MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 18 PAGES

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VIKSIT BHARAT DIALOGUE

PM: Step out of

comfort zone,

time for India's

quantum jump

Says country on course to become a

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits an exhibition at the

Viksit Bharat Young Leaders

Dialogue in New Delhi on

National Youth Day, Prime

Minister Modi said the country

also hopes to host the Olympics

in the next decade and is working

"India is rapidly moving to-

wards becoming a \$5-five trillion

economy, which will greatly ex-

pand development and facilities,

he said. He projected that by the

end of the next decade, India wil

He said India has made rapid

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

surpass the \$10-trillion mark.

towards it with full dedication.

Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue in New Delhi. PTI

In docking trial bid,

to 3-metre distance,

puts out images

ISRO brings satellites

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

URGING THE youth to step out-

side their "comfort zone" while

underlining that this is the time

for a "quantum jump" to have a

developed nation by 2047, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi said

Sunday that India is rapidly mov-

ing towards a \$5-trillion econ-

omy and will surpass the \$10-

trillion mark by the end of the

Addressing a gathering at the

next decade.

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

\$10-tn economy by end of next decade



THE WORLD



SAUDI ARABIA URGES LIFTING OF SYRIA **SANCTIONS PAGE 14**

BJP announces NDA boycott of Assembly bypoll in Erode

ARUN JANARDHANAN CHENNAI, JANUARY 12

THE BJP-LED NDA has joined the AIADMK and the DMDK in announcing a boycott of the February 5 Erode East Assembly bypoll in Tamil Nadu.

State BJP president K Annamalai announced the NDA's decision late on Saturday night, referring to the bypoll as a "by-election for a by-election". This was a reference to allegations of malpractice during the 2022 bypoll held in the constituency.

"The coming 2026 Assembly polls are meant to remove the DMK from power. The NDA is moving towards that target and does not want to allow the DMK to confine people like cattle once again," Annamalai said, recalling that there were accusations at the time about the MK Stalin-led party "confining" people at des-

ignated places. "All the leaders of NDA who desire people's welfare, after detailed consultation, have decided to boycott the Erode East bypoll. Our target is to remove the DMK in the 2026 elections and give the NDA's good governance to people," Annamalai said, adding **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

RELATED REPORT PAGE 6



'Greatest challenge for innovation in India is cultural. Families want their children to be safe, not take risks'

CHINTAN VAISHNAV FORMER MISSION DIRECTOR, ATAL INNOVATION MISSION

PAGE 16

Association, where he advocated against corruption in the judici-

even leading to resignations. sought-after lawyers for corporate

cases he took up included Nestle's fight against the ban on Maggi noodles; the split of Amarchand Mangaldas, one of India's biggest law firms; the dispute between the Birla and Wadia families over real estate in Worli; and, the battle between Coca Cola and Pepsi over

their advertisements. He also advised Cyrus Mistry, who was married to his daughter Rohiga Chagla, in the highprofile legal battle against the Tata Group – Mistry died in 2022

1948-58, who went on to become India's Ambassador to the US and later UK High Commissioner, and a minister in Iawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet where he held the education portfolio — and later the exter-

nal affairs portfolio. Initially keen on journalism, Iqbal Chagla wanted a career in writing but studied law and was also called to the Bar at Grav's Inn. the professional association for barristers and judges in London. Having completed his Masters in History and Law from Cambridge University, Chagla returned after his mother passed away to prac-



Petal shower to chopper ride to holy dip, stage set for start of Maha Kumbh today

An estimated 45 crore people are expected to visit Prayagraj over next 45 days

MAULSHREE SETH

MAHA KUMBH 2025, expected to bring over 45 crore people to Prayagraj over a period of oneand-a-half months, will begin on Monday with the first snan, or holy bath.

Even before the Kumbh officially began, the Sangam — the meeting point of the rivers

Scrutinised by DPIIT

Top violations

Source: DPIIT records

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

ENFORCING the 2017 Make-In-

India order in government pro-

curement is easier said than done.

Public Procurement (Preference

to Make in India) Order prohibit

tenders that restrict or discrimi-

nate against domestic suppliers

either by specifying foreign

brands or setting eligibility con-

ditions around turnover or pro-

duction capability that may put

domestic firms at a disadvantage.

years, an estimated 40% of over

However, over the last three

Rules framed under the

AGGAM WALIA

Found non-compliant

Asking for specific brands

Restrictive turnover requirement

Asking for specific foreign certification

According to officials, around 50 lakh people took the holy bath at the Sangam in Prayagraj on Sunday.

The Uttar Pradesh government's Horticulture Department has made preparations to shower flower petals on pilgrims on all major snan days, starting Monday. Over 20 quintals of rose

2017 ORDER TO ENCOURAGE DOMESTIC SUPPLIES

Lifts to computers:

4 of 10 Govt tenders

can't comply with

Make in India rules

Depts say sometimes it makes more

economic sense; mandate doesn't

create supply response, says official

TENDERS FLOATED OVER LAST 3 YEARS

1,502

Provisions of the 2017 order not incorporated

No. of tenders

Value

₹1,74,145 cr

₹63,911 cr

No. of tenders

982

450

152

*As of November 2024

3,500 high-value tenders, which

accounts for Rs 64,000 crore,

floated by Government depart-

ments were flagged as "non-

compliant" with these rules by

the Department for Promotion

of Industry and Internal Trade

(DPIIT), the nodal agency for the

'Make in India' push, according

to records reviewed by *The*

medical supplies to desktop

computers, records show, de-

partments were turning to for-

eign brands arguing that these

made better economic — and

quality — sense than their

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

From lifts to CCTV cameras,

Indian Express.

Ganga, Yamuna and the mythipetals will be used for this purcal Saraswati — witnessed a pose and they will be showered Kumbh have come from across huge gathering of pilgrims. over an area of 4,000 hectares, the country and from different officials said.

The Tourism Department has

announced the start of a special helicopter ride from Monday onwards to witness the Kumbh. This will be priced at Rs 1,296. According to officials, all 13

Akharas that take part in the Kumbh have entered the Kumbh site with their processions.

Visitors to Prayagraj for the parts of the world. Among them was Laurene Powell Jobs, wife of

Apple co-founder Steve Jobs. Five major snan will start with the first one on Paush Purnima, which is Monday, followed by three rituals known as Shahi or Amrit Snan, which will take place on Makar Sankranti on Tuesday **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** **SNAPSHOTS: WHERE**

EXPLAINED

CULTURE

ALL ROADS LEAD

TO SANGAM PAGE 9

KUMBH ORIGIN, HISTORY, APPEAL

PAGE 16

After record high in 2023, footfall in mohalla clinics fell 28% last year

Stakeholders say drug shortage the primary reason; data shows clinics are far more popular among Delhi's women

ANKITA UPADHYAY NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

AFTER UNPRECEDENTED footfall in 2023 - 1.94 crore visits by the citizens of Delhi — the Capital's mohalla clinics saw a 28% dip in 2024 to 1.39 crore appointments, an application filed under the Right to Information Act and official documents sourced by The

Indian Express have revealed. The decline, health department officials, doctors and experts say, is primarily due to a drug shortage that the mohalla

clinics faced last year. Mohalla clinics, the centrepiece of the Aam Aadmi Party government's health infrastructure, were first set up in October

Your Right TO KNOW

AN EXPRESS RTI **APPLICATION**

2015. Since then, the clinics, which are meant to be the first point of contact for patients with basic illnesses, have caught the attention of many from across the world, including former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, who wrote a letter to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal praising the project.

The Capital has 546 mohalla clinics spread across 70 assembly constituencies. A senior official from the state health department

CONSULTATIONS

Year Male Female						
2019	15.14	20.53				
2020	12.65	15.22				
2021	11.89	14.76				
2022	52.37	68.35				
2023	85.86	108.65				
2024	2024 64.17 75.49					

said more than 60 per cent of doctors there are women, which provides a sense of comfort that **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Jaishankar to be at Trump inaugural, will meet incoming team members

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar will represent India at the January 20 inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump.

Announcing the visit, the Ministry of External Affairs on Sunday said, "On the invitation of the Trump-Vance inaugural committee, External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will represent the Government of India at the swearing-in ceremony of Looking at continuity

INDIA AND the US have invested in a strong bilateral relationship in the last two decades, and support has been largely bipartisan.

Delhi's moves are part of securing the continuity of bipartisan consensus with Trump 2.0. Jaishankar has repeatedly said India is not worried about Trump, the way others are.

President-elect Donald | Trump as the 47th President of the United States of America."

During the visit, the MEA said, "The External Affairs Minister will also have meetings with representatives of the incoming administration, as also some other dignitaries visiting the US on that occasion."

Jaishankar visited the US in the last week of December and met Mike Waltz, NSA-designate in the incoming Trump administration. The new administration has

maintained that strengthening CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 A photograph released by ISRO earlier on Sunday shows the SpaDeX satellites 'holding position at 15 metres'

ANONNA DUTT NEW DELHI. JANUARY 12

MOVING TO attempt docking in space, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) brought two SpaDeX satellites as close as 3 metres to each other Sunday morning. After completing the manoeuvre, the space agency moved the satellites away from each other.

