, or even educational institutions.

State governments should be encouraged to post one state bureaucrat to target location missions with the task of facilitating tourists come to their state in India.

This is India's decade but to really make it our own we should remember Benjamin Franklin's pithy invocation "you may delay but time will not!"

(Views are personal)

# Budget FY26: AMFI calls for restoration of long-term indexation benefit for debt funds

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, JANUARY 6

THE ASSOCIATION of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) has called for restoration of the long-term indexation benefit for debt schemes of mutual funds which was withdrawn in the Budget 2024.

In its proposals for Union Budget 2025-26, the mutual fund body has also requested the government to restore earlier tax rates on capital gains, amend definition of equity oriented funds, allowing mutual funds to launch pension-oriented MF schemes with uniform tax treatment as NPS and a uniform rate for deduction of surcharge on TDS in respect of NRIs

## THE WISHLIST

■ The mutual fund body has also requested the government to restore earlier tax rates on capital gains, amend definition of equity oriented funds, allowing mutual funds to launch pension-oriented MF schemes with uniform tax treatment as NPS and a uniform rate for deduction of surcharge on TDS in respect of NRIs

long term capital gains from debt funds in respect of all investments in debt funds made up to March 31, 2023," AMFI said in its proposal.

The restoration of indexation benefits will boost the confidence of retail investors in the debt market and help in the development of the economy.

To encourage retail participation in bond markets, the mutual fund body has requested that capital gains on redemption of units of debt oriented mutual funds held for more than one year should be taxed at the rate of 12.5 per cent, as applicable in respect of listed bonds.

Currently, debt mutual fund is considered as short-term capital asset irrespective of the holding period and are taxed at applicable rates.

In the Budget 2024, the short term capital gains tax was hiked from 15 per cent to 20 per cent, increasing tax liability by 30 per cent. The long term capital gains tax was raised from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent, increasing tax liability by 25 per cent.

The mutual fund body, in its Budget 2025 proposal, has requested to reinstate the earlier capital gains taxation rates as the percentage of hike is large.

AMFI has also proposed that for mutual funds as an investor, the STT (Securities Transaction Tax) on futures and options should be reinstated to the earlier rates. In the last budget, the STT was increased in futures from 0.0125 per cent to 0.02 per cent, for options it was hiked from 0.0625 per cent to 0.1 per cent. The mutual fund body has requested to amend the definition of equity oriented funds (EOFs) to include fund of funds (FOF) investing in equity oriented funds. A FOF scheme of a mutual fund scheme invests in the units of other mutual fund schemes.

Under current income tax regime, a FOF scheme is treated as an EOF only if a minimum of 90 per cent of the total proceeds of such fund is invested in the units of EOFs; and such EOFs also invest a minimum of 90 per cent of their total proceeds in the equity shares of domestic companies listed on a recognised stock exchange.

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THIS WORD MEANS

ARTESIAN WELL

When water is confined under pressure between layers of impermeable rock, and gushes forth on its own

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
JAIPUR, JANUARY 6

THE RESIDENTS of Taranagar village in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district witnessed an unusual phenomenon last month — large amounts of water began to gush out of the ground. The flow began on December 27, and stopped without any external intervention in the night of December 29.

Some on social media claimed the flow was from the underground Saraswati river, mentioned in ancient Vedic texts. Scientists have pointed to a geological event instead.

What happened in Jaisalmer?

A local farmer had contracted a firm to dig a tube well on his land to extract groundwater. On the morning of December 27, when the well had reached a depth of 850 feet, water began spouting from the ground.

In about an hour, it began to flow at high pressure — so much so that a truck and a drilling machine were stuck in it. Around 25 *bighas* of land was submerged by the water, which created a large depression in the ground. A small amount of non-inflammable gas was released along with the water.

Dr Narayan Das Inakhiya, Senior Hydro-Geologist at the Rajasthan State Ground Water Department, attributed the incident to an "artesian condition".

What are artesian conditions?

According to the United States Geological Survey website, an artesian aquifer refers to water stored under pressure between layers of sediments and soil below the Earth's surface. It is also described as "confined" water because of the hardy materials that lie above and below the subterranean reservoir.

Unlike water that is extracted through tube wells or wells, however, artesian water can spout on its own; the reservoir is also located deeper below the Earth's surface. The water is surrounded by poorly permeable rocks that result in high pressure. When a rupture (like through



Gushing subterranean water flooded a large area. Screenshot from video

drilling) happens, the underground pressure forces the water upward.

The word "artesian" is specifically used when water is "confined under pressure below layers of relatively impermeable rock". It comes from the town of Artois in France, the old Roman city of Artesium, where the best known flowing artesian wells were drilled in the Middle Ages, the USGS says on its website.

Is it unusual for this water to gush out in the desert?

Dr Inakhiya explained that in desert regions, water is confined underneath a geological layer of sandstone. As soon as the top layer is punctured, water starts flowing upwards due to the high pressure. This phenomenon has previously been observed in Rajasthan in places such as Mohangarh and Nachana Samiti Panchayat.

"But the intensity with which the water was flowing (in Taranagar) has never been seen before," Dr Inakhiya said.

Artesian conditions have also been seen in desert regions of Australia and Africa.

ADRIJA ROYCHOWDHURY  
KOLKATA, JANUARY 6

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister MK Stalin has announced a \$1 million prize for deciphering the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation, an enigma that endures more than a century after Sir John Marshall announced the discovery of the Bronze Age culture that thrived in valley of the Indus between c. 3300 and 1300 BCE.

Many archaeologists, epigraphists, linguists, historians, and scientists have made more than 100 documented attempts to decipher the writing system of the Harappans, without success.

The announcement by Stalin followed the publication of a study of *Indus Signs And Graffiti Marks of Tamil Nadu* by the state's Department of Archaeology, which identified "parallels" between "more than 90% of the graffiti marks of South India and the graffiti marks of the Indus Valley Civilisation".

The study compared marks on 15,000 pot shards found in 140 archaeological sites in Tamil Nadu with 4,000 artefacts, including seals, discovered at Indus Valley sites, and identified 42 "base signs", 544 "variants" and 1,521 "composite forms".

Signs in the script: how many?

The Indus Civilisation, which reached its zenith between 2600 and 1900 BCE, sprawled over more than 800,000 sq km in what is today Pakistan and parts of northwestern India. It was the world's most sophisticated urban culture at the time, with an elaborate system of trade, taxation, and drainage.

The plethora of inscriptions on seals and terracotta tablets found at Indus sites contain a variety of symbols — human and animal motifs, and what scholars have identified as parts of a forgotten script. However, there is no agreement on the number of symbols in the supposed script.

Archaeologist S R Rao, who pioneered the deciphering effort, postulated in 1982 that the script contained 62 signs. This was refuted by the Finnish Indologist Asko Parpola, one of the most authoritative voices on the subject — he said there were 425 signs (*Deciphering the Indus Script* (1994)). Then, in 2016, archaeologist and epigrapher Bryan K Wells suggested the presence of 676 signs.

This is only the first of many scholarly disagreements on the nature of the Indus script. The lack of a Rosetta Stone-equivalent has meant that scholars of the Indus Civilisation have sometimes resorted to speculation, tinged with ideological biases.

The 'Dravidian connection'

Scholars have long attempted to find linkages between the Indus script (and language) and Sanskrit. This is a part of the larger nationalist project to link the civilisation of the Indus Valley to that of the Vedic period, emphasising the indigeneity of India's people and culture. Rao was the most notable of these voices — but other specialists disagreed.

Andrew Robinson wrote that Rao seemed "determined to prove that the Indus language was the ancestor of Sanskrit, the root language of most of the modern languages of North India, and that Sanskrit was therefore not the product of the so-called Indo-Aryan (Indo-European) 'invasions' of India from the West via Central Asia but was instead the expression of indigenous Indian (Indus) genius". (*Lost Languages: The Enigma of the World's Undeciphered Scripts* (2008))

In an interview to *The Indian Express* last year, Parpola explained why Sanskrit, the language of the Vedic Aryans, could not be connected to the Indus script. "There is archaeological evidence to suggest that the Aryans came to the Indus Valley only in the second millennium BCE which is after the Indus Valley Civilisation," he said.

Parpola's research, which began in 1964, concluded that the Indus script — a logosyllabic script of the kind used by all major cultures around 2500 BCE — was Dravidian roots.

The script used a concept called 'rebus', in which pictograms represented the word for the object or action depicted, or any other word

# Mystery of the Indus script

For a century, scholars have tried and failed to decipher the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation. There is now a \$1-million prize for anyone who succeeds. Why is the answer so elusive? Is the 'script' not for real?

## Why is it so difficult to decipher the Harappan writing system?

ARJUN SENGUPTA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

TO DECIPHER a script, the following sub-problems have to be solved in order, Italian philologist Fabio Tamburini wrote in 2023 (*Decipherment of Lost Ancient Scripts as Combinatorial Optimisation using Coupled Simulated Annealing*).

- Deciding if a set of symbols actually represent a writing system;
- Devising appropriate procedures to isolate or segment the stream of symbols into a sequence of single signs;
- Reducing the set of signs to the minimal set for the writing system forming (its alphabet, syllabery, or inventory of signs) by identifying all allographs (the same sign written in a variant form, for example a printed 'a' and a cursive 'a');
- Assigning to each symbol their specified value, whether phonetic or otherwise;
- Trying to match these values to a specific language.

In the case of the Indus script, scholars have struggled to solve many of these sub-problems. This is due to three main factors.

**No multilingual inscriptions:** What is perhaps most helpful to decipher unknown scripts is direct comparison with known ones, made possible by multilingual inscriptions which have the same content in two or more scripts. There is evidence that the Indus Valley Civilisation had robust trade links with the contemporaneous Mesopotamian Civilisation whose cuneiform script was deciphered in the early 19th century — but no multilingual inscriptions have been discovered so far.

The most famous multilingual inscription is the Rosetta Stone, which contains a decree passed during the reign of Ptolemy V in 196 BCE in three scripts: Greek, demotic (a later ancient Egyptian script), and hieroglyphics. The inscription was instrumental for the decipherment of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics in the 1820s by French philologist Jean-François Champollion.

**Language not known:** Undeciphered scripts/languages fall in three basic categories, according to Andrew Robinson, the author of the influential *Lost Languages: The Enigma of the World's Undeciphered Scripts* (2008). These are: "an unknown script writing a known language; a known script writing an unknown language; and an unknown



(Clockwise from the top left) The Pashupati seal of Mohenjodaro; a seal bearing the very common unicorn motif; the mould of a seal showing a man fighting two tigers; the mould of a seal showing an elephant in movement. All the seals have symbols from the Indus script inscribed on top. Wikimedia Commons

script writing an unknown language."

Of these, the third category is the most challenging to decipher as they provide scholars with the least number of points of reference to go by. The Indus script falls in this category. Although scholars have variously postulated the script representing different languages, there is no clinching evidence to seal the debate. Without knowing what language the script represented, scholars have struggled to allocate phonetic sounds to the script's symbols.