"A trial attempt to reach up to 15 m and further to 3 m is done. Moving back spacecrafts

to safe distance," ISRO said in a statement. "The satellites will be brought back to the positions and the docking attempted only

after analysing the data." The satellites had been left at a distance of 230 metres from each other Saturday night. Early Sunday morning, ISRO brought the satellites closer — first to a distance of 105 metres between them. They were captured as tiny specks by the on-board video camera. The satellites were then brought to 15 metres of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

A legal luminary who raised voice against corruption in judiciary

SADAF MODAK MUMBAI, JANUARY 12

SENIOR ADVOCATE and one of India's leading lawyers Iqbal M Chagla, who passed away Sunday in Mumbai at the age of 85, was known as much for his legal acumen as for his tenure as President of Bombay Bar ary in the 1990s, with resolutions passed against six sitting judges,

Chagla was one of the most houses, too. Some of the famous

in a car accident. Born in 1939, Chagla was the son of M C Chagla, the first permanent Indian Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court from

tice in the Bombay High Court.



IQBAL M CHAGLA

1939 - 2025 epaper.indianexpress.com

At the age of 39, he was designated as a senior advocate, and was offered judgeship at least thrice. It is believed that he was one of the first candidates who was considered for appointment directly from the Bar as a judge of the Supreme Court. But Chagla refused — even though he would eventually have been elevated to the position of Chief Iustice of India. His son Riyaz Chagla is now a sitting judge of the Bombay High Court.

Iqbal Chagla led the Bombay Bar Association, one of the oldest in the country of practicing lawyers, for terms from 1990 to 1999. "He personally became a

petitioner in matters before the Supreme Court where the judges of various high courts were being transferred indiscriminately. In every major matter, I believe that he took correct and courageous decisions, never afraid of the powers that be or governments. That has been the true tradition and standard of the Bar. Igbal set that standard," said Rafique Dada, a former President of the Bar Association who had served as vice-president during a part of Chagla's tenure.

It was during Chagla's time as Bar President that the then Bombay High Court Chief Justice A M Bhattacharjee was forced to re-

sign on allegations of financial misconduct. Senior advocate Yusuf

Mucchala, who began his practice at the same time as Chagla in 1962, recalled the role played by the Association under Chagla in the riots cases. "When the Justice Srikrishna Commission was set up after the 1992-93 Bombay riots, he had taken the lead as president of the Association, having felt that it should help the Commission find the truth. The Association had filed affidavits on behalf of some of the victims. This stemmed from his personal belief to maintain the values of **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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NEWS EXPERIENCE Indian Express







MADHA GAJA RAJA MOVIE REVIEW: VISHAL, SANTHANAM POWER THIS SUNDAR C THROWBACK TO SIMPLER YET SUS TIMES

The laughs keep on coming, and it is a terrific mix of nostalgia and wistful thinking about the times that were that makes us throw our weights behind this film

TECH

FROM PAGE ONE



strides in the last 10 years and

the youth will not only drive the

greatest transformation in the

country's history but also be its

setting big goals and achieving

them, be it resolving to be open

defecation-free or providing

bank accounts to all Indians," he

take ownership of the Viksit

Bharat goal and assured them

that the ideas presented during

the dialogue would become part

encourages women patients to

According to RTI data, 2019

of the country's policies.

Modi said the youth must

"For any country to move for-

biggest beneficiaries.

OPPO'S 'SHARE WITH IPHONE' FEATURE

Is this the bridge that unites the Android world with iOS?

Time for India's quantum jump: PM

objectives.

"Achieving big goals is not

solely the responsibility of gov-

ernment machinery but re-

quires the collective effort of

every citizen," he said and high-

lighted the importance of delib-

eration, direction and owner-

ship in achieving national

through an economic crisis, but

it resolved to come out of it and

adopted the New Deal. There

was a time when Singapore was

in a bad state but with the right

leadership and discipline, they

became a developed nation and

a huge trade hub. We too dreamt

of independence. We struggled,

sacrificed, and achieved inde-

pendence from the British em-

Stakeholders say a drug

The key reason was non-pay-

shortage at the clinics is the pri-

• After record high in 2023, footfall in mohalla clinics fell 28% last year

"In the 1930s, the US went



FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

He said India is making rapid

strides as a space power, with

plans to establish a space station

by 2035. He noted the success of

Chandrayaan and the ongoing

preparations for Gaganyaan,

with the ultimate aim of landing

an Indian on the Moon. He em-

phasised that achieving such

goals will pave the way for a de-

pressed confidence that with a

large young population, India

will have a "golden period" over

the next 25 years. "I can imagine

a Viksit Bharat, one which is eco-

nomically, socially, and strategi-

cally strong. This is the moment

for India to take a quantum jump

The Prime Minister ex-

veloped India by 2047.

pire."

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and it will only happen by acting

rapidly, it can spend more on in-

frastructure, railways, roadways

and overall development, he

lion economy, significantly in-

creasing its capabilities. The cur-

rent infrastructure budget is over

11 lakh crore rupees, nearly six

times higher than a decade ago,

and more is being spent on rail-

ways alone than the entire infra-

structure budget of 2014," he

said. This increased budget, he

said, is evident in India's chang-

ing landscape, with Bharat

Mandapam being a beautiful ex-

"India is now nearly a \$4-tril-

As India's economy grows

upon our ideas."

said.

ample.

doctor.

EXPRESS Q AUDIO



Story of new India through its working class ft Neha Dixit

In today's episode of The Sandip Roy Show, we discuss Neha Dixit's latest book The Many Lives of Syeda X. Through her narrative, we talk about the story of a young, working-class Muslim woman, spanning from the early 1990s to present

In docking trial bid, ISRO brings satellites to 3-metre distance, puts out images

each other and the position held steady. Both the satellites were then clearly visible on the onboard cameras.

♦The Indian EXPRESS

Virat Kohli reclaims top position

in ICC Test Batting Rankings

"We are just 50 feet away for an exciting handshake," ISRO said. After this, the satellites were brought 3 metres from each other and then allowed to drift back to a safe distance.

ISRO had to postpone the docking plans on two earlier occasions — on January 7 and January 9 – because the satellites had not been able to achieve the required alignment.

"After the last manoeuvre, the satellites had drifted away, but they were safe. Now, we are re-attempting the entire process. There are certain fixed hold points, the satellites would be brought to these hold points again, before we attempt docking again," an ISRO official had said earlier.

Under the docking plan, the Chaser satellite is to be progressively brought closer to the Target satellite, holding positions at a distance of 5 km, 1.5 km, 500 m, 225 m, 15 m and 3 m, before joining together. All the hold points were accomplished Sunday.

Once the satellites dock, the space agency will also demonstrate the exchange of electrical power between them and give commands to the composite spacecraft as one.

in the world – after the United States, Russia and China – to have achieved this feat in space.

The SpaDeX mission is designed to demonstrate space docking, a process by which two fast-moving satellites or spacecraft are brought into the same orbit, brought closer together, aligned autonomously or manually, and finally joined. This capability is necessary for carrying out missions that require bigger payloads that a single launch cannot carry.

The first actual Indian mission requiring the docking capability is likely to be Chandrayaan-4, which is supposed to bring lunar samples back to Earth. The re-entry module of this mission, which will be designed to withstand the heat of re-entry to the Earth's atmosphere, is planned to be launched separately. The transfer module carrying samples from the Moon will come and dock with the re-entry module in the Earth's atmosphere.

quired for setting up the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. The first module is planned to be launched in 2028. It is supposed to have five modules, which are expected to be launched separately and brought together in space. A manned mission to the Moon, which will also require the capability, is not expected to happen before 2040.

A successful docking will make India the fourth country

ward, it is imperative to set big goals. Goals are our life blood, our tonic. We have seen over the last 10 years that we have been

Docking will also be re-

2019 [see box].

However, 2022 saw a surge – 52.36 lakh consultations by men and 68.34 lakh by women. This figure rose even further in 2023 – 85.85 lakh consultations by men and 1.08 crore by women. That trend changed in 2024, though, as mohalla clinics saw 64.17 lakh consultations by

Data accessed by *The Indian* mary factor. In September 2024, *Express* testifies to this — since The Indian Express reported 2019, the number of appointfrom three government hospiments by men has been 2.42 tals and six mohalla clinics in Southeast, East and West discrore, while for women, this figure is 3.02 crore. In fact, more tricts and found a shortage of eswomen have visited mohalla sential drugs — meant to be clinics every single year since available for free to patients —

saw 15.14 lakh consultations by ment of vendors and a change in men and 20.53 lakh by women, tender conditions, as a result of but the numbers dipped in 2020 which two-thirds of the compaand 2021, the Covid years. nies didn't participate in the tender process this financial year. To put the crisis in context, at the time of reporting, only Rs 5 crore had been spent to procure medicines from the essential drug list this year — a far cry from Rs 164 crore in the financial year 2023-24 and Rs 247 crore the previous

across the board.

While larger hospitals could navigate the crisis by procuring the drugs from local vendors, albeit at a higher cost, mohalla

Jaishankar to be at Trump inaugural, will meet incoming team members

clinics and smaller hospitals faced a more dire situation.

The silver lining

Health department officials say they remain optimistic that the dip in 2024 is a blip and the footfall will continue to increase. They also highlighted what they say is the clearest success of mohalla clinics – the overwhelming preference by women.

Doctors and health experts The Indian Express spoke to said women have been accessing five key health services – for diabetes, hypertension, hypothyroidism, pregnancy-related issues, and seasonal issues such as flu and cold. "Among elderly women, knee and generalised pain are two common issues," said a doctor, adding that women also visit for issues related to the menstrual cycle, post-MTP care, family planning

and counselling. "We provide hormonal tests and medicines and also run

anaemia programmes where we provide weekly iron and folic acid supplementation," said the

"The treatment, diagnosis and consultation are free, compared to private healthcare where the costs are high Mohalla clinics provide social security to women who often do not have the freedom to spend on themselves," said another

Explaining the post-pandemic surge in numbers, a senior official from the state health department said that in 2022, the Delhi government opened around 100 more mohalla clin-

"During the pandemic, we started conducting Covid tests as well, which brought more people from the vicinity, more importantly women.

Later, even immunisation programmes started at the clinics, including Covid vaccine, said the official.

Maha Kumbh starts today

(January 14), Mauni Amavasya on January 29, and Basant Panchami on February 3. Subsequently, the remaining major snan will be on Magh Purnima on February 12 and the last one will be on Maha Shiv Ratri, which is February 26.

NDRF, SDRF and PAC teams will be deployed on 700 flagged boats to ensure the safety of the devotees, along with the placing of remote life-saving buoys on a large scale, officials said.

Among the preparations made for the massive event by the Uttar Pradesh government is the roping in of experts from IIT Kanpur to provide cyber security and help with crowd control as well as traffic management. With the digital landscape

changing considerably in the 12 years since Maha Kumbh was last held, the state government is anticipating a bigger threat this time from social media rumours and online frauds.

The IIT has also established a control room with a mechanism to immediately alert the Kumbh Mela authorities and police about any social media posts that pose a potential threat to security or crowd management.

Moreover, as the government has declared this year's Maha Kumbh the "digital Kumbh" – at least nine different mobile applications have been launched to assist visitors and records regarding the deployment of police personnel have been digitised – it has also sought the help of the IIT to scan all these digital portals for any possible threat of hacking. The IIT has also been asked to screen all the sensors and scanners installed at the Kumbh sites.

There is also the fear of pilgrims falling prey to scammers who provide fake links for services related to these apps, and the IIT experts have been asked to help prevent this, too. IIT Kanpur director Manindra

Agrawal told The Indian Express, "At any such large event, if rumours start floating, it will have consequences. Considering the bigger role that social media plays today in comparison to the past, we have assisted in setting up mechanisms to track any such potential threats on social media Major social media platforms will be tracked for Maha Kumbh and Prayagraj-related posts or hashtags and immediate alerts will be given to mela authorities regarding suspected material for quick action on them."

According to sources, one of the main objectives is to prevent stampede-like situations that could arise due to the circulation of wrong information.

Agrawal said a control room has been established at IIT Kanpur, where experts will monitor social media and Kumbh-related apps launched by the government for potential frauds and hacking.

"We are also providing assistance with cyber security Considering that this year's is a 'Digital Kumbh', to prevent it from digital attack, there are people continuously working with system operations to ensure that the Kumbh's digital network does not fall pray to breakdowns and critical infor mation is not leaked," he said.

Officials said the IIT is also helping with traffic and crowd management by analysing data and scanning real-time footage available through CCTV cameras and drones to assist in decision-

Around 2,750 CCTV cameras have been installed and drones deployed at Kumbh Mela sites to

monitor the crowd movement.

• BJP announces NDA boycott of Assembly bypoll in Erode

that the state had been pushed to a "dark period" with no safety for various sections of society. The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), which is led by former Union Minister Anbumani Ramadoss, is among the NDA constituents in Tamil Nadu

On Saturday, the AIADMK also announced it was skipping the bypoll, citing the ruling party's alleged misuse of official machinery and money power in previous polls. "The DMK used muscle power to win the Erode bypoll in 2023. They will deploy the same tactics again, preventing peaceful voting," said AIADMK chief and former CM Edappadi K Palaniswami. The AIADMK's ally DMDK followed suit on Sunday morning. The DMK, which has fielded V C Chandrakumar in the bypoll, has dismissed the boycott as its rivals' admission of electoral

In early 2023, a bypoll was necessitated in Erode East following the sudden death of veteran leader **EVKS** Congress Elangovan's son Thirumagan Everaa. Thirumagan, a rising star in Tamil Nadu Congress and a direct descendant of social rebriefly served as MLA before he died of cardiac arrest. Elangovan a former Tamil Nadu Congress president, won the bypoll only to succumb to illness on December

Erode East, carved out as an independent constituency in 2008, has about 2.26 lakh registered voters, including 1.16 lakh women, 1.1 lakh men, and 23 transgender individuals. With a blend of urban and semi-urban populations, people there heavily depend on agriculture and textile industries. The seat has been historically favoured the two Dravidian majors, DMK and AIADMK, largely influenced by alliance dynamics. In 2021, Erode East was contested by the Tamil Maanila Congress, a junior partner in the AIADMK-led alliance.

For the leadership of the DMK, the bypoll contest was being seen as an informal barometer for public opinion ahead of the Assembly polls next year. However, with two of its major rivals deciding to not contest, the DMK will be expected to coast to victory even if the election is held.

-WITH PTI INPUTS

former Periyar E V Ramasamy,

a decline of 25.2 per cent and 30.5 per cent respectively compared to the previous year.

men and 75.48 lakh by women,

Indo-US ties has been a bipartisan commitment and enjoys support on both sides of the aisle. But Trump's return brings

challenges as well – he has spoken out against tariffs by the Indian government, even calling it the "tariff king" and "abuser of tariffs" in the past. So, the Indian side is expecting a tough challenge on the trade front, which has grown beyond USD 190 billion in 2023. The other challenge that

India expects is on the issue of illegal immigration, a political hot-button issue during the elections. In the last year, the Biden administration sent back about 1,100 people on flights who had entered the US illegally.

The Indian government maintains it does not support illegal immigration, and does not want the issue to cast a shadow on legal immigration. In recent weeks, there has been much debate over the H-1B visa issue as well, raised by far-right Republicans, and the Indian community has had to face the ire of the MAGA Republican base.

However, Trump has backed the H-1B programme, and acknowledged frequently using it for his own properties, calling it a "great programme". His ally and backer, Elon Musk, owner of Tesla, X and SpaceX, had waded into the debate on hiring H-1B visa-holders with many in the right wing opposing it.

Musk said he "will go to war" on the issue and asked rightwingers to "take a big step back".

The H-1B programme allows businesses in the US to employ

skilled foreign nationals. The Indian side maintains that Indian professionals contribute to the US economy as well, and the Indian American community is viewed as an influential, educated and wealthy "model minority" group in the

In the light of these issues, the Indian establishment has moved in early to engage with the incoming Trump administration. And Jaishankar's two back-to-back visits are testament to that effort.

Delhi believes that the growing assertiveness of China has been a strategic glue for India and the US, including under Trump 1.0, and expects that to continue in his second term as

Trump championed the Quad grouping by reviving it, and is expected to continue with it. The Biden administration has started the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, and Delhi hopes it will continue with

ply of lifts were specifying foreign

the Trump administration since Beijing is the biggest competitor on these critical and emerging technologies as well. During his visit in December,

Jaishankar was said to have met senior members of the Trump team – other than those of the outgoing Biden administration.

The Biden administration sent NSA Jake Sullivan to India last week on a wrap-up visit, and Delhi is counting on a sense of continuity in the next term with Trump in the Oval Office.

There is a possibility of Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting France for the Artificial Intelligence summit early February, for which French President Emmanuel Macron is also trying to bring Trump. If that works out, the two leaders will have their first opportunity for an in-person meeting on the sidelines of the AI summit.

must also be given fair and equal

opportunity to participate in the

Iqbal Chagla dies at 85

secularism; he was secular at heart, committed to the values of the Constitution," Mucchala

"Although he was an erudite lawyer, he wore it lightly. One of the reasons he was such a phenomenon was he was not only interested in law but also in art, literature, music and politics, which made him multi-faceted. If you entered court as a stranger to law, and if you had seen him argue — his physical stature, the grace with which he carried himself, the fluency of his language and the simplicity with which he explained a complex point — it would make you realise that you are in the presence of someone great," senior advocate Navroze Seervai said.

"I M Chagla's contributions to the legal field are immeasurable and his legacy will forever be remembered. His dedication, integrity and excellence has incountless spired legal professionals. The Bombay Bar Association mourns the loss of a true champion of human rights and protector of the rule of law,"

a statement by the Bombay Bar Association's secretary, Farhan Dubash, said.

In 2020, Chagla wrote a column for The Indian Express, in which he spoke about his tenure as president of the association. "In 1990, it fell upon myself to move resolutions against five sitting judges of the Bombay High Court, impugning their integrity and calling for their resignation. I was warned by friends that this constituted clear criminal contempt and under the extant law, justification was not a defence. My only raison d'etre was that one owed it to posterity not to sit idle even as the fountain of justice was polluted. The resolutions were

and two were denied any fur ther judicial work," he wrote. In its statement on Chagla the Bombay Bar Association said that "the funeral will be held at 10.30 am, on Monday 13th January 2025, at the Worli

Crematorium".

passed, albeit with much-

heated debate: One judge re-

signed, two were transferred

• Lifts to computers: 4 of 10 Govt tenders can't comply with Make in India rules

domestic counterparts. Many departments have also underlined that some foreign brands specified in their tenders have manufacturing operations in

In February 2023, DPIIT found that of the 1,750 high-value tenders - above Rs 1 crore for services, Rs 50 crore for goods, and Rs 100 crore for works – floated since October 2021 by Central government procuring entities, 936 tenders valued at Rs 53,355 crore were non-compliant with the

2017 rules. The DPIIT's analysis, presented to a Committee of Secretaries (CoS) chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, showed that when these "violations" were flagged to procuring entities and respective ministries, corrective action was taken in 180 tenders and "no re-

sponse" was received in 706 cases, records show. In 2020, the 2017 order was further tightened by introducing a

method of classification: as a norm, departments should only source from local suppliers with local content more than 50% if there is sufficient local capacity and competition; if not, then they can also source from suppliers with local content between 20-50%; suppliers whose local content is below 20% were classified as "non-local suppliers" and allowed only in exceptional cases, like a global tender.