**Not much known about civilisation:** The greater availability of material evidence — in the form of inscribed artefacts — the higher the likelihood of a script being deciphered. This is because each different artefact, and the context in which it was found, can provide some insight into

the script it is inscribed with. Although some 3,500 seals have been identified till date, given that each seal has on average only five characters inscribed, scholars simply do not have enough material to analyse.

Add to this the fact that very little is actually known about the Indus Valley Civilisation, compared to contemporaneous ancient civilisations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Many Harappan sites remain undiscovered, and those which have been uncovered remain underexplored.

This general paucity of information has made it difficult to decipher its script. A lot more archaeological work will have to be carried out to provide philologists, epigraphists, and linguists greater opportunity to understand the writing system.

with a similar sound, irrespective of meaning. "Basically the signs were pictures which stood for complete words by themselves," he said.

The fish sign, found in abundance on Indus seals, is unlikely to have meant actual fish, Parpola said. Rather, he connected it to 'star' — a homophone (words with the same pronunciation but different meaning) of the Dravidian word for fish (*min* or *meen*).

Starting with this hypothesis, Parpola claimed to have found the Old Tamil names of all planets in the Indus script. His theory has found support from both Western and Indian scholars, including Iravatham Mahadevan, the leading Indian researcher on the Indus script.

The existence of Brahui, an extant Dravidian language spoken by a small ethnic group in Balochistan in present-day Pakistan, appears to lend further weight to the Dravidian hypothesis.

What if it isn't a 'script' at all?

From the early 2000s onward, questions have been raised on whether the so-called Indus "script" represented any language at all. This hypothesis was based mainly on the fact that all the Indus inscriptions are very short — with only about five characters on

average. The longest has 26 characters.

In a paper published in 2004, historian Steve Farmer, computer linguist Richard Sproat, and Indologist Michael Witzel claimed that the Indus "script" did not constitute a language-based writing system, but mainly comprised nonlinguistic symbols of political and religious significance.

Parpola rejected the principal claim of the paper (*The collapse of Indus Script Thesis: The Myth of a Literate Harappan Civilisation*) that writing systems necessarily produce longer texts than the ones found on Indus inscriptions — pointing out that Egyptian hieroglyphic writing was of a similar nature.

Recent scholarship has, however, supported some of the conclusions of Farmer, Sproat, and Witzel. Bahata Ansumali Mukhopadhyay, a software engineer who has researched the script, has said that while the Harappans may not have been "illiterate", the symbols "do not phonologically spell words of any language".

In a paper published in the journal *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* in 2023, she argued that the inscribed Indus seals were mainly used as tax stamps, while the tablets were used as permits for tax collection.

tion, craft making or trading. The script was not used for religious purposes, nor did it phonetically spell out words to encode names of ancient Vedic or Tamil deities, she wrote.

Linguist Peggy Mohan, author of *Wanderers, Kings, Merchants: The Story of India through Its Languages* (2021), told *The Indian Express* last year that one must stop referring to the signs on Indus seals as being part of a script, and consider them to be a hallmarking system. "Even today *dhobis* have signs which are useful for them but they are not what you would call language," she said. "Most prehistoric societies did not write the kind of things we write today. Commercial information was perhaps the first thing that any society would record in writing."

Ansumali Mukhopadhyay noted that "When Linear B (among the earliest Greek scripts) was being deciphered, some scholars hoped to find snippets of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*", but found a palace book-keeping record instead. Nonetheless, it provided significant information about the palace economy.

"Similarly, in the case of the Indus script, even though it is just giving us commercial information, it can tell us a lot about how the economy functioned at that time," she said.

## A clue on why new memories do not overwrite old ones

RESEARCHERS have found clues on a long-standing mystery — how the brain avoids overwriting old memories when new ones are created.

They have found that in mice, the brain processes new and old memories in separate phases of sleep, which might be helping in separating new and old memories.

The study, 'Sleep microstructure organises memory replay' was published in the journal *Nature* last week. It was carried out by scientists based at Cornell University in the United States.

For their analysis, the researchers, over the course of a month, taught a variety of tasks to a group of mice. They then equipped the mice with brain electrodes and tiny spy cameras that hung in front of their eyes to track their pupil dynamics when they went to sleep.

"One day, the mice learned a new task and when they fell asleep, the electrodes captured their neural activity and the

cameras recorded the changes to their pupils," according to a press statement.

The researchers interrupted the mice's sleep at different moments and subsequently, tested how well they recalled their learned tasks.

It was found that new memories are repeated and consolidated when the pupil is smaller during a sub-stage of non-REM sleep — the stage of sleep most associated with memory consolidation. Old memories are repeated when the pupil is larger.

Azhahara Oliva, co-author of the study and a physicist at Cornell University, told *Nature*, "The brain was preserving the older memories during this

large-pupil sub-state, but incorporating new memories during the small-pupil sub-state". This two-phase system is a "possible solution to this problem of how the brain can incorporate new knowledge but also maintain the old knowledge intact".

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# HMPV, the old 'new' virus that has infected two infants in Bengaluru

ANONNA DUTT  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

AT LEAST two cases of human metapneumovirus (HMPV) were detected during routine surveillance of respiratory infections by the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Union Health Ministry confirmed on Monday.

This comes after reports of a surge in respiratory infections in China, attributed to HMPV among other pathogens. There is usually an increase in respiratory infections during winter months owing to poorer immune response and conditions favourable to transmission.

"HMPV is not a new virus, it is known to cause respiratory tract infections. We do see a few cases every year. However, it often

doesn't get detected because people do not get tested for it," Dr Rajesh Chawla, senior consultant of pulmonology at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, said.

What is HMPV?

Unlike Sars-CoV-2 that caused the Covid-19 pandemic, HMPV is not a new virus and was first identified in 2001. The virus is related to the avian metapneumovirus that leads to a variety of symptoms in different birds. Since its discovery, several studies have detected HMPV in patients with respiratory infections around the world.

In India, a multi-centre study on respiratory infections between 2016 and 2018, found HMPV in 3.4% of patient samples. For context, influenza was the most commonly detected virus, found in 15.4% of samples, according to

the 2022 study headed by AIIMS Delhi, ICMR National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases in Kolkata, and Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences in Srinagar.

Another study during the same period from Chennai, found HMPV in 4% of the samples, the same as a study by ICMR Regional Medical Research Centre in Gorakhpur, which also reported the death of one in four persons testing positive with HMPV.

There was an outbreak of HMPV in Puducherry between November 2022 and March 2023. During this period, Jawaharlal Institute of Post-Graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) found the virus in 9.6% of the samples. The researchers found that HMPV was more prevalent in children below the age of 1 year, in those with a history of wheezing, and seizures. During the outbreak,

the researchers also identified new lineages of the virus, highlighting its evolving nature.

"HMPV is an RNA virus, the likes of which are notorious for mutations. This is the reason surveillance should be maintained and samples tested by research laboratories," Dr GC Khilnani, chairman of PSRI Institute of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine and former head of pulmonology department at AIIMS Delhi, said.

What are the symptoms of HMPV? How to prevent and treat it?

HMPV usually causes symptoms such as cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, wheezing, and shortness of breath. It may sometimes lead to more severe symptoms like pneumonia — a lung infection that causes air sacs to be filled with fluids — in children who

get infected for the first time, in the elderly, and those with a weakened immune system.

The infection is transmitted through the air borne droplets that are released when a sick person coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread when someone touches surfaces where the virus may have settled.

This is the reason general precautions such as frequent washing of hands, masking up, maintaining social distance, and avoiding crowded places can help. Dr Chawla said that people must not step out when they have symptoms such as cough and cold to prevent spreading the infection to others.

There is no specific medicine or vaccine for HMPV. Dr Chawla said that treatment is symptomatic, and that people may take paracetamol if they have fever. However, no antibiotics should be consumed without

consulting a doctor, he said.

How does the government conduct influenza surveillance?

After the 2006 bird flu outbreak and 2010 swine flue H1N1 outbreak, the Indian Council of Medical Research and Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme started routinely testing samples of patients with respiratory illnesses.

Patients' samples are first tested for various strains of influenza virus. If found negative, they are tested for RSV, HMPV, Rhinovirus, and Adenovirus. Recent data from the network shows that Influenza A H3N2, Influenza B victoria lineage, and RSV were the most common cause of respiratory illnesses during the last week of December and first week of January.

## अनु0 जाति एवं अनु0 जनजाति कल्याण विभाग

**:: आवश्यक सूचना ::**

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Classifieds

**PERSONAL**  
I, Mohammad Faruqan Q/o Mohammad Salam R/o 2147, M.P.Street Pataudi House, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Mohammad Furkan. 0040767283-2

I, Md Riyazuddin, S/o Haji Abdul Rashid, R/o D- 15/ 16, Okhla Vihar, Jamia Nagar New Delhi-110025, have changed my name to Mohd Reyazuddin 0040767318-6

I, Khakshan Sayyed D/o Nasim Ahmad R/o Plot no. 38-B Vikas Nagar Block-S Uttar Nagar New Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Kakhshan Sayyed for all future purposes 0070943738-1

I, Junaid Mohammad S/o Mohammad Furkan R/o 2924, Gali Saadat Ali Sir Syed Ahmed Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Mohammad Junaid. 0040767283-1

I, IK Verma S/o Sihiva Shanker Verma R/o LG-34, Kaushlesh Kunj Colony, Ayodhya, Faizabad (U.P) have changed my name to Ishwar Kumar Verma for all purposes. 0040767259-1

I, Bhushan chander S/o Late Mithan Lal R/o 20/11, first floor Shakti Nagar, Delhi-110007 that Bhushan chander & Bharat Bhushan both are one and same person. That My correct & actual name is Bhushan Chander s/o late Mithan Lal 0070943757-1

I, Baboo Khan S/o Lalloo Khan R/o T-11/L, F/F, Flat No-5, MB Road, Pul Pehladpur, Delhi-110044 have changed my name to Babu Khan 0070943753-1

I, Ayasha Nigar W/o Naeem Uddin R/o Masjid, Masjid Compound, Gurudwara Raqab Ganj Road, New Delhi-110001, have changed my name to Ayesha Mirza, for all future purposes. 0040767271-1

I, Anamika Tyagi alias Anamika, W/o Sapan Tyagi, R/o D110, Vivek Vihar, Noida Sec-82, UP-201303, have changed my name to Anamika, for all purposes. 0040767325-1

I, Amit Kumar Verma, S/o Roop Chand Verma, R/o A-26, Chander Lok Shahdara, Delhi-110093, have changed my minor Son's name from Vansh Kumar Verma to Vansh Verma for all purposes. 0070943755-1

I, Vidhi Alias Mahak Bhatnagar, D/o Chavi Bhatnagar R/o Flat No-857, Akshardham Apartments, Pocket-3, Sector-19, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075, have changed my name to Vidhi Bhatnagar 0070943686-1

I, Sunita Rani Bansal W/O, Virender Kumar Bansal R/o I-1/11 Sector 16 Rohini Delhi 110089 have changed my name to Sunita Bansal. 0040767303-1