By November last year, soon after the 10th anniversary of the flagship 'Make in India' initiative, the number of high-value tenders that didn't conform to the 2017 orderincreased to 1,502 out of 3,590 tenders scrutinised (42 per cent),

amounting to Rs 63,911 crore.

A total of 982 tenders (65 per cent) were found non-compliant for not incorporating provisions of the 2017 order; 450 tenders (30 per cent) for specifying foreign brands; and 152 (10 per cent) for having restrictive turnover requirements.

In 2019, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and DPIIT Secretary had instructed top bureaucrats across ministries to "advise their procuring agencies to desist from such practices," records show. The departments of Military

Affairs and Atomic Energy were yet to update their procurement policies to align with the 2017 order, DPIIT told a review committee in November 2024, records As of April 1, 2024, the

Department Telecommunications, along with the ministries of Electronics and Information Technology, Civil Aviation, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Textiles, and Steel, had not updated their procurement rules to incorporate the 2020 amendments to the 2017 order.

respond to requests for comment. In 2022, DPIIT compiled common tendering practices across ministries that it called restrictive and discriminatory toward local suppliers. For example, foreign brands

The DPIIT and the listed de-

partments and ministries did not

such as Cisco, NEC, Alcatel, and Siemens were being specified in tenders for telecom products; while HP, Dell, and Lenovo were being specified for IT products. Similarly, tenders for the sup-

brands like Otis, Kone, Mitsubishi, and Schindler. Even though these companies have manufacturing capacities in India, as noted by some procuring entities in meetings with DPIIT, specifying brand names in tender documents violates the 2017 order for being restrictive and discriminatory through exclusion of other do-

mestic brands. In 2019, the Container Corporation of India Ltd (Concor) justified limiting a bid for procurement of lifts from just three companies-Schindler, Otis, and Thyssenkrupp—as they needed to replace old lifts on "an urgent basis". Concor noted that these are "established brands and all have their manufacturing units in India". The clarification came af-

ter Gujarat-based Omega

Elevators filed a grievance against

the bid and "requested that they

"The main thing is, there has to be a supply response from the

tender," records show.

domestic suppliers. There may be some cases where errors have also been made. In other cases, foreign brands might be specified because they're the only ones which meet the technical requirement. A mandate doesn't create a supply response. It just raises costs and undermines the quality and functionality of things in some situations," a former senior official said on the condition of anonymity

At the CoS meeting in February 2023, the Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary said that the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) was facing issues in procuring quality madein-India lifts for its projects. At the meeting, the Finance

cific brand not only violated the 2017 order but also the government's General Financial Rules (GFRs), which oversee use of public finances. Then, the CoS directed ministries to "fix responsibility in case

Secretary also noted that viola-

tions like requirement of exces-

sive turnover or mentioning a spe-

of violation" of the order and "take stringent action against officers responsible for such violations". It also flagged "the inordinate delay in reporting action taken by procuring entities" on grievances received, which increased by over

four times from 556 in October

2019 to 2,190 in February 2023. Again, in April 2024, a review committee noted that only three ministries—Railways, Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Power—had been submitting monthly compliance reports to DPIIT since it made reporting mandatory in

August 2023. Until November, a total of 18 ministries and departments had not provided any action taken reports.

In 2021, AIIMS, Jodhpur had cancelled a tender that listed a suture brand trademarked by Johnson & Johnson in its technical specifications after Aurolab Trust in Madurai filed a grievance. The Health and Family

Welfare department also issued a show-cause notice to AIIMS, Jodhpur for having a restrictive turnover requirement of Rs 1000 crore for the supply of surgical sutures worth Rs 2 crore in a tender issued in February 2022. The Confederation of Indian

MSME in ESDM & IT also managed to get a tender for the supply of desktop computers floated by Balmer Lawrie and Company Ltd cancelled for making foreign certifications mandatory for local suppliers.

Leopard strays into Gurgaon residential society, rescued

SOPHIYA MATHEW NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

A MALE leopard strayed into a residential society in Gurgaon's Sohna area early Sunday morning, triggering panic among res-

The feline, aged around 5-6 years as per Forest Department officials, entered Anmol Ashiana Society, which is at the foothills of the Aravalli range.

According to police officers, a security guard on duty at the society first spotted the leopard in the basement parking around 2 am and immediately informed them.

Assistant Commissioner of Police, Gurgaon, Abhilaksh Joshi, said, "A police team stationed at Bhondsi reached the spot and informed officials concerned of the Wildlife Department. After a joint operation that lasted for several hours, the leopard was caught and released into the forest."

Station House Officer (SHO) Chander Bhan confirmed that it was a four- to five-hour joint rescue operation.

By the time officials reached the spot, the society's residents had trapped the leopard in the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), as per Wildlife Department of-

hind some sacks and material near a tank inside the STP. Our team strategically cut a smaller opening in the iron rod gate, allowing us to coax the leopard into a cage adjacent to it. By spraying water through pipes, we prompted the leopard to move into the cage. We were able to capture the leopard safely without using any tranquilisers." said Divisional Forest Officer Wildlife, Gurgaon, Ram Kumar Jangra. The forest official confirmed

"The leopard took cover be-

that the feline was healthy and could have wandered from the Aravallis in search of food and is likely to have entered the society by jumping a wall under construction.

The animal was later released in the forest range, around 20-25 km away, in the early morning hours.

Jangra added that the area at the foothills of the Aravalli forest was prone to such instances.

"We keep getting such complaints. Nowadays, it is increasing... it was only around 20 days ago that we rescued a leopard from a Haryana village. The leopard population is also increasing because of conservation efforts, it is common in these areas for them to enter farms and villages," he further



A forest official said the leopard was healthy and could have wandered from the Aravallis in search of food. Express

NOIDA LINK ROAD

Two dead as SUV crashes into divider, collides with two cars

HIMANSHU HARSH NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

TWO PERSONS died and one was injured when an SUV allegedly hit a divider and crashed into two vehicles on the opposite lane in the early hours of Sunday on the Noida Link Road, said police, adding that a hunt has been launched to trace the SUV driver who has been absconding since the accident.

"According to the complainant, Aakash Basisea, he was traveling from Noida to Delhi in his Maruti Baleno when a black Mahindra Bolero, coming from the opposite direction, rammed into a divider, and then hit his car before crashing into a taxi that had three people onboard," said Abhishek Dhania, Deputy



Cab driver **Arjun Singh** Solanki was killed in the accident.

Commissioner of Police (East Delhi). The incident was reported at around 1:14 am.

"The taxi driver, identified as Arjun Singh Solanki, and a female passenger, Suman Dhoopra, died on the spot while another passenger, Sanjeev Dhoopra (Suman's husband) was severely injured. The couple was rushed to Kailash Hospital in Sector 27 in Noida where Suman was declared dead," the DCP said, adding that Sanjeev

The SUV driver is absconding since the accident and a search has been launched to trace him, said police.

was unable to give a statement to police due to his injuries.

Dhania said that efforts are being made to trace and arrest the driver of the Mahindra Bolero who fled the scene fol-

lowing the crash. "Police have registered an FIR under sections 281, 106(1)(causing death by negligence) and 324(3) (loss or damage to property) of the BNS at Mayur Vihar Police Station based on Aakash's statement, and the investigation

added. The bodies of the deceased

is currently underway," he

have been sent to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital for postmortem.

Another police officer said that the deceased taxi driver was a native of Khurja in Uttar Pradesh and had been living in a rented accommodation in Dadri. Greater Noida.

He was the sole breadwinner of his family and is survived by his wife, and two children, aged 8 and 6 years.

The officer further said that Suman Dhoopra (63) and Sanjeev Dhoopra (67), a chartered accountant, were going to their home in Gurgaon from Noida when the accident happened.

The complaint, Aakash, works with a Noida-based firm..

Man killed in Audi hit and run: Accused held after 60-km chase

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

A DAY after an Audi allegedly jumped off a divider on Ring Road near the World Trade Centre and crashed into another car, killing a man (28), the absconding accused was arrested following a 60-km chase and an analysis of footage from 50 CCTV cameras, police said on Sunday.

Identified as Paras Pathaniya (25), a resident of Paschim Vihar, the accused immediately fled the spot after the Audi that he was allegedly driving crashed

into an Ertiga early on Saturday morning, said officials. He was living in Canada between 2018 and 2024 but he had shifted back to Delhi last year in April, they added.

The CCTV footage and other

available evidence were used to draw up a possible sequence of events, as per officials. Surendra Choudhary, Commissioner of Police (DCP) South West, underlined, "After analysing approximately 50 CCTV cameras, the team chalked out a route and arrested the accused following a chase of around 60 kilometres."

Date: 09.01.2025



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DENSE FOG TO PREVAIL FOR THREE DAYS, YELLOW ALERT SOUNDED

Day temperature dips after rainy weekend; GRAP III curbs revoked as AQI improves

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

DENSE FOG is set to prevail in Delhi till Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said as it sounded a yellow alert for the Capital. Even as the blanket of fog continues to affect rail, road, and air transport, rain over the weekend has resulted in a slight improvement in the air quality in the city — from an average AOI (air quality index) at 397 (categorised as "very poor") on Friday to 278 (poor) on Sunday.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the city on Sunday saw an improvement in air quality compared to the day before when the AQI was at 327. Citing the improving trend in the air quality, the



The maximum temperature settled at 17.3 degrees **Celsius on Sunday.** Amit Mehra

Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) revoked the anti-pollution curbs under Stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) with immediate effect on Sunday evening from

National Capital Region (NCR). Restrictions under GRAP III entail hybrid model of classes for up to Class V in schools, a ban on plying of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel vehicles, and a ban on all demolition works and mining activities. Meanwhile, a rainy weekend also brought down the daytime temperatures in the city. The nighttime temperatures,

however, remain higher than usual. The Safdariung observatory. which is representative of Delhi's weather, reported 2.2 mm of rainfall on Saturday. While there was no rain reported after 8.30 am, on Sunday, early morning light showers resulted in a drop in temperature — the maximum temperature settled at 17.3 degrees Celsius, around three notches below the season's normal.

The nighttime temperature

Celsius. On Monday, the day's high is expected to be 19 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal. The night temperature is likely to settle at 7 degrees Celsius. During the week, as per the weather office, both maximum

saw a slight increase of one degree

Celsius in 24 hours at 9 degrees

and minimum temperatures are likely to fall below normal, with the minimum expected to hover around 6 degrees Celsius and the maximum at 19 degrees. Sounding a yellow alert, the IMD has said smog or moderate

fog is likely at most places, with dense fog conditions at a few places in Delhi in the morning hours on Monday. Very dense fog conditions are expected on Tuesday and Wednesday.

On Wednesday, light rain is likely in evening or night hours.





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3 OF 10 NOW OPERATIONAL

Drone platform, CCTVs: Police get new anti-riot vehicle fleet

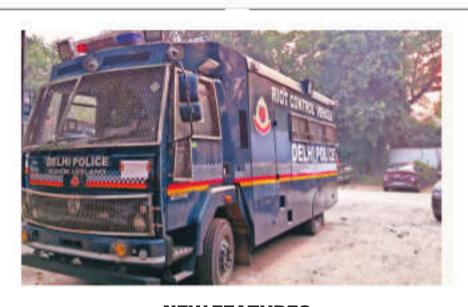
ALOK SINGH NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

A DRONE landing platform on the

roof, provisions for launching stun guns (tear gas shells), and CCTV surveillance to monitor events during emergencies: the Delhi Police has introduced a new fleet of anti-riot vehicles — also known as 'Vajra Vahan' — to handle large protests and riot situations more effectively, said officials.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Provisioning and Logistics) Vinit Kumar confirmed the induction of the modified anti-riot vehicles into the force.

The new vehicles are said to be designed to provide safety and security to personnel deployed in riot control. Unlike the older versions, an officer said, which had troops seated directly against window screens covered with iron mesh, the new vehicles offer more secure and comfortable seating arrangements with troops positioned centrally inside. "The sitting arrangement is such that they can also launch stunguns from inside comfortably if required," the officer said. These highly modified, air-conditioned vehicles are designed not only to protect the



NEW FEATURES

- **■** Drone platform ■ Can launch tear gas
- from inside
- **■360-degree MBSL** (Multi Barrel Shell Launcher) system
- Fog lights all around

troops inside during encounters on its rooftop. To increase the vis■ Top quality stainless

- Two-way mic system
- AC installed and
- summer and winter

but also to offer better control over riot situations, the officer added. These vehicles can maneuver into crowds and allow officers to launch tear gas shells through a 360-degree MBSL (Multi Barrel Shell Launcher) system installed

steel mesh on windows.

insulated water system for

■ First-aid facility

ibility during fog or smoke, the vehicles are also equipped with fog lamps, installed on all four sides. Each 'Vajra Vahan' can carry up

to 12 troops, with additional space for a driver and another person in the front cabin. "The vehicles have a drone landing platform on its rooftop and the officers can man-

age the machine while moving the vehicle from inside. There are the display screens inside to keep a tab on outside activities while maneuvering through the crowd," the officer said. The new vehicles also come equipped with an insulated water system, ensuring comfort for officers during both hot and cold weather. It also has stretchers and first aid boxes in-

A two-way microphone system has also been installed, allowing the driver to communicate with the troops inside the vehicle. The glass windows are said to be covered with a top quality stainless steel mesh, unlike the older ones that used iron mesh that was prone to rusting. Another senior police officer said the fleet of 'Vajra Vahans' has grown from 25 to 35 with the addition of these 10 newly modified vehicles. Three of these vehicles are now operational, which have been allocated to the Outer, Outer-North, and Shahdara districts.

"Seven of them are parked at the Provisioning and Logistics unit of Delhi Police Police at Rajpur Road in North district and they will be handed over to other districts soon," the officer added.

'Fascinated by the layers of history, diversity and things to see in Delhi'

Stewart Wheeler, former Deputy High Commissioner of

Canada. *Abhinav Saha*

in Delhi.

around on the weekends, and

Three things that stood out

The three things are hard to

nail down... but I kind of sum-

marised one thing that is con-

stantly intriguing about the city

is very calm and manicured. So,

it's surprising that when you get

out into traffic and drive around

the city, it's just bursting with

life... and you realize there's

amazing diversity and dy-

namism. You see people from all

walks of life. It's the energy of the

city. But at the same time also

seems like a sleepy city. For that

reason, it's kind of like a paradox

for me. I was also struck by the

Canadian connections. I think

everyone growing up in Canada

has Indian friends because the

Indian diaspora in Canada is

huge. I've travelled around the

world and you don't necessarily

see Canadian brands popping

out at you. But here, I think it was

the first week, I don't know how

many Tim Hortons coffee shops

I saw. There's one at the airport...

You go grocery shopping and the

French fries are McCain French

fries in the freezer. In the Metro,

The part that we live in here

— it's a little bit of a paradox.

during your stay?



STEWART WHEELER FORMER DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER, CANADA

NIRBHAY THAKUR NEW DELHI. JANUARY 12

'A TRIP to India or Delhi is not a one-time thing... you need to slow down and take in all the richness around you' — this was how Stewart Wheeler, who was former Deputy High Commissioner of Canada, described his home of nearly a year. Wheeler was expelled on October 14 last year over a diplomatic row between India and Canada. Currently, there is no Canadian envoy in India. Wheeler began his assign-

ment as Deputy High Commissioner for Canada in India (with concurrent accreditation to Nepal and Bhutan) in September 2023, after more than four years of service as Chief of Protocol of Canada. He has been an officer in Canada's Foreign Service for over 29 years, with postings in Washington, London, Bogota, and Kabul.

He received the Minister of Foreign Affairs Award for Foreign Policy Excellence and the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal, and earned the Operational Service Medal -South-West Asia Ribbon for his civilian service in Afghanistan in 2010-2011. Wheeler spoke to *The Indian*

Express last year in August as part of a series of interviews with Ambassadors about Delhi their home. Edited excerpts:

One place in Delhi that you love visiting?

That's a difficult question... because what I'm fascinated by in Delhi is the layers of history, diversity and things to see... It's a challenge to find... when I can go as peacefully as possible, in this city of millions, and visit some of the amazing historical places...

it's finding out what day of the the train coaches are made by week you can go and see the Bombardier, a Canadian comsunset at Humayun's Tomb or pany. It is nice to see Canadian Qutub Minar. I'm always envious brands that remind you at of my friends who put up pichome... tures of their travelling, going

seeing some of the ruins of old with you even when you palaces and forts. So, I have a very aren't in Delhi anymore? long bucket list of places to see

There are lots... day-to-day life ones and the event ones. We were curious about the

Encounters that will stay

idea that there is a wedding season in Delhi. We would hear music from weddings floating over the trees... or we're driving around and, all of a sudden, we see people marshalling the horses because they're doing a mountain horseback arrival of the groom...

Aside from the festivals and the wedding season, I would say some of my memories will be of events where I was really astonished by how Indians are interested and engaged in talking about ideas. I remember we hosted a film

festival and we presented a film, a co-production between Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta and Delhi filmmaker Sirat Taneja, a transgender woman. It's a kind of documentary that Deepa herself takes part in... it's a discussion of the challenges of a transgender woman's life in Delhi. Transgender people, whether they're in Delhi or they're Toronto, have a challenging time in life. But there was a full auditorium that wanted to hear them talk after the film. ... So I have snippets of

events... where it really re-

minded me that Indians don't just want to talk politics. Indians want to talk about life. They want to talk about Philosophy. They want to talk about art.

Is there anything that you will miss when you say

goodbye to the city? Well obviously, food. People, more than anything else... And I will miss the idea that on a Sunday morning, I could get up and go somewhere to learn about a fascinating snippet of history... see the bricks and mortar of a tomb or a palace or something of a civilisation that is still there and haunting the city... I think I'll miss the discussions and food-based encounters l have with friends here.

If you had to introduce Delhi to someone back home, what would you say?