I, Sanjay S/o Kishan Lal R/o D-68/9, Block-D, Tomar Colony, Kamal Pur, Burari, North West Delhi-110084, have changed my name to Sanjay Pandey 0070943669-1

I, Rukshar D/o Mohd Shamim Akhtar R/o E-52, Shastri Market, South Moti Bagh, South West Delhi-110021, have changed my name to Shabina Khatoon 0070943667-1

I, Parveen Garg S/o Jagdish Lal Garg R/o C-431, Gali No-10, Majlis Park, Adarsh Nagar, N.S Mandi, Delhi-110033, have changed my name to Parveen Kumar Garg 0070943660-1

I, Meenakshi D/O, Madan Lal Dogra R/o 363, Jawahar Lal Apartment, Plot No. 9, Sector 5, Dwarka, New Delhi 110075 have changed my name to Meenakshi Dogra. 0040767296-1

I, Gita Rani W/o Khushi Ram R/o U-54 Subhash park, uttam nagar, west delhi-110059 have changed my name to Geeta Malhotra 0070943655-1

I, Amit Kumar Mittal s/o Kashmiri Lal Mittal R/o A-58 Budh Vihar Ph-1 Delhi-86 had changed my name Amit Mittal to correct name as Amit Kumar Mittal for all future purposes. 0040767244-1

I, Akash Kumar Sahu S/o Ashok Kumar Sahu R/o L-35, Gali No-19, L-Block, H-Block, Dispendry, Mahendra Park, Delhi-110033, have changed my name to Aakash Kumar Sahu for all future purposes 0070943751-1

I, FIRST NAME CHAMELI DEVI (MENTIONED IN MY, PASSPORT), W/O- SURENDRA PRASAD PANDEY, R/O KAMLA NAGAR KHAGA, KHAGA, FATEHPUR, UTTAR- PRADESH- 212655, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO FIRST, NAME CHAMELI LAST NAME DEVI. 0040767323-2

I, KARAN S/O RAM NATH PRAJAPATI R/O-T-58 Opp. A-134, Rajpura Gurmandi Delhi-110007, have changed my name to KARAN PRAJAPATI 0040767308-2

I, ATAR ALI son of ASGAR ALI KHAN, H/O-123, GAFLUR NAGAR, JAMIA NAGAR, OKHLA, DELHI-110025, have changed my name to ATAR KHAN, for all future purpose. 0040767313-3

I, ANKIT ANAND S/o ABHAY KUMAR R/o H.No 69E, POCKET-K, SHEIKH SARAI PHASE-2, DELHI-110017 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ANKIT CHOUDHARY FOR ALL PURPOSES IN FUTURE. 0130047897-1

**Pradeep Mittal S/o Omkar Nath Mittal R/o A-1514, Gaur Valerio, Ahinsa Khand-II, Indirapuram Ghaziabad 201014, have changed my name to Pradeep Kumar Mittal for all future purposes. 0070943739-1**

It is for general information that I, Surender Kumar, S/o - Mishri Lal, R/o - H.No.204, Block-B 2nd, Madangir, D- Ambekdar Nagar, Pushpa Bhawan, Delhi-110062, declare that name of my minor son namely Shobhit Rajora aged-14 years has been wrongly written as Shobhit in his school records. The actual name of my minor son is Shobhit Rajora, which may be amended accordingly. 0040767318-10

I, ZIAUDDIN KHAN S/O MOHAMMAD IDRIS, H.No.898, A DARGAH MAKHDHUMSAH, ward.no-8 MEHRAULI NEW DELHI-110030, have changed my name to HAFIZ ZIAUDDIN, all future purposes. 0040767304-4

I, Yogesh Kumar, R/o - H. no. 119 Gali.No. 1, Anand-Vihar, Loni- Ghaziabad UP-201102, have my father's name incorrectly spelt as Yamuna Prasad in my CBSE matriculation Certificate and mark sheet. The correct name is Yamuna Prasad Ojha and should be considered so, for all purposes. 0040767319-2

I, USHA MEHTA W/o Sh. Ashwani Pruthi R/o 4/72, Subhash Nagar, New Delhi-110027 have changed my name to BHAWNA PRUTHI. 0040767318-3

I, Tarun S/o Santosh Kumar, H.No.-2114, Gali No.-72, Near Radhey Sweets, Laxman Vihar Phase-2, Gurgaon (Haryana), have changed my name to Tarun Kumar. 0040767317-7

I, Sobiya Rani, W/O Mohammad Umair, R/O D,97 Gali no.9, Near jama Masjid, Village wazirabad Delhi-110084, have changed my name to Sobiya Umair, for all purposes. 0040767304-3

I, Shaweta Bhatia W/o Manoj Kumar Madaan R/o KP-274 Maurya Enclave Pitampura Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Shweta Madaan 0040767308-4

I, Satinderjit Kaur Sethi, W/o Surjeet Singh Sethi R/o-3711, First Floor, Sector-23, Gurgaon, Haryana-122017, have changed my name to Satinder Kaur Sethi. 0040767317-3

I, Sarbjeet Singh s/o-Harjeet Singh R/o-2 F 15 Nit Faridabad Haryana, have change my name to Sarvjeet Singh permanently. 0040767313-10

I, USHMA CHAUHAN, W/O AJAY, H.No-111/8 PRAKASH MOHALLA EAST OF KAILASH DELHI-110065, have changed my name to SEEMA, for all, future purpose. 0040767313-4

I, Sanjay Dogra, S/o-Tarsem Singh, R/o-L-128B, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052, declare that Sanjay, and Sanjay Dogra, both names are same and one person, shall hereafter known as Sanjay Dogra, for all future purpose. 0040767323-4

I, SUNITA KUMARI/SUNITA T. TRAKROO, W/O, AJAY TRAKROO, R/O, FLAT, NO.-1105, TOWER-A, GALAXY NORTH AVENUE, GAUR CITY-1, PLOT, NO.-GC-3, GREATER NOIDA, WEST, PO-NOIDA, GAUTAM-BUDDHA NAGAR, UTTAR- PRADESH-201301, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUNITA T TRAKROO. 0040767323-1

I, SHREYA, D/O, VIJAY KUMAR, R/O-B-805, 8TH FLOOR, ROYAL TOWERS APARTMENT, SECTOR-61, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, U.P.-201301, have changed my name to SHREYA MATHUR. 0040767318-9

I, SATISH KUMAR SHARMA, S/O HARBANS LAL SHARMA, H/O-E-7, E-BLOCK, 2ND FLOOR, MODEL-TOWN PHASE-2, MODEL-TWON-II, NORTH-WEST DELHI, DELHI-110009, changed my name to SATISH SHARMA, for all future purposes. 0040767317-6

I, Rachna Gakkhar, W/o-Parveen Kumar Gakkhar, R/o-5A/29, Third Floor, Near-Tilak-Nagar Police Station, Tilak Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Rachna Dikshaa Gakkhar, for all, future purposes. 0040767304-8

I, RUKHSHANA W/O ABBAS AHMAD, R/O C528/2 MULLA COLONY GHAROLI DELHI-110096, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RUKHSANA PRAVEEN FOR FUTURE. 0040767318-2

I, ROSHNI D/O-MO NAUSHAD R/O-3757, J J COLONY, BLOCK-E, BAWANA DELHI-110039 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ROSHANI. 0040767317-4

I, RAM NATH S/O HIRA R/O-T-58 Opp.A-134 Rajpura Gurmandi Delhi-110007, have changed my name to RAM NATH PRAJAPATI 0040767308-3

I, Chander shekhar S/o-Raghar Dayal, Add-Flat no-D-3-4th floor, plot no-48 shakti-khand-2, Indirapuram, Shipra suc c, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh -201014, changed my name to Lokesh Kumar. 0040767304-6

I, Chandan Singh Jat Kanjar S/o Lakshman Singh Jat Kanjar R/o F-1206, ACE-Apsire, Greater Noida(West), have changed my name to Chandan Singh Jat for all purposes. 0040767249-1

I, Parveen Kumar Gakkhar, S/o Tara Chand Gakkhar, R/o 5A/29, Third Floor, Near Tilak-Nagar Police Station, Tilak Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110018, That I have changed the name of my minor son aged about-14-years, from Shivaansh Gakkhar to Shivaanshh Gakkhar, for all future purposes. 0040767304-10

I, PRIYA PRAMODKUMAR MALIK, W/O-PRAMOD KUMAR MALIK, R/O-KADAM 303, SHIPRA SRISHTI, AHINSA KHAND-I, INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201014, CHANGE MY NAME TO PRIYA MALIK, FOR FUTURE, ALL PURPOSE 0040767318-5

I, PRITI W/O-NITIN MITTAL R/O-WZ-19A 3RD-FLOOR NEAR-GURUDWARA BHAI LALO PART-1, VISHNU GARDEN, DELHI-110018, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PRITI MITTAL. 0040767304-5

I, PRAMODKUMAR SOMNATH MALIK, S/O-SOMNATH RAMMAL MALIK, R/O-KADAM 303, SHIPRA-SRISHTI, AHINSA-KHAND-1, INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD UTTAR PRADESH-201014, CHANGE MY NAME TO PRAMOD KUMAR MALIK, FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE. 0040767318-4

I, Nandni Dhawan D/o Surinder Kumar, R/o-G-144, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name as Nandini Dhawan, for all future purposes. 0040767242-1

I, NITIN RAI, S/O OM PRAKASH R/O WZ-A/103, A-BLOCK GULAB BAGH UTTAR NAGAR DELHI-110059, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NITIN KUMAR RAI. 0040767313-2

I, NIRAJ ANAND, S/o Late S.K.Malik, R/o 11/15, 2nd Floor, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008, have changed my name to NERAJ K ANAND, for all, future purposes. 0040767313-9

I, SURINDER SINGH S/O BHIRAM SINGH R/O-E-3/142 SULTAN PURI DELHI-110041, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SURENDER SINGH. 0040767313-8

I, MAYA PRADHAN, W/o RAM BAHADUR PRADHAN, R/O MANABARI BASTI, MAL JALPAIGURI, WEST BENGAL-735222, have changed my name from MAYA PRADHAN TO KALI PRADHAN, for all purposes. 0040767311-2

I, MADTI DEVI, W/O SH. BUDH RAM, R/O-VILLAGE-BEELWA, POST-BEELWATESHIL KHETRI, DISTT-JHUNJHUNU, RAJASTHAN, have changed my name from SUPIYAR DEVI to MADTI DEVI, after marriage for all, future purposes. 0040767311-1

I, M PRADEEP KUMAR, son of M Karna Rao, Presently, residing at, Flat.No.403, Gopalan Grande Naim- Nagar, Hanamkonda, Distt.War angal, Telangana-506009, have changed my name from M PRADEEP KUMAR to MULLE PRADEEP KUMAR, vide- affidavit Date-06.01.2025. 0040767308-9

I, Kamal Kant s/o SS Ahuja, R/O-699 32B ranwar- colony nit Faridabad Haryana, have change my name to KAMAL KANT AHUJA Permanently. 0040767308-1

I, KAJAL W/O GURWINDER SINGH, R/O PLOT NO-114, G/F, KH.No-34/15, BLOCK-N UDAY VIHAR, PART-3 NILOTHI EXTEN NANGLOI, Delhi-110041, have changed my name to KAJAL JAIN, permanently. 0040767313-5

I, K S Bhatia alias Khussvinder Singh, S/o-Jagan Nath Bhatiya, R/o-GH-5and7, Flat.No.762, Paschim-Vihar, Delhi-110087, have changed my name to Khushinder Singh Bhatia. 0040767313-7

I, Jatinder Pal Singh S/o Manohar Singh R/o-11/206, Geeta Colony Delhi-31, have Changed my name to Jatinder Paul Singh Bedi. 0040767317-5

I, Jasprit Singh Arneja, W/o Inder Mohan Singh Arneja, R/o-J/35, Second-Floor, Rajouri-Garden, Delhi-110027, have changed my name to Jasprit Singh. 0040767317-2

I, Jai Prakash, R/o, B-11, 1st Floor, Sector-12, Noida, Gautam Buddha-Nagar, U.P-201301, have changed the name of my minor daughter Vaishnavi Raikwar, aged 4-years and she shall hereafter be known as Taanshi Raikwar. 0040767304-9

I, HEMA SHARMILA VELLAI SAMY, W/O RAJENDRAN, R/O-BLOCK-CA NO.6A DDA FLAT, VTC-MUNIRKA JNU (POST) SOUTH WEST DELHI-110067, have changed my name to HEMA SHARMILA. 0040767304-1

I, HARISH KUMAR, S/O VIDYA DHAR DHOUNDIYAL R/O 11/X-2, BLOCK-C DILSHAD GARDEN, SHAHDARA DELHI-110095, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO HARISH KUMAR DHOUNDIYAL. 0040767311-3

I, Garima Kalra, D/o Sanjay Kalra, W/o Karan Mehta R/o-HG-2, 6/83, Kartike Apartment, Rajendra Nagar, Sector-2, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201005, have changed my name to Garima Mehta, for all future purposes. 0040767313-6

I, ASHOK SHARMA S/O DINA NATH SHARMA R/O HNO.171, PKT-11B, SECTOR-23, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHOK KUMAR SHARMA. 0040767319-1

I, Bhawna Dogra, W/o- Sanjay Dogra, R/o-L-128B, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052, declare that Bhawna, and Bhawna Dogra, both names are same and one parson, shall hereafter known as Bhawna Dogra, for all future purpose. 0040767323-3

I, Arun Kumar Giri, S/O-Girja Shanker, R/O,F-1/35,D, Sharma-Colony Ph-2, Budh-Vihar North West-Delhi-110086, have Changed Name to Arun Kumar Giri to Arun Giri, for All Purpose 0040767304-2

I, Anubhav S/o Gaurav Chaudhary R/o Holly Mohalla, Chipiyana Buzurg, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP-201009, have changed my name to Anubhav Chaudhary permanently 0040767308-5

I, Anju W/o-Lokesh kumar, Add-Flat no-D-3 4th floor, plot no-48, shakti khand-2, Indirapuram, Shipra suc c, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201014, changed my name to Anju Dayal. 0040767304-7

I, ABBAS AHMAD S/O NAFIS AHMED R/O C528/2 MULLA COLONY GHAROLI, DELHI-110096 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ABBAS AHMED, FOR FUTURE. 0040767318-1

I, Kirshan Kumar Army No-22050323A Rank-SEPOY, S/o Sh.Vikram Singh, R/o-Village Gurwari, Tehsil-Palwal, Haryana-121102, I inform that my mother name kamla devi wrongly-metion in my army record. The Correct, and Actual name is Kamal. 0040767288-1

I, GURMUKH S/O HARBANS SINGH, R/O A-31-B, SECOND FLOOR, UDAY VIHAR BLOCK-B NILOTHI EXTN, NANGLOI DELHI-110041, have changed my name to GURMUKH SINGH. 0040767317-1

I, Yaseema W/O Mohammad Haroon R/O Tahbarpura, Mirapur Mujffarnagar Miranpur UP-251315, have changed my name to Vaseema. 0040767318-8

I, Shambhu Yadav Aggarwal S/o Mahabir Prasad Aggarwal, R/O-A-204, Manav Apartment, Sector-9, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Shambhu Yadav Aggarwal. 0040767253-1

I, Shahina W/o Mohammad Kamran R/o 3246-3247, 4th Floor, Kucha Tara Chand, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Shaheena. 0040767283-3

I, Sanjay S/o Subedar Yadav R/o H-138, Gali No-5, Saurabh Vihar, Jaipur, Delhi-110044 have changed my name to Sanjay Yadav 0070943746-1

I, Sanjay Kumar S/o Bhoop Singh R/o D-18, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to SANJAY KUMAR BADLIYA 0040767246-1

I, SULOCHANA, mother of No.14892430Y, Sep/MT Kapil Dev, R/o Ward No.12, V.P.O.-Kithana, Chirawa, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan-333028, have changed my name from SULOCHANA to SILOCHANA DEVI, vide affidavit dated:-06/01/2025, before Notary Public, Delhi. 0040767241-1

I, Sajid Beg, S/o Islam Baig, R/O-2340, Chatta Momgram, Turkman Gate Delhi, have changed my name to Sajid Baig for all purposes. 0040767318-7

I, Prem Chand S/O Sh. Sukhdev R/O H.No. 196, Block-C-6, Sultan Puri, Delhi-110086 have changed my name Prem to Prem Chand and shall hereafter be known as Prem Chand. 0040767257-1

I, Zafar S/O-Mohd Zahid, Address- 15/442, Trilokpuri Chilla Saroda Khadar Delhi-110091, Changed My Name To Mohd Zafar. 0040767313-1

I, Pinky W/o Pushpender Singh R/o 23c Royal Sehkari Awas Samiti Ltd, Sector-sigma-4, Greater Noida, Kasna, Gautam Buddh Nagar U.P.-201310 have changed my name to Pinky Yadav for all future purposes. 0070943697-1

I, Neeraj Kumar gupta S/o Late Ama prasad gupta R/o 33/15, second floor Shakti Nagar, Delhi-110007 that Neeraj Kumar gupta & Neeraj gupta both are one and same person. That My correct & actual name is Neeraj Kumar gupta S/o Late Amba prasad gupta 0070943687-1

I, Naisha D/o Pushpender Singh R/o 23c Royal Sehkari Awas Samiti Ltd, Sector-sigma-4, Greater Noida, Kasna, Gautam Buddh Nagar U.P.-201310 have changed my name to Naisha Singh for all future purposes. 0070943699-1

I, Mukesh Kumar s/o Mange Ram Verma R/o B-339, FF, Hari Nagar, Delhi-110064 have changed my name to MUKESH KUMAR VERMA 0040767245-1

LOST & FOUND

I, SHOBHA RANI AGGARWAL W/O NARESH KUMAR AGGARWAL have Lost my original Share Certificate and Allotment Letter in respect of, Society Flat.No.80-A, Hill C.G.H.S. Ltd.knownas Hill Apartment, Plot No.17, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have lodged an FIR/NCR vide LR.No.LR.No:2462316/2025 Dated.04/01/2025 finder Contact-9891115100 0040767308-10

PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The public at large is hereby informed that my clients Mr. Ramdutt S/o Sh. Tolu Ram & Smt. Shakuntala W/o. Sh. Ramdutt Goyal both R/o Flat No.108, Keshav Bhawan, Kureet, North-West-Delhi, Delhi-110010 have debarred and disinherited their daughter Ms. Heena Goyal, Aadhar No.401289942068 from their movable and immovable properties and also snatched their relation from her due to her bad conduct and disobedient towards my clients and my clients have no control in any manner over her. If anyone deals with her will be at his/her own risk then my clients will not responsible in any manner. Sd/- (MANOJ KUMAR) ADVOCATE D/884/2023

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is for general information that I, VIBHA GANGAHAR ALIAS VIBHA DATTA D/o PRAMOD DATTA EX. WIFE OF SHANTANU GANGAHAR R/O H.NO. 91, AMAR COLONY, LAJPAT NAGAR 4, LAJPAT NAGAR, SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110024 declare that I got divorced from my husband SH. SHANTANU GANGAHAR vide court decree HMA No. 862/18 dated 05.05.2018. Further I have changed my name and my minor daughter PRINA GANGAHAR aged 12 years and we shall hereafter be known as VIBHA DATTA and PRINA DATTA for all future purposes.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to all concerned on the behalf of my clients Sh. Lughman S/o Mohammadam Bar, age about 54 years, r/o N-17 B-271, Fathawala Bagh, Wazirpur J/ colony, Ashok Vihar, Delhi-110052 that he has disowned/disinherited and debarred his Son, Mohammad, Nazamuddin, from all his movable and immovable properties due to his disrespectful, disobedient behavior. If any-body deals with Mohammad Nazamuddin in any manner, he/she shall do so at his/her own risks, costs and consequences. My client shall not be liable or responsible for the same in any manner. Muzammil Usmani (Advocate) 362, II Floor, Kohat Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-34

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is for information to all concerned that My clients i.e. Shri Ashwani Kumar Talwar, Son of Late Shri Harbans Lal Talwar and Smt. Monika Talwar Wife of Shri Ashwani Kumar Talwar both Resident of Property Bearing No. 1698, Ground Floor, Pratap Street, Chuna Mandi, Palangang, New Delhi-110055 notify you that we have disinherited, disowned and debarred our son i.e. Shri Gaurav Kumar Talwar from all my immovable and movable properties due to utter misconduct and misbehavior. That anybody dealing with my Son i.e. Shri Gaurav Kumar Talwar will do so at his/her /their own risk and responsibilities and my clients will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Shri Gaurav Kumar Talwar. Sd/- SHUBHMAN AGARWAL Advocate Enrl. No. D/2806/2017 C-27, Kailash Colony, New Delhi-110048

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is for information to all concerned that My clients i.e. Shri Ashwani Kumar Talwar, Son of Late Shri Harbans Lal Talwar and Smt. Monika Talwar Wife of Shri Ashwani Kumar Talwar both Resident of Property Bearing No. 1698, Ground Floor, Pratap Street, Chuna Mandi, Palangang, New Delhi-110055 notify you that we have disinherited, disowned and debarred our son i.e. Shri Gaurav Kumar Talwar from all my immovable and movable properties due to utter misconduct and misbehavior. That anybody dealing with my Son i.e. Shri Gaurav Kumar Talwar will do so at his/her /their own risk and responsibilities and my clients will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Shri Gaurav Kumar Talwar. Sd/- SHUBHMAN AGARWAL Advocate Enrl. No. D/2806/2017 C-27, Kailash Colony, New Delhi-110048