I would say everything I've just said. I tend to get very excited about places I've lived in. So, it's a good question because I need to distill it into a oneminute version as I start going on and on and on. And people's eyes glaze over like 'no I only have two or three days in Delhi, I'm not going there for a lifetime'.

So, I would tell people that there is so much going on there are food festivals... monuments... People have to realise that a trip to India or Delhi is not a one-time thing. You need to slow down and take in all the richness around you... not be so rushed that they can't take an extra afternoon and go see something in Jaipur because a door opened and they found an amazing artisan working on old furniture or something and he wants to take them to where that furniture came from. You can't do that if you're on a tight schedule bus tour.

My advice is that you will have a hugely rich visit if you come to Delhi for three-four days and go to one or two other places.

If I could get a job later, for Incredible India as a part of the tourism campaign, I think I would gladly do that in my retirement.

www.indianexpress.com

FULL INTERVIEW ON

Two sisters fall to death from 4th floor of residential building, family seeks answers women, Chandini, left his home Upon returning home,

HIMANSHU HARSH GURGAON. JANUARY 12

TWO SISTERS, working as domestic helps in Gurgaon's Sector 40, were found dead on Friday with the police saying that the two had jumped from the fourth floor of a residential building. While the police are investigating the case as a suicide, having registered it under Section 194 (inquiry and report on suicide) of the BNSS, family members of the two women are still seeking Deepak Kumar Kushwaha,

the husband of one of the

CROSSWORD 5572

in Gurgaon's Sector 40 on Friday at around 9:30 am, heading to his job as a store helper at Grand Bazaar, just 500 meters away in Sector 40 HUDA Market. "I was out delivering an order

in Sector 45 when I received a call between 1 and 1:30 pm from a resident of the building. She told me that my wife was nowhere to be found and asked me to come home quickly," Deepak said. Chandini, 21, worked as a domestic help on the second and fourth floors of the residential building, and the couple lived in the parking area of the building.

Deepak, 23, couldn't find his wife. He began searching for her, checking both the second and fourth floors. He called his brother-in-law,

Punit Kumar, to see if he had any information. "Punit told me he didn't know.

My sister-in-law, Rashmi, worked as a domestic help too. She would visit my wife every day with her 2.5-year-old daughter after finishing her morning shift to spend time together," Deepak explained.

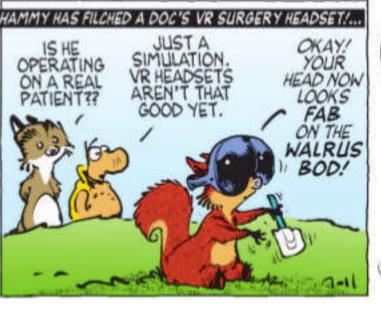
When Punit couldn't give an answer, Deepak returned to the parking area. "That's when I unconscious under the shade at the back of the parking lot," he said. Lalit Kumar, SHO Sector 40

found them (the two women)

(Gurgaon), said, "We are investigating the case from all angles... The post-mortem of the bodies has been done but the reports are pending. We will have a clearer picture once the reports come in."

Kushwaha said he and Chandni had plans to leave for Jhansi on Sunday. "We had booked a ticket to Jhansi today (January 12) to meet her aunt... why would she steal or die by suicide?" Deepak questioned.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis







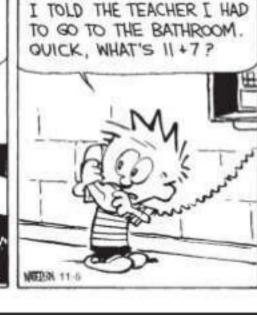
CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson







ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



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. But to have a ___, and to be ___ under any and all trials, is the mark of a man! - Charles

Solutions Crossword 5571 Across: 1 Pointed, 5 Hosea, 8 Thought it over, 9 Heart,

10 Spheric, 11 Aligns, 12 Adrift, 15 Dungeon, 17 Gales, 19 Measured tread, 20 Nudge,

21 Turns in Down: 1 Pitch, 2 Isolation ward, 3 Tighten, 4 Detest, 5 Hitch, 6 Severe

illness, 7 Apricot, 11 Abdomen, 13 Dog Star, 14 Intent, 16 Etude, 18 Sedan

DOWN

surrender (6)

active (7)

2 Common stock (5)

5 Be best man? (5)

with speed (7)

rearranged(7)

initially (6)

1 Withdraw a direction to

3 Mount that is dangerous when

6 Chemical container sent up

8 Rule to which there can be no

7 Pin inserted into a joint

14 Hackneyed tour now

15 A burden upon the spirit

16 One taps a cask with it

17 Turn up at ten on the dot

19 One of an opening pair

21 Doctor with practice on

computer accessory (5)

Eastman (6,.,4) **BDEER**

ACROSS

1 Disgraceful complaint

9 Short rhyme upheld by Colet

13 Rose - taken from the garden? exception (6,5)

10 Smart girl that is after a

share of the proceeds (5)

11 A mouthful of water

12 As enjoyed by a sick

18 Vessel avoided by poor

20 Worker encountered me

22 Developed in the wrong

23 Be keen then disgruntled

coming back first (5)

by employment (7)

proposition?(6)

24 Not a tough business

25 Hold out longer? (6)

celebrity? (3,4)

(3,3,2,3)

way(5)

sailors?(7)

4 A real sport (6)

ACEMNU DFIRT EOORDF

man! - Charles Eastman Answer: But to have a **triend**, and to be **true** under any and all trials, is the mark of a Solution: BREED, DRIFT, ACUMEN, ROOFED

Difficulty Level 5s 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 SUDOKU rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

7			4		6		8	
				2		9		5
	2	4			5			1
	7		2	9			6	3
	8	3				1	2	
2	9			3	8		5	
5			8			4	1	
9		7		6				
	6		3		4			7

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5833 9 6 3 6 2 4

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Overall, this is not

a week for clear thinking. However, neither is it a time to let your imagination run riot. The planetary picture can be rather argumentative, but only if you allow trivial events to provoke you. Stick to your principles and the results could be very constructive.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) You will gain from discussing all your

long-term hopes and wishes with as many people as possible. This is hardly the moment to dig your heels in and resist the inevitable. If you do insist in keeping things exactly as they are, then it could hit you in the pocket.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) You're coming to the end of a brief cycle which has

brought a surge in your personal ambitions and welcome professional developments. There'll be one last emotional push at the end of the week, and you'll have the confidence to forge your own path whether partners support you or not.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) No matter how

misjudged you feel, think twice before you settle any old scores. This is one of those weeks when a chance remark could start a full-scale war. The fact is that someone close to you is under incredible pressure, and they need your help and understanding.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

A great deal has happened in the past which has caused you grief — in that you're not unusual.

However, unless you decide to wipe the slate clean now, some adverse planetary aspects this week may stir up a number of continuing dramas.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

What a perplexing time this is. However, planetary movements over the next few days bring welcome

changes. Friends and partners who have been out of sorts will regain their composure. But you may also have to patch up a partner's emotional bruises.

BY PETER VIDAL

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) You may now need

not expend so much energy keeping up a front. In addition, relations with children now seem to be more important. Younger family members will show you the way to enjoy yourself, so don't stand on ceremony.

to spend more time

on your own and

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Your personal stars are under a little pressure, which is why you may need to dispose of some unwanted emotional baggage this week. Today's lunar position emphasises meetings and unusual discussions, anything

your work and daily routine. SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Your imagination

which can ease the path of

may lead you a merry old dance, and feelings like resentment, jealousy, anger and the desire for revenge are lurking. However, first you should make a fair and reasonable assessment of the situation. Let the facts speak for themselves.

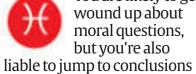
CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) Seldom have your stars looked more

passionate - at least not for a month or so! Such feelings will of course have intense repercussions for your romantic affairs, but will also influence other areas of your life. Adopt a bold and colourful approach.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19) You are much stronger than you think, and even apparently

disastrous developments will turn out in your favour. You must pay special attention to partners who are swept away by feelings they can't understand - and don't tangle with authority, either.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) You are likely to get



and misunderstand what is really going on. Say your piece, but be a good listener. If partners know that you're giving them your attention, they'll respond in kind.



KEJRIWAL CHALLENGES SHAH

'Won't contest if BJP gives homes to slum residents'



Arvind Kejriwal and Satyendar Jain at Shakurbasti. Amit Mehra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. JANUARY 12

ISSUING A challenge to Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal said he won't contest the Delhi polls if the BIP withdraws cases related to slum demolitions and gives an undertaking in court that all displaced people would be rehabilitated on land they have been evicted from within 24 hours.

His statement comes a day after the BIP leader, addressing a 'Jhuggi Basti Pradhan Sammelan', called upon slum dwellers "to liberate Dilli from this aapda."

Standing outside the Railway Jhuggi Camp in the Shakur Basti constituency with MLA and exminister Satyendar Jain, Kejriwal called himself the "protector of slums and slum residents" and said the BIP remembers slumdwellers only during elections.

"We saw recently how BJP

leaders spend a night in different slums. Why didn't you come here... 10 years ago? All this jhuggi tourism is nothing but drama to get votes. The BJP is a party of rich people. They think those in jhuggis as keeda makoda (insects). Do you think they are spending time here because they love jhuggi residents? No, they are showing love because they want votes from you," he said.