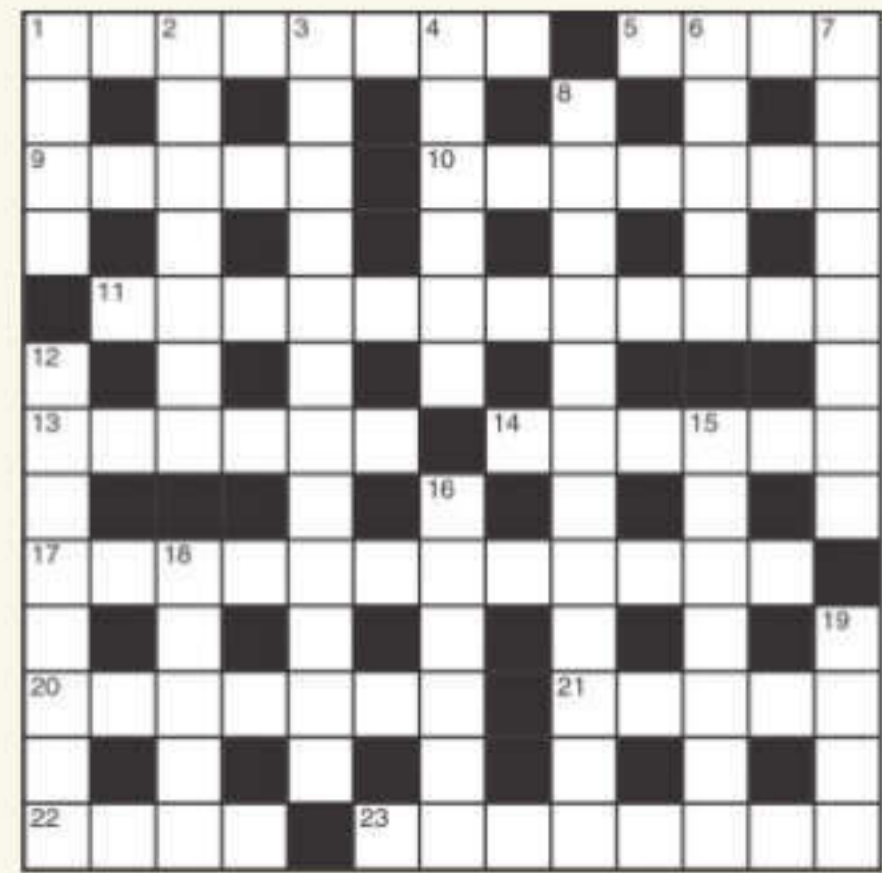
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Public at large is hereby informed that Freehold SFS Flat No. 130, First Floor, Category-III, Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi, owned and possessed by present Seller by virtue of Sale Deed, vide registered vide Regd. No. Regd. No. 29827, dated 16.09.2005/19.09.2005 and the same is proposed to be offered as Security with State Bank of India, Branch: RACPC, Naraina, New Delhi and as per present owner(s) version the said property is/are free from all sorts of encumbrance. It is hereby notified that any person/ legal heir and/or Bank, financial institution having any claim, any charge, interest or lien or claim and /or objection to thereof, he/she/ they may lodge / notify the same to the undersigned with documentary proof/ court judgment within 15 days from the day of publication of this public notice, failing which any/future/ future claim/ objection(s) shall be rejected and my client/ prospective buyer (s) as a bona-fide purchaser conclude the title / Sale Deed proposed to be executed in favor of my client or in the name of his/her/ their nominees shall be deemed to be clear and marketable without any defect, encumbrance, flaw and impediment. SATYENDER YADAV (ADVOCATE) Chamber no. 561, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Saket Courts, New Delhi, India. 9711212421 E-mail: syadav7567@gmail.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The general public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule of property from its owner of 1/8th undivided share viz., Ashok Kumar Wahi s/o Madan Lal Wahi c/o 4, Pusa Road, New Delhi-110005. Any other person(s)/ institution/ government authorities having any sort of right, claim, title or interest of any kind whatsoever in the said property or any part thereof or anybody else claiming are required to put forth his/ its claim with the undersigned, within 15 days of publication of this notice, failing which the same shall not be binding on my client and my client shall proceed to complete the transaction for the purchase of 1/8th undivided share from the above owner, free from all encumbrances whatsoever. Schedule of property: 1/8th undivided share of free-hold built-up property no. 4, Road no. 34, bearing Municipal no. 12032, Khasra no. 662/767, ward no. XVI, situated at Western Eastern Avenue, Karol Bagh, New Delhi, (commonly known as 4, Pusa Road, New Delhi), measuring 1450 sq. Yds Sd/- Sanat Kapoor Advocate 12, Central Lane, Ground Floor, Bengali Market, New Delhi-110001. Cell: 9114525806 E-mail: sanat.kapoor@gmail.com

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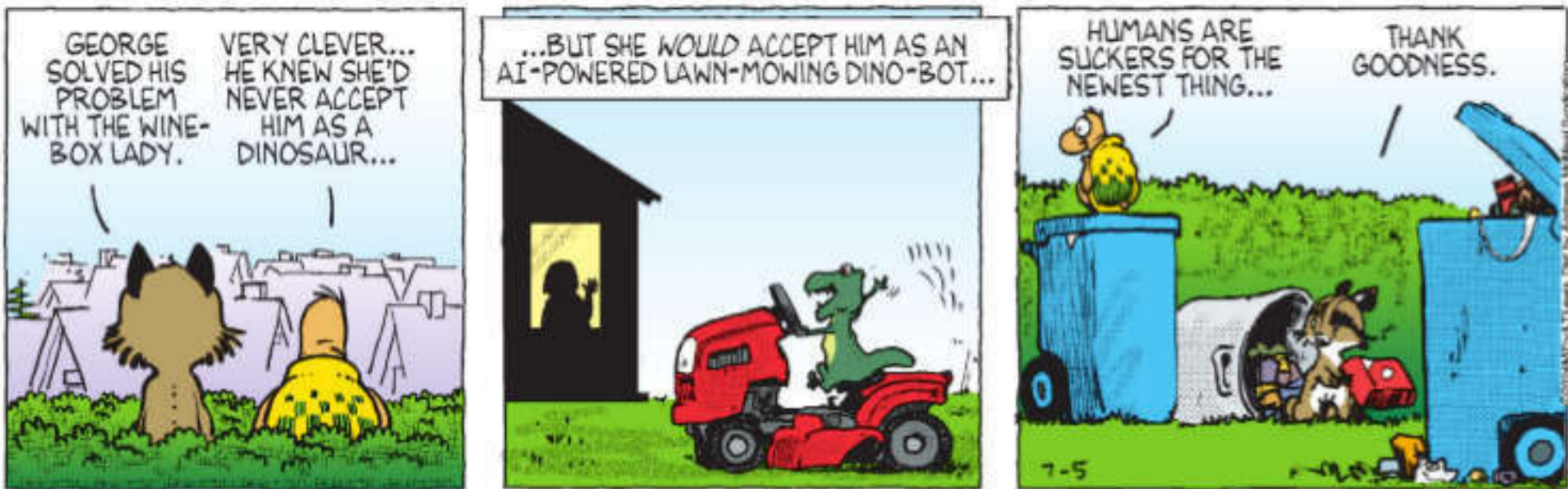
CROSSWORD 5567



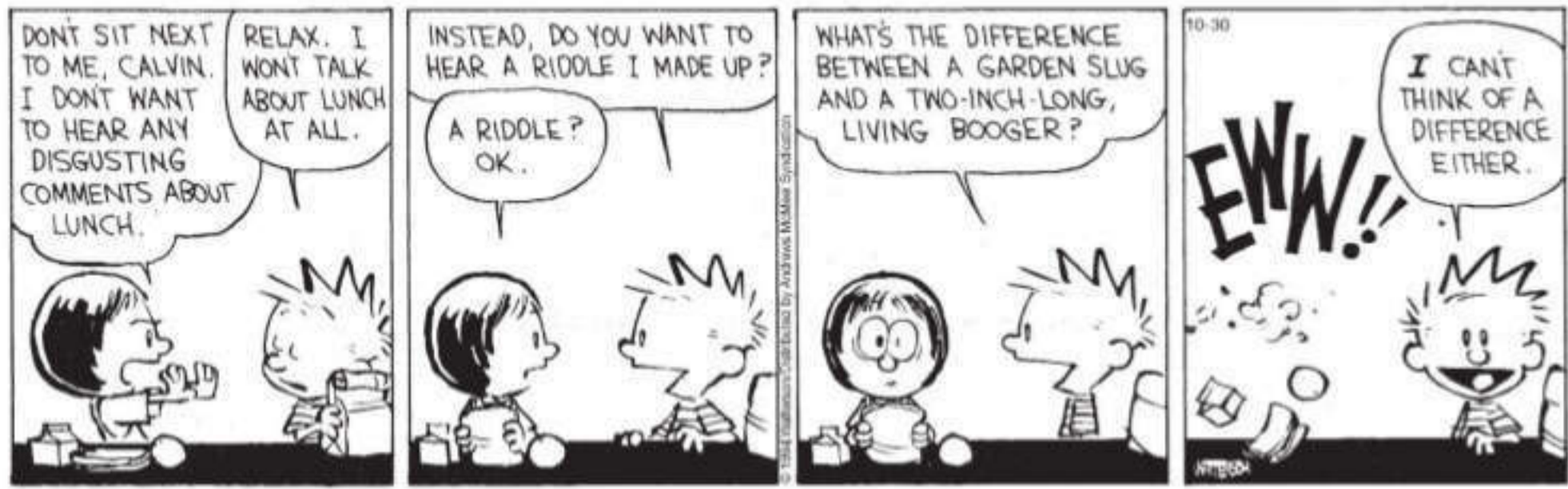
- ACROSS**
- 11 That many were treated badly was important (8)
- 5 Surrounded by a shadowy reflection (4)
- 9 Article in weekend place is ruined (5)
- 10 Where to find persons of conviction (7)
- 11 The family's failure makes a wretched story (4,8)
- 13 Offender dismissed by decree (6)
- 14 Shoot something to eat (6)
- 17 Flags on the street (6,6)
- 20 One hears it being broken (7)
- 21 I start to scold, being furious (5)
- 22 Cart is moved back three feet (4)
- 23 Vertigo surprises (8)
- DOWN**
- 1 Compel to manufacture (4)
- 2 Final layer of paint is worn out (7)
- 3 Doing someone a good turn (12)
- 4 Is deep perhaps but may be detected (6)
- 6 I wander up to a New Zealander (5)
- 7 Is untied loosely and split (8)
- 8 Having no like? (12)
- 12 Made up to appear calm (8)
- 15 Work with a kind of musical note (7)
- 16 A quarter cent rise (6)
- 18 House constructed badly in Virginia (5)
- 19 Service charges (4)

Solutions: Crossword 5566 Across: 1 Shellfish, 8 Oriel, 9 Austria, 10 Minima, 11 Stolid, 12 Encroach, 15 Whistler, 18 Reload, 20 Losers, 21 Snapper, 22 Clogs, 23 Horseplay Down: 2 Haint, 3 Lately, 4 Fair deal, 5 Hosier, 6 Digital, 7 Clear head, 11 Showplace, 13 Currants, 14 Mission, 16 Thrush, 17 Slip up, 19 Arena

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.