Attacking Shah, Kejriwal said, "At an event yesterday, Shah called people from several jhuggis and abused me. The BJP says jahan jhuggi wahan makan. We also believe in this scheme. But jahan jhuggi wahan kiska makan? Jhuggi walon ke liye? Nahi. Jahan jhuggi wahan inke dost ka makan, builders ka makan. (But whose land? Its their friend's land, the builder's land). Everyone knows who they are."

"Withdraw all cases filed against the people of jhuggis, and submit an affidavit in court that you will give houses to all those people on the same land where they lived earlier... I will not contest the elections. I give you this challenge, accept it.

Otherwise, Kejriwal will not go anywhere, but will fight the elections, win and stand for the slum people like a shield and will not let you demolish their houses," he said.

The AAP convenor further said the BJP would prioritise land over slum-dwellers after the polls, citing how the L-G changed land use of the Shakur Basti slum area to facilitate demolitions on December 27 last year.

He also accused the Railways of floating a tender to demolish the railway camp slum last September. "At this railway camp, people think they will get a house under the 'Jahan Jhuggi Wahan Makan' scheme, while the BJP already had a detailed plan to clear this area three months ago. If you make them win, they will make you homeless in no less than two months," Kejriwal warned. Hitting out Kejriwal later in

the day, L-G V K Saxena called his statement a complete lie. Citing the DDA meeting of December 27 last year, he said, "The DDA has neither changed the land use of this colony nor given any eviction or demolition notice. Kejriwal is deliberately telling a blatant lie and misleading the people..."

Hitting back at AAP, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said in the past 10 years, Kejriwal allowed 50,000 flats built under the Rajiv Awas Yojana in areas like Narela to turn into ruin without allotting even one flat to any slum dweller, has done nothing to transform slum clusters into model settlements or improve the living standards of residents.

"The last 10 years bear witness to the fact that Kejriwal can only provoke people but can't improve their lives. You have been in power for over a decade. Please explain what your government, DUSIB, or any other department has done for the better rehabilitation of slum dwellers...," said Sachdeva.

The BJP also promised that every homeless person in Delhi will get a house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

At 10% of city's electorate, why slum dwellers will be a crucial factor in Assembly elections

GAYATHRI MANI

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

THE ALMOST 3 lakh households in Delhi's 675 slums and 1,700 JJ clusters make up almost 10% of the electorate and, as a result of their sheer size, form one of the most crucial vote banks in the Capital. As the February 5 Assembly polls draw near, these areas have dominated the discourse, with all three major parties vying to bring residents of these places over to their side.

The AAP is making efforts to keep slum dwellers, seen to be its core voter base, on its side while BJP is hoping to make a dent and make gains in what is not considered to be its traditional support base. Congress, on the other hand, is looking to regain its support in these areas, which it believes has drifted towards AAP in the last 10 years.

While AAP has targeted the BJP over demolitions in slums in Tughlakabad, Sundar Nagri, Okhla, and other places ahead of the G20 Summit in 2023, the BJP launched the "Jhuggi Vistarak Yojana" just after it won all seven seats of Delhi in last year's Lok

DECODE

POLITICS

At the Railway Jhuggi Camp in Shakurbasti. Amit Mehra

Sabha polls.

Congress, which is looking to open its account, is conducting a doorto-door survey in slums to focus on all sections of the electorate. Leader of the

Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, will kickstart the party's campaign on Monday with a "Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan" rally in Zero Pushta of Seelampur, which houses slums and an unauthorised colony.

On Sunday, AAP chief Arvind

Kejriwal continued his party's attempts to keep this key voter base intact and said he would not contest the polls if Union Home

Minister Amit Shah

signed an affidavit promising houses to slum dwellers and withdrew cases against them. He was speaking at Shakur Basti.

A senior AAP leader admitted that "increased anti-incumbency" may lead to a changed scenario, adding that the party was going all-out to tell slum dwellers about

the benefits of voting again for it and its welfare schemes.

According to Delhi government data, the New Delhi Assembly constituency has around 67,000 households in slum areas while the West Delhi constituency has the lowest, with around 22,000 households. Slums in Delhi are inhabited mostly by migrants who hail from UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, and comprise people from across communities. They form a significant chunk of beneficiaries of AAP's welfare schemes.

BJP's game plan

The BIP's efforts are visible too as its top leadership, including PM Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, repeatedly referred to slum dwellers in their addresses. Earlier this month, Modi inaugurated houses for slum-dwellers under the BIP's "Jaha jhuggi, Wahan Makan" campaign, while the Union Home Minister addressed a public meeting in an unauthorised colony Saturday. The party has stepped up its efforts in the slums, with party leaders, workers, and 250 vistaraks working at the booth level and interacting with locals.

BJP's Jhuggi "Vistarak

general secretary Vishnu Mittal explained why parties were going all out to reach out to slum dwellers. "There are around 15 lakh voters in slums of Delhi, of which around 9-10 lakh cast their vote. Of this around 7 lakh people

Abhiyan" in-charge and Delhi BJP

vote for the AAP while the BIP gets 2 lakh votes. The remaining vote for the Congress and other parties... Even if we can sway another 4-5 lakh of these votes in our favour, it will be a game-changer." Mittal said the BJP came up with the scheme after conducting extensive surveys and interacting with people to "gain their trust".

"We also realised a large number of slum-dwellers are unaware of the Centre's schemes. But we are making them aware of how the BIP has successfully implemented cash-for-women schemes in other states while the AAP has failed to do it in Punjab," he said, adding that while slum-dwellers had been voting for AAP due to free amenities, only a few were receiving them now.

A BJP leader admitted the party had not managed to connect with slum dwellers so far and this time adopted a "humanitarian" approach.

Atishi kicks off crowdfunding campaign

BALLOTIN

New Delhi: Chief Minister and AAP's Kalkaji candidate Atishi Sunday launched a crowdfunding campaign to contest the Assembly polls. At a press conference, she said, "Raising Rs 40 lakh through improper means would have been easy for a sitting Chief Minister, but our principles do not allow it. Had we compromised, we could never have achieved the transformation of government schools and hospitals, or ensured free healthcare." **ENS**

AAP spreading misinformation, no claim over any post: Bidhuri

New Delhi: BJP's Kalkaji

candidate Ramesh Bidhuri Sunday said he was not the party's chief ministerial face and the claim made by AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal was "completely baseless." Kejriwal, citing sources Saturday, claimed BIP had decided to project Bidhuri as its chief ministerial candidate. The same claim had been made by Delhi CM Atishi Friday. Bidhuri said he is a loyal party worker, committed to public service and the country, and has no claim over any post. "I am as much committed towards the people, as I am towards BJP. Talking about the post of chief minister in reference to me is absolutely

AAP MLA's 'links' to illegal immigrants: BJP's Irani targets CM

baseless," he said. PTI

New Delhi: The BJP Sunday hit out at AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, questioning his "silence" over the alleged links of his party MLA Mohinder Goyal to a syndicate facilitating Aadhaar and voter ID cards to illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Delhi. Addressing a press conference, BIP leader Smriti Irani claimed the probe agency had found signatures and seals of AAP MLAs Mohinder Goyal and Jai Bhagwan on Aadhaar update forms for 26 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in the city. Hitting back, AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar alleged it was Amit Shah's failure that Rohingya settled across Gujarat, UP, Haryana, and the rest of the

country. PTI

'Ek baar Congress ko mauka dijiye': Dropped from Karawal Alka Lamba at Kalkaji campaign

DEVANSH MITTAL NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

THE CHILDREN are having a blast, dancing to the beats of a loud drum. A small crowd of women gathers around them — and more are being called — at the open ground in Gandhi Camp, Sriniwaspuri, which serves multiple purposes as a parking lot, a space for dumping garbage, and a playground with a trampoline. Those in charge of gathering

the crowd are aware it is too small for the 'guest' who's arriving soon. Nevertheless, they request women standing on the street to join them while shouting into their phones: "Jaldi aa jao 20-25 auraton ko lekar (Come quickly with 20-25 women)."

The crowd is waiting for Alka Lamba, the 49-year-old fielded by the Congress to contest from Southeast Delhi's Kalkaji constituency. She is facing off against sitting AAP MLA and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and former BIP South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri. As news arrives that Lamba,

who is supposed to undertake a door-to-door campaign on Sunday, is nearby, there is some confusion amongst her supporters about whether there are enough garlands to welcome her. When she finally does reach the spot, she wastes no time in formalities. She knows she has a tough task ahead of her today: introduce herself to



Alka Lamba at Gandhi Camp, Sriniwaspuri. Express

potential voters. "My name is Alka Lamba and my leader is Rahul Gandhi ji, who has sent me here to serve you," she says. As she walks over a half-built

road and pipelines that supply water to houses — both of which were laid in the past week say residents — she asks the people to give the Congress a chance again. "Ek baar Congress ko mauka dijiye (Just give one chance to the Congress party again)," she says. "Ek baar lauto Congress ke saath (Return to Congress once more)."

The party has been in the political wilderness for over a decade in Delhi, drawing a blank in the last two elections in 2015 and 2020. Kalkaji too was once a Congress stronghold, sending a representative to the Delhi Assembly from 1998 to 2013. The party got just 12.72% votes from

the seat in 2015 and 4.64% in 2020. At the ground, Lamba climbs atop a chair and starts speaking. The small crowd gathered around comprises women and children; the few men listening are curious passersby. Lamba's focus remains on the women. Rallying against the AAP — her primary point of attack—she says: "If they wanted to give Rs 2,100 to you every month (under Mahila Samman Yojana), why didn't they do it until now?"