ITWER

IINTLS

TOPIS

LUMPER

Solution: WRITE, POST, INSTILL, RUMPLE

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.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SUDOKU 5828

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5827

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

**ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)**

Mars has now commenced a new cycle which is going to lift your morale and give you a massive shot in the arm - but only if you turn your attention to all unfinished business and left-over tasks. How can you make the most of all your many talents and abundant energy?

**LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)**

The best relationships are those based on joint interests, and the happiest social life is that built on good conversation. Consider the legal situation, and make sure that you know your rights. And don't give anyone the wrong idea about your intentions.

**TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)**

Move carefully, flitting about behind the scenes, doing your best without being spotted! The coming phase in your life is one for discretion, so plan accordingly. Also, if a friend or partner lets you down, don't be too hard on them: they might have no choice.

**SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)**

The cycle you're now entering is one which warns you about the danger of burning yourself out, but offers you the chance to get your physical well-being together, cleaning up your diet, improving your exercise and tackling niggling chronic complaints.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)**

This should be a somewhat sensitive day, but no less confident for that. The golden rule is never to take offence, and always to realise that little slights may be unintended. Partners really are in need of your care and understanding, so you'll have to be patient.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)**

Partners and business associates will eventually reveal facts which you think you ought to know. However, when it comes to dealing with people in authority, extracting the truth may be like getting blood out of a stone. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't try.

**CANCER (June 22 - July 23)**

You are undoubtedly well aware of certain emotional undercurrents, and it's thanks to your intuitive skills that you're more in tune than many other people with the choices that should now be faced. That doesn't mean that you'll come up with the right answers, though, so tread carefully.

**CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)**

Areas of your life which are now being spotlighted indicate where you should streamline your affairs and how you should reorganise your relationships. Consider changes at home. They might receive a warm welcome.

**LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)**

Don't expect any let-up of daily pressures even if today's stars are more relaxed than usual. You should realise that any tension can work to your advantage, giving you the excuse to make long-overdue improvements, especially at work.

**AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)**

Circumstances beyond your control may now force you to abandon certain schemes, or at least reach a major compromise. Family plans are still in a state of some uncertainty, while domestic entertaining looks favourable. Take advantage of any opportunities for pleasure.

**VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)**

This is one occasion when partners may be better equipped to take control. At work employers should be listened to and obeyed, although they in their turn should recognise your role as a conciliator. It's all a matter of mutual respect.

**PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)**

Other people may not intend to mislead you, and what you mistake for opposition could be support. If someone seems to be standing in the way, it may be that they are somehow forcing you to make a response which is more mature than in the past.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 84 BNSS**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Rakesh, S/o Babu Lal, R/o Village Ahmad Garh, PS Jhinjana, Distt. Mujaffar Nagar, U.P. and C-140, Partap Nagar, Mandoli, Nand Nagri, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 71/2006, U/s 392/34 IPC, P.S. Rajender Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Rakesh** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Rakesh** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Rakesh** accused of **FIR No. 71/2006, U/s 392/34 IPC, P.S. Rajender Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **25.03.2025**.

By Order  
Ms. Preeti  
Judicial Magistrate First Class-03  
Central District, Room No. 150  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/152/CD/2025

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**(See Section 82 Cr. P.C./84 BNSS)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused **Ajay Sharma S/o Sant Ram Sharma R/o H No 153, Near L-163A, Back Side of Khasra number 106/9/1, Gali NO.5 Raja Puri, New Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **CT Case no.284/2023 U/s 135 I.E. ACT P.S. Bindapur, Delhi** and it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Ajay Sharma** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Ajay Sharma** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that **Ajay Sharma in CT Case no.284/2023 U/s 135 I.E. ACT P.S. Bindapur, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **06.02.2025**.

By order  
Shri Vinod Kumar Meena  
Additional Sessions Judge (South-West)  
Special Court (Electricity)  
Room No. 609  
Dwarka Dist. Court, New Delhi

DP/218/DW/2025

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr. P. C.**

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Jitender Pal Singh Redi** (Prop. of M/S Grooms by solution) R/o K-9/1/301, Vikash Puri, Delhi, have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **CC.No. 849/2019 U/s 138 NI Act**, have been registered at **P.S. Bhajanpura, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, **Jitender Pal Singh Redi** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Jitender Pal Singh Redi** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Jitender Pal Singh Redi of CC.No. 849/2019 U/s 138 NI Act**, registered at **P.S. Bhajanpura, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **14.02.2025**.

By Order  
Sh.Pankaj Rai, JMFC-01, (NE)  
Room No.73, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

DP/16873/NE/2024

**ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (APCRDA)**  
Lenin Center, Governerpet, Vijayawada - 520002 (A.P.)

**E Procurement Tender Notice**

NIT No. 62/PROC/MAU51-USIOHB/BO/15/2024-HB Dated: 06.01.2025

Name of Work : Name of the work: WORLD BANK & ADB financed Amaravati Capital City Development Program related to 'Completion of Balance works in External Infra Development viz., Providing Water Supply, Underground Sewerage System, Storm Water Drainage System, Street Lighting, Internal Roads, External Electrical, Plumbing and Sanitary Systems, Firefighting Systems, HVAC Systems, Building Security Systems, Landscaping etc., for 1440 nos. multi-storied apartment quarters in 14 towers of (S+12) floors pattern buildings for Gazetted Officers Type-I & Type-II and Group-D Officials near Nelapadu, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh on Lumpsum Contract (1% percentage tender) System with the DLP of '2 years'. Est. Cost - Rs.226.26 Crores.

The bid can be downloaded on AP-e-procurement portal from 07.01.2025 to 28.01.2025 up to 14.00 Hrs. Due date for submission of Bid is 28.01.2025 up to 15.00 Hrs. Technical bid opening 28.01.2025 @16.00 Hrs. For further details Please refer to [www.appeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.appeprocurement.gov.in) and [www.crda.ap.gov.in](http://www.crda.ap.gov.in). Sd/- Commissioner, APCRDA, Vijayawada.

**Metro Railway, Kolkata**

**Tender Notice** for e-tendering is invited by **Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata** for and on behalf of President of India for the following work : **Name of work : 'Renovation, Repair and Interior works of 120 DPS Road (Annex of RPF Barrack), Tollygunge of Metro Railway, Kolkata'. Approx. Cost of Work : ₹ 29,33,099.10. Earnest Money : ₹ 5,14,700/- . Completion Period : 29.33 (06) Months. Date and Time of Closing: 28.01.2025 at 12.00 Hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Amendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be uploaded only on the website.**

**Abridged e-Tender Notice No. : Civil-2484-2024(Open)**

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Danish@Mohd. Adil S/o Mohd. Akil R/o 105-A, Block-A, Subhash Mohalla, Gali Bajrang Bali Wali, Majupur, Delhi**, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case **FIR No. 393/13 U/s 379/411 IPC P.S.: Daryaganj Delhi**. it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Danish@Mohd. Adil**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Danish@Mohd. Adil**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Danish@Mohd. Adil**, accused of **FIR No. 393/13 U/s 379/411 IPC P.S.: Daryaganj Delhi**, is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **11.02.2025**.

By Order  
Sh. Dr. Raj Kumar Singh  
JMFC-05, Room No. 241  
Tis Hazari Court Delhi

DP/176/CD/2025  
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 CrPC**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person (1) **Neelu Shiekh @ Neeru Sheikh D/o Ruhib Sheikh @ Ruhab Sheikh R/o Jhuggi Bangali Colony, Sahabad Dairy, Delhi**, (2) **Vicky Dass @ Vicky S/o Sadhan Dass R/o Jhuggi Bangali Colony, Sahabad, Daulatpur, Delhi**, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **FIR No. 28/20, U/S 25 Arms Act, P.S. Daryaganj, Central Distt., Delhi-02** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused (1) **Neelu Shiekh @ Neeru Sheikh (2) Vicky Dass @ Vicky** cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused (1) **Neelu Shiekh @ Neeru Sheikh (2) Vicky Dass @ Vicky** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that (1) **Neelu Shiekh @ Neeru Sheikh (2) Vicky Dass @ Vicky** the said accused of **FIR No. 28/20, U/S 25 Arms Act, P.S. Daryaganj, Central Distt., Delhi-02**, is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **25.02.2025**.

By Order  
Dr. Raj Kumar Singh  
Judicial Magistrate First Class-05 (Central),  
Central Distt., Room No.-241,  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/182/CD/2025  
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 CrPC**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Harjeet Singh, S/o Sh. Hardeep Singh, R/o Patti Choudharn, Baraut, Baghatp, UP** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide **FIR No. 384/22, U/S 3/4/5/55 G. Act, P.S. Jagatpuri, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Harjeet Singh**, can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Harjeet Singh**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Harjeet Singh, of FIR No. 384/22, U/S 3/4/5/55 G. Act, P.S. Jagatpuri, Delhi** is required to appear before this court (or before me) to answer the complaint on or before the day of **14.04.2025**.

By Order,  
Ms. Aayushi Saxena  
Judicial Magistrate, First Class-05,  
Second Floor, Shahdara Distt.,  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

DP/17076/SHD/2024 (Court Matter)

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)

Corporate Office, "MESCOM BHAVANA", Bejai, Mangaluru - 575004  
Ph: 0824-2885796 CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SC 030425

No: MESCOM/SEE(PROJ)/EE(APR)/2024-25/2371 Date: 03-01-2025

**SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (E-Procurement Portal Only)**

MESCOM Re-invites tenders from the eligible bidders for the "Selection of Solar Power Generators (SPGs) on the basis of Build Own & Operate (BOO) for Design, Survey, Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Operation & Maintenance of grid connected distributed solar power plants for solarization of selected Agriculture/Mixed Load feeders at 19 Sub-Stations in MESCOM jurisdiction, its associated 11kV line to connect the plant with concerned Substations and Remote Monitoring System (RMS) of solar power plants through RESCO mode, for 25 years under Component C - Feeder Level Solarization of PM-KUSUM scheme" vide Bid enquiry no. MESCOM/2024-25/SE0049 (19 Packages).

The interested eligible bidders may log on to e-procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> on or after 07.01.2025.

Sd/-, Superintending Engineer (Ele) (Projects)  
For Power Related Complaints & Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Person namely **Ratan Singh S/o: Kalyan Singh, R/o: Pink Colour Ka Makan, 3rd Floor, Gali No. 21, Village Bawana, Delhi** also at Village Khiriya Kalan, Mohaba, Jaitpur, P.S. Ajhar, Uttar Pradesh (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **FIR No. 421/2022, U/s 323/341 IPC**, registered at P.S.: Bawana, Delhi and the warrant has been returned writing upon that the said accused **Ratan Singh** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Ratan Singh** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Ratan Singh** accused **FIR No. 421/2022, U/s 323/341 IPC**, registered at P.S.: Bawana, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **13.02.2025**.

By Order  
Sh. Sarthak Panwar, LD.  
Judicial Magistrate First Class  
Room No. 114, Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/171/ON/2025  
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**(See Section 82 Cr.PC)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Sahjad, S/o Jainudeen R/o H.No.B-49, Gali No. 5, DCM Colony Ibrahim Pur, Delhi** also at Vill. Admapur PS-Manjhla Ghar Distt. Gopal Ganj Bihar has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No.017478/2022 u/s 379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Burari, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Sahjad** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Sahjad** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Sahjad of FIR No.017478/2022 u/s 379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Burari, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **13.02.2025**.

By Order,  
Ms. Payal Singal  
Judicial Magistrate First Class-09 (Central), Room No.286,  
Central District, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/149/N/2025

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Ravi @ Daikait, S/o : Sh. Manohar Lal, R/o : B-82, Gali No. 1, Prem Nagar, Shiv Vihar, Karawal Nagar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case **FIR No. 2561/2020 U/S 379/411 IPC, P.S.: Bhajanpura, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Ravi @ Daikait** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Ravi @ Daikait** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Ravi @ Daikait** accused of Case **FIR No. 2561/2020 U/S 379/411 IPC, P.S.: Bhajanpura, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **13.02.2025**.

By Order  
Sh. Pankaj Rai  
Judicial Magistrate, First Class-01  
Room No. 73, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

DP/16632/NE/2024  
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Yash Raj Pal, S/o : Sh. Hargovind, R/o : A-98, Mohan Garden Extn., Uttam Nagar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case **FIR No. 385/11 U/S 419 /420 / 472 /34 IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Yash Raj Pal** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Yash Raj Pal** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Yash Raj Pal** accused of Case **FIR No. 385/11 U/S 419 /420 / 472 /34 IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **15.02.2025**.

By Order  
Sh. Shashank Nandan Bhatt  
Metropolitan Magistrate  
Room No. 356, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/16820/WD/2024  
(Court Matter)



Oh, I didn't get too fazed. Unfortunately, Uzi got out. He was trying to buy some time a little bit. It was probably my fault, but it happens. It's cricket. Credit to Bumrah. He got the wicket, but obviously great performance from the team."

SAM KONSTAS, ON HIS HEATED EXCHANGE WITH BUMRAH



AUSTRALIA  
TOUR DIARY

Serendipity meant a flight booking error, being locked out of the house and a forced New Year dinner of a McD burger ended up holding the most memorable treasures on a tempestuous cricket tour

# Sandwiched between two warm hugs - a scoop and many heart-warming tales



SRIRAM VEERA

ASHWIN PERSPIRES

Nov 21, Perth

The media cafeteria is downstairs at Perth. As one enters, the sound of the ball hitting the stumps and the 'thud, thud' of spiked boots is heard. From a door crack one can see Ravichandran Ashwin at it, on his own at the indoor nets, all through that Test. Little does one realise that these visuals will pop up in the mind when he announces a shock retirement midway through the series. Lunch on that opening day in Perth was lamb shanks, if memory serves right; the day's special could have been cooked better. Just like the ending of Ashwin's career.

WARM HUG ON A SUNNY DAY

Nov 27, Perth

By oversight, the flight out of Perth had been booked two days after the Test ended, and one day later than the rest of the media pack. Turns out to be the best decision ever as former England batsman Robin Smith, with the fiercest square cut imaginable, agrees to meet on what was to be the final day of the Test. We meet on a sunny airy day at an out-doorsy cafe where he opens his heart on how he fought darkness inside him. Takeaway memory? The warmest hug imaginable at the end.

The Australian press is already making a big deal of a throwaway line from Josh Hazlewood and the headlines are splashed across newspapers : 'Divided Team'.

Steve Smith's photo of playing with his eyes shut is splashed across the West Australian with the headline 'R.I.P.' alongside a pic of a skull: 'Australia's old and out-of-form team humiliated' runs the slug. Somewhat similar texts and visuals would be said about the other team in a month's time. Such is life.

A BRAVE AFGHAN GIRL

Dec 1, Canberra

Another decision on the fly proves gold. Canberra, where the Indians play a tour game against the Prime Minister's XI, wasn't originally part of the schedule but a cheap flight without check-in baggage is booked. The luggage is kept in an airport locker and a backpackers' dorm becomes home for the next few days. The first sighting of selfie-king Sam Konstas is had, and also a remarkable young Afghan girl Benafsha Hashimi, a 22-year-old who had fled Kabul as a 18-year old cricketer along with her teammates, is met on the day after the game, before driving to the airport.

On a tour, where brave gutsy bowlers hound down batsmen, Benafsha remains the most courageous person I met. Also, the quietest quaintest capital city perhaps stirs up some more drama.



Cricket-trotting through Australia's iconic cities wasn't too different from reading signs of the storm approaching, punctuated by still sunsets even as glory eluded India. *Sriram Veera*

'Deep Throat' tells a story or two from the Indian camp. Put the phone down, drop the raised eyebrows with a couple of rum shots, and call the boss.

UNPRINTABLE PAKISTAN TALES

Dec 4, Adelaide

The pretty old-age home of Australia, where the rest of the country seems to come to live their life after retirement, beckons next with the pink-ball Test. Couple of days at the Indian nets, it's pretty easy to suss out that this game was going to be a lost cause. They find spotting the ball difficult from the hand, get rapped on the pads a lot more, and the question was how long this game would last.

An ex-colleague in India, currently an absolute star of the Australian media, Bharat Sundaresan throws a house party at his beautiful home up in the hills. The stories from Sunil Gavaskar on Javed Miandad's witty repartees and tales of Pakistan crowds who took a fancy to Roger Binny are absolutely hilarious, but sadly unprintable.

The next day, the old manual scoreboard operator tells a tale from Virat Kohli's first tour of Australia when the scoreboard plate carrying his name was dented by the Australian players celebrating their series win. Write that story out, omitting the of-

fending Aussie player's name. Sometimes sense prevails over sensationalism. A cricket-ball shaped pastry at the media cafeteria is the highlight of the Test.

'CAN'T WAIT TO GET YOU AT GABBA'

Dec 18, Adelaide

Last time in Brisbane was 12-13 years ago. It's almost unrecognisable now, heavily corporatised and an aspirational city. Staying at a grimy neighbourhood though where the local tobacconist stays under a locked-door shop. A tobacco mafia war is on in Australia and firebombs are being hurled at shops selling cheaper cigarettes. Smoking kills, definitely. Rain keeps hurtling down, marring an interesting Test, but there are lovely side-lights.

Bishan Singh Bedi's son from his first wife Gavasinder Singh comes to meet the person he is named after: Gavaskar. Ian Healy, former wicketkeeper, agrees for a chat on his career, and shows his twisted curly knocked-about fingers. Shudder."Can't wait to get you at the Gabba, Mate" has a whole other meaning now. Gabba gets Ashwin, and he walks behind Rohit Sharma into the press conference to announce his retirement.

A night later, have the best food of the tour at a Nepali restaurant. The dish was

called 'Laping'. Send a picture to the wife, get a response: 'I have had it in Kathmandu when I went on the Mount Everest base camp climb'. Grrr, can't win that. Beers are ordered and the fat tummy is patted.

REDDY GAARU UNWRAPS GIFTS

Dec 26, Melbourne

Melbourne proves all Christmassy for Nitish Reddy, the break-out star with a lovely maiden Test hundred. He kneels down to plop his helmet atop his bat; and his uncle would tell its significance a day later: "He was showing that he has planted his flag in Australia at MCG with his first hundred". Pity, instead of being inspired, India go down stunningly in the final session of the final day of an enthralling Test. Gautam Gambhir has a stern honest meeting with the team that evening. Some more developments take place as one leaves the city.

FIREWORKS AND HOT STORY

Dec 31, Sydney

The morning of December 31, New Year's eve, is spent locked out of the home of a kind stranger who had agreed to let a couple of journalists stay at his place as

the AirBnB host had cancelled our booking for the night. Since he was out of the country but didn't possess a key to the door-knob, a locksmith had to be called and the issue sorted out. Phew. The late evening/night, while most of Sydney spent revelling at the fireworks show in the city, this journalist spent time at a pub on the city outskirts speaking, collating information from colleagues, writing out the story of simmering chaos in the Indian camp, and picking up a burger at McDonald's at 11:55 pm.

Saunter out, see a small paddock opposite the fast-food joint where a few strangers are sitting on the grassy banks staring at a distant horizon which is dimly lit up with a trail of fireworks in minutes. The burger tasted just fine.

The new year was upon us. A video call with wife and kid is made; neither interested in talking as they are at a restaurant with friends and asking to shut up as 'New year is still a few hours away'. Oh, well.

AN ACT OF GRATITUDE

Jan 5, Sydney

The final Test hurtles along at a frenetic pace on a grassy knoll and the Indians are shot down on the third day. Jasprit Bumrah

is stuffed physically, Mohammed Siraj is totally knackered, getting treatment by the boundary on his muscles, and revving himself up to bowl the next over.

Game, series done. Spot Sunil Gavaskar by the boundary instead of the dais where Allan Border is standing before the ceremonies.

Tell a friendly Australian journalist looking for some scoop and he is abuzz, rushes down, speaks to Cricket Australia, to Gavaskar and files his story in a blink.

Nearly 20 years earlier, that journalist, Robert 'Crash' Craddock, had written a lovely line about Indians sleepwalking on that tour: 'Wake up India, Get Angry, Shake a leg, move, Do something' - words that had remained tattooed in the brain.

Get him to repeat those lines after he is done with the 'Gavaskar angry at not being allowed to present' story.

Crash is older now, but still happily thirsty for a scoop, utters that line dramatically, and embraces with a warm hug.

The tour started with a hug from Robin, ended with one from a journo. In between, there were a shoulder-barge, scoops, heart-warming stories and inspirational persons. And oh, by the way, a senior Indian player is right now planning a ... just kidding. Happy New Year!

NEW BALL GAME

# Spicy pitches, new version of Kookaburra made life difficult for batters

VENKATA KRISHNA B  
JANUARY 6

WITH A place in the World Test Championship (WTC) final up for grabs and every team trying to exploit home advantage, pitches for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy (BGT) were expected to be result-oriented. Ever since the WTC came into effect, the number of drawn Tests has reduced and so has the number of games going into the final day.

The BGT, which Australia won for the first time since 2014/15, saw the pacers setting the tone at each of the five venues, as the aggregate match total exceeded 1,000 only once – at the Boxing Day Test, which incidentally went into the final session on Day 5.

While the pitches have played their part, a lot of it is also the effect of the new variety of Kookaburra balls. In complete contrast to the white balls used for limited-overs cricket which offer less swing, this version happens to be bowler-friendly.

Combined with surfaces that assist fast bowlers, it added up to a formidable challenge for batsmen.

Steve Smith, who scored centuries in

Brisbane and Melbourne, summed up how it is to face the new variety of the Kookaburra. "Since 2021, when they changed the Kookaburra ball, batting has definitely got more difficult, particularly at the same time wickets got greener as well. So, it's like a perfect storm coming together," he said.

"So, the last three years have probably been the hardest that I've experienced in my career. Batting-wise, in terms of the amount of movement that's been generated. You can see that in the way the scores have come down as well. Bowling averages come down, batting averages come down."

What is the new variety of the Kookaburra?

In the past, bowlers have found the Kookaburra balls going soft once the seam flattened. So to ensure the ball stays harder for longer, extra lacquer was applied, which meant seam movement for longer.

But it is just one part of the modification. What is also causing more deviation off the seam is the presence of a ridge under the seam which has been made by the centre of the ball being housed in two plastic cups raised at the point at which they meet (un-



The new Kookaburra ball remains harder for a longer period.

AP

der the seam basically).

Since this ridge now sits below the stitch of the seam – which in the past used to go flat by the 15th over or so – it now stays intact for longer because of the ridge. So when

a pace bowler hits the pitch with the seam, there is a strong chance of him getting the ball to deviate more than before. Add the green, lively decks, and batsmen have their task cut out.

What does it mean?

In the past, openers were advised to see off the new ball for the first hour or the first session. But with the new variety, it has become challenging for batsmen to survive for that long and as a result, even the middle order is getting exposed to the new ball. With runs coming at a premium, one of the reasons why Australia turned to Sam Konstas was in the hope that his aggressive approach could at least get them some quick runs.

"Particularly the first 35 overs of an innings are very challenging at the moment with the significant seam movement. But the ball stays hard. So, if you get through that period, the ball still bounces off the bat a lot harder than it used to. I think the last three years have probably been the hardest that I've experienced in my career," Smith said.

Numbers tell a story

Before heading to Australia, touring batsmen usually focused on getting used to the extra bounce. But right now, conditions have been hard to decode, especially with regard to seam movement. It means fewer runs and batsmen not facing as many overs.

Right through this series, batsmen encountered green, lively pitches with the one

at the SCG for the final Test being the spiciest of the lot. The Kookaburra ball has been altered after the iconic 2020/21 Border-Gavaskar Trophy that India won. Back then, the Brisbane Test saw 1,328 runs while 1,228 were scored at Sydney.

The Boxing Day Test witnessed 791 runs, while the Pink Ball Test saw just 564 runs. Except for the Adelaide Test, the remaining three Tests saw 399.5, 424.2 and 306.4 overs being sent down respectively.

Since the new variety of Kookaburra came into play, the average of batsmen in Australia has come down to 26.40 from 32.08 in the previous cycle between 2016-2021.

"Probably five years ago, you're putting consistent 400s, 500s in the first innings. If you put a three in front of it these days, you're usually in a pretty strong position. If you get a big score, you're going to need some luck to do it. And you're going to have to play really well," Smith felt.

Only one Australian player's average has improved during the period: Travis Head's up to 55 from 47.

"If we can sort of get to 30-odd overs when Travis comes in, it makes a big difference to the team. The seam probably starts to settle down around 30, 40 overs and the ball stays quite hard," Smith added.

# Poets can use pragmatic prose too

United coach Amorim must learn to strike a balance between flexibility and idealism the way his Liverpool counterpart has done

# Soorma HC clinch shootout win over Delhi



**PRESSTRUST OF INDIA**  
ROURKELA, JANUARY 6

SOORMA HOCKEY CLUB secured a thrilling 3-1 shootout victory over Delhi SG Pipers after a late brace by **Harmanpreet Singh** in the final quarter levelled the match in regulation time here on Monday.

After a quiet first half, Tomas Domene (43') and Manjeet Singh (45') scored to grant Delhi SG Pipers a two-goal lead in the third quarter. However, Harmanpreet (48', 57') found the back of the net twice with his drag flicks to get Soorma back on level terms in the last quarter and force penalty shootouts.

Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nicolas Keenan and Boris Burkhardt scored in the penalty shootouts, while Vincent Vanash pulled out three saves to snatch the bonus point for Soorma Hockey Club. After the first half ended goalless following a series of missed opportunities, Maninder Singh earned Soorma's first penalty corner five minutes into the third quarter but Della Torre's low flick was easily deflected out. The Pipers remained undeterred in their search for a goal and as the third quarter came to a close, Ky Willot found Domene on the right wing, who shook his marker and pushed the ball through Vanash's legs to grant Delhi SG Pipers the lead in the game.

With a minute left in the quarter, the Pipers ventured on a counter attack through Jake Whetton who blazed a cross in front of goal and Manjeet Singh was alert to dive and deflect the ball to the roof of the net and further increase their lead. Soorma went on to earn their second penalty corner soon after and Harmanpreet powered the ball through Benjamin Rennie's legs to pull a goal back for Soorma. They kept the pressure on and earned another penalty with four minutes left in the game and Harmanpreet stepped up again to find the bottom right corner and restore parity.



**On the back of a poor run, Manchester United coach Ruben Amorim (L) inspired his side to a deserved draw at Liverpool.** *Reuters*

couple of players accustomed to the dynamics of the system.

Three-man defence thrives when the wingbacks are quick and robust, when the double midfield pivot are strong and strapping, when the forwards are incessant pressers and runners. In just a couple of practice sessions, Amorim would have realised that he cannot replicate a 3-4-3 or a 3-4-2-1 here. Yet, he remained religiously wedded to his dogma, despite shuddering reality checks every week. Like for instance, starting with a midfield pair of Cristian Eriksen and Casemiro against the muscular and faster trio of Bruno Guimarães, Sandro Tonali and Joëlinton.

But Amorim would stick to his beliefs. "I was here because of my idea and I will continue to do my idea until the end. I have to sell my idea. I don't have another one," he said.

**The team at Amorim's disposal possesses none of the virtues required to thrive in a three-man defence that the Portuguese adamantly clings to. Rather, it has exactly the men ill-fitted for such a high-energy structure.**

He did make minor tactical tweaks or in-game alterations, but everything was framed in an inflexible three-man defence. The consequence was a wholly incoherent and scattered bunch, sleepwalking through a game.

It is not to suggest that philosophy-slaved managers are living a delusional world. There are benefits if the team is guided by a definite theme. Movements become synchronised, hence more aesthetic; the roles are

clear, everyone knows what everyone is supposed to do; the squad is unified by a guiding vision; the scouts and recruiters know what kind of players to hire. It promises sustenance and smoother inheritance, as Liverpool discovered in Arne Slot.

Klopp's successor is perhaps the best example of someone striking the balance of being flexible as well as idealistic. He has by and large stuck to Klopp's dogma, but made subtle changes too. Like, repurposing Mohammed Salah to the centre-forward role (but on the right wing). He has lost a few yards, but sharpened his shooting skills even more. Trent Alexander Arnold is now the marauding orthodox full back rather than one who dropped into the midfield. Encouraged by the resurrection of Ryan Gravenberch, Liverpool progressed the ball through central channels.

As unwilling to budge has been

# SA win 7th successive Test, sweep series 2-0 over Pak



South Africa, having sealed qualification to this year's World Test Championship final, won the series against Pakistan on Monday. AP

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
CAPE TOWN, JANUARY 6

SOUTH AFRICA earned a seventh successive win after beating Pakistan by 10 wickets on day four of the second test at Newlands on Monday and swept the series 2-0.

Pakistan, which was forced to follow on after 194 in the first innings, fought hard to avert an innings defeat with only 10 batsmen after Saim Ayub was injured on the first day. It was bowled out for 478 in the last session, leaving South Africa only 58 runs to win.

David Bedingham and Aiden Markram knocked off the runs in just 7.1 overs to wrap up the series after their narrow two-wicket win at Centurion, also inside four days.

Since beating the West Indies by 40 runs at Providence last August, South Africa has achieved 2-0 series wins against Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan and qualified for its first World Test Championship final in June in London.

Ryan Rickelton's 259 in South Africa's decisive first innings total of 615 earned him the player of the match, but he didn't take the field on Monday because of a groin injury.

Pakistan's long resistance on the flat, dry pitch was largely based on a determined century from captain Shan Masood, who batted for just over six hours before falling for 145 to 18-year-old debutant Kwena Maphaka after lunch.

Pakistan started the day on 213-1 and nightwatchman Khurram Shahzad frustrated South Africa in the morning before Marco Jansen had him caught at point on

18. Jansen came close to also dismissing Kamran Ghulam without scoring in the same over but Bedingham missed an easy catch at first slip.

Ghulam hit four boundaries in a 28 but was undone by Kagiso Rabada off a delivery that just came back enough to hit the off stump as the batter attempted a loose drive and missed the line of the ball.

The Proteas took the new ball after lunch and struck twice in the next two overs.

Rabada found the outside edge of Saud Shakeel on 23 and the left-hander was caught in the slips, then South Africa got the big wicket of Masood. A successful lbw referral showed Maphaka's sharp delivery hit the Pakistan captain on the front pad.

Masood helped to narrow the deficit to 109 but Pakistan was five wickets down with only four wickets left.

Salman Ali Agha (48) and Mohammad Rizwan (41) survived close lbw reviews early in their innings before spinner Keshav Maharaj, who bowled long spells on Monday, dismissed both batters.

No. 9 batter Mir Hamza (16) smashed Rabada for a straight six before he was the last man out, top-edging the pacer, who finished with 3-115.

Maharaj (3-137) and Jansen (2-101) also helped as the South Africa had to grind out 122.1 overs.

Bedingham opened the batting for the Proteas in the absence of the injured Ricketton and hit an unbeaten 44 off 30 balls with four boundaries and two sixes.

**Brief Scores:** South Africa 615 & 61/0 (David Bedingham 47\*) beat Pakistan 194 & 478 (F/O) (Shan Masood 145, Babar Azam 81; Kagiso Rabada 3/115, Keshav Maharaj 3/137) by 10 wickets.

## NUMBER PLATE

**5** Arne Slot has replaced Liverpool legend Jurgen Klopp seamlessly as head coach. The team has been so dominant under the Dutchman that the draw against United on Sunday was only the fifth time they dropped points in a game all season.

**6** Midway through their season, Liverpool have confirmed themselves as title favourites with a six point lead over second-placed Arsenal with a game in hand.

Tottenham Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou. Come feast or famine, hell or high water, his teams spot a high defensive line, despite being burned repeatedly, even though most of his first-choice back four had been absent this season. Southampton's Russell Martin was similarly deluded by his expansive build-up before the club axed him. The Spurs manager would recently say: "I do not know what a Plan B or C is," he said. "If people want me to change my approach, it's not going to change. We are doing it for a reason."

The great idealist Guardiola too has not been averse to change, though not of a radical nature. He changes functions within functions of the player. Like John Stones in the treble-winning season operating as sweeper-playmakers, or Joao Cancelo functioning as a full-back or forward.

Another fitting example is Carlo Ancelotti. In his first year at Parma, he refused to buy Roberto Baggio because he didn't play with no 10s (but twin strikers). Baggio went to Bologna and netted 22 goals that season (1997-98). He picked the essence of coaching from that incident. "After that season, I was convinced that I should plan my style according to the strengths of my team," he once said. Two years later, he joined Juventus and moulded one of the best no 10s in the world, Zinedine Zidane. The challenge, thus, is not about tearing the temple, but adding more practical layers so that the soul doesn't rot. A manager can be a poet, but a few lessons of prose would not do harm.

prose would not do harm.

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