Her BJP rival finds mention only in the context of his controversial remarks comparing roads to Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks. Lamba then reminds the

gathering that young people will be given Rs 8,500 every month the Congress's latest poll promise called Yuva Udaan Yojana till thev get a job and that women will get Rs 2,500 (under its Pyari Didi Yojana) to fight rising prices if the Congress forms a government in the Capital.

"Today, there is no treatment for poisonous air and disease. People are just going to government hospitals and coming back without treatment. The Congress has promised that as soon as we form a government, we will give Rs 25 lakh health insurance for

everyone," she says. "5 tarik, panje ka nishaan, 5 saal ke live, 5 muddo par, Congress aap *se vote maang rahi hai* (Congress is seeking votes on five issues; on February 5, press the hand symbol for five years)," she says.

Nagar, BJP MLA Mohan Bisht back in the running Sources said Bisht was replaced in Karawal Nagar based

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

AFTER A day of protests and demonstrations outside its party office at Pandit Pant Marg, the BJP Sunday announced that sitting Karawal Nagar MLA Mohan Singh Bisht will contest the upcoming Assembly polls from Mustafabad.

Bisht was replaced by former AAP MLA and minister Kapil Mishra in Karawal Nagar, a constituency he has won five times - in 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, and 2020. He was defeated by Mishra, who was then in the AAP, in 2015.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Bisht said, "The party's leadership kindly acknowledged that I am the most senior MLA that it has in Delhi... I was the MLA of Mustafabad from 1998 to 2008 when the Karawal Nagar constituency was formed. The people have come out on the streets in support of me (after the announcement of his name)... I'm sure this seat will be the first among those the BJP will win."

After the BJP's second list on Saturday, which saw some major changes, those who have been denied a ticket protested. Bisht was then convinced by its national state leadership that his being accommodated on subsequent lists was "a matter of time", according to a senior leader.

on party surveys, which exhibited Mishra's "hold on the substantial Purvanchali population". making him a better choice. "On the other hand, more than

60% of the Mustafabad seat, including its significant Pahadi population, was part of the Karawal Nagar Assembly before delimitation in 2008; Mohan ji is still immensely popular in those areas," a senior Delhi BJP leader said. "He was reassured that he is

one of the tallest leaders that the party has in the city and it will throw its weight behind him in Mustafabad as much as it will do so for Mishra in Karawal Nagar, after which he (Bisht) is said to have agreed to follow whatever responsibility the party would hand him," another leader said. A group of protesters from

Tughlakabad in South Delhi also held a dharna at the gate of the Delhi BJP office. While the party fielded Rohtas Bidhuri from the seat, former South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri's relative Vikram Bidhuri was denied a ticket. He had lost to AAP's Sahi Ram Pehelwan in the 2020 polls.

A similar protest was also held by some party workers outside the Delhi BJP office against Mehrauli candidate Gaiaindar Yadav.

(INPUTS FROM PTI)

GROUND REPORT

At city's mohalla clinics, staff complain but patients maintain faith in AAP

ANKITA UPADHYAY NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

A FEW kilometres away from the commercial hub of Rani Bagh, hundreds of shacks made out of haphazardly arranged bamboo sticks and covered with plastic sheets form a jhuggi jhopdi cluster. This is home to around 8,000 safai karamcharis, truck drivers, porters and their families. A wide road pierces through the IJ colony. This stretch, paved in the past, is now pockmarked with potholes and each time a truck zooms pass, a cloud of dust emerges, momen-

The mohalla clinic that is situated at the entrance of this II colony stands out. Two rooms built inside a porta cabin is the only access to health care for these low-wage workers and their families. Five patients — three middleaged men, a woman donning a woollen cap and holding the hand of a little boy — are standing in a queue before the pharmacist's desk. They need medicine that is distributed free in these Delhi government clinics. The pharmacist, however, is on leave and the lone doctor who manages this clinic is doubling as a pharmacist too.

tarily turning the shacks invisible.

"I've already seen these patients. One of them complains of stomach ache... another dizziness... cold also," the doctor says.

A round-faced bulky spectacled man with an already receded hairline, the doctor isn't happy at all. "I've prescribed medicine to them but most of it isn't available. Out of the 160 essential medicines, we have only 60," he says. "For example, we've been

short of Telma 40 and Metformin. Patients take whatever we give them and go home." 'Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics'

has been the flagship scheme of the AAP with more than 500 such clinics running across the Capital. The first clinic was set up by the AAP government in

Peeragarhi, Shakurbasti constituency, on July 19, 2015. Satyendar Jain, the area MLA, was the AAP government's first Health Minister before he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in May 2022. The constituency had sent Jain

to the Delhi Assembly in the last three elections. In the 2020 polls, he won the seat with 51,165 votes and defeated BJP's S C Vats who got 43,573 votes. The constituency has 1.47 lakh people registered in the electors list including 75,620 male voters, 71,792 female voters and 5 third gender voters.

Back at the IJ colony clinic, the doctor says, "Shuruat badhiya hui thi par ab cheezein gadbad ho gayi hai (The beginning (of these clinics) was excellent but now things are not in place anymore)."

"I know what happened. The never-ending fight between the L-G and CM ruined this scheme... It is only because of these fights that mohalla clinics are in such bad shape... there is no medicine and whatever medicine is given to us also is never sent on time."

He says that the situation became "especially difficult after (the then CM) Arvind Kejriwal and Jain were sent to jail". The doctor also talks about

another "burden" for the staff at these clinics. "There is a lot of unnecessary paperwork for them. The AAP government is very jittery after the allegations of corruption made by the L-G last year.

"They (staff) have to update all the data in the tablet first, then manually in the register and also provide patients with prescription papers. It makes no sense," he complains. "It's sad that mohalla clinics were the favourite project of the AAP government but they failed to take care of the people working in these clinics".

The doctor and the two other staff members are critical of the AAP for a different reason though. "Their only purpose seems to lure voters through such schemes like free bus rides for women, Mahila Samman Yojana and distribution of free medicine. "They (AAP) know this will ensure they remain in power," the multi-task worker

says. The doctor and nurse agree.







Who should form the next government in Delhi? Surprisingly, all three officials of the clinic wish Kejriwal to be Chief Minister while they insist (Narendra) Modi in a complaining tone. remain Prime Minister. "That will be good for Delhi. The BJP does not have a face to represent. We don't

the nursing staff. A patient, who later identified himself as Lal Yadav, a cleaner at a transport company nearby, joins the conversation. "How can AAP

know who will be the CM," says

work? BJP put Kejriwal and Jain behind bars.... one was Chief Minister, another Health Minister... who will manage things," he says

Yadav, 50, lives across the road from the Clinic. He has suffered from diabetes for the last 10 years and is a regular at the clinic.

Outside, AAP seems to have maintained its hold on the electorate in the JJ colony. The alleged corruption charges against Kejriwal and Jain like the excise





Patients waiting outside mohalla clinics in the city; (left) the clinic in Shakur Basti. There are more than 500 such clinics running **across the Capital.** *Express*

policy case or the 'Sheesh Mahal' controversy don't seem to have made a dent on its support base.

"Corruption to sab karte hain par kejriwal free me dawai deta hai (Everybody is involved in corruption but Kejriwal gives us free medicine also)," Yadav explains.

He says he wishes the next AAP government will build them homes. "I've been living in this jhuggi for more than 20 years now. Both BJP and AAP governments gave the slogan 'Jahan

Jhuggi Wahan Makaan (A house will replace a jhuggi)' but instead they have only demolished jhuggis and not built houses here".

Ravindra Jadhav, 40, another JJ Colony resident says many among his neighbours have registered their wives for a new scheme – Mahila Samman Yojana. "If AAP comes back to power, this scheme will help people like me a lot. Every woman will get Rs 2,100 monthly," he says. He also insists he simultaneously supports Kejriwal and Modi. "Modi ji apni jagah theek hain or Kejriwal ji apni jagah," he says.

This simultaneous admiration for Kejriwal and Modi, which transcends party politics and electoral rivalry, is a common thread running across most of the jhuggis in Shakur Basti.

Four kilometres away, the mohalla clinic in the bustling Rani Bagh market caters to the residential blocks of Rani Bagh.

Manjeet Kaur, a 60-year-old housewife, is standing in a queue. "There is no doubt Kejriwal has done a lot. I can get any bus ride for free. We don't have to pay electricity bills. We get free medicine also," she says. "But they (AAP)

must work on cleanliness now." Kaur had come to fetch Telma 20 for her high blood pressure but didn't find it. "At least I got medicine for my granddaughter. She has had a cold," Kaur says.

Maniu Sharma, 62, has come for medicine for a cold. She says she's always supported Keiriwal in the Assembly polls. "CM toh ye hi theek hai. Ye janta ko jaante hain. Wo pradhan mantri hi theek hai kyuki BIP kuch muft nahi de rahi hai. ((Kejriwal) is good as CM. He knows the people here. (Modi) is good as PM because BJP doesn't give anything free)," he says.

The mohalla clinic in Peeragarhi — a mere 7 km away however is locked as the only two staff members, a nurse and pharmacist, leave for home for the day. It is around 1 pm. Outside the clinic, three women and a man are sitting on chairs. The population of this jhuggi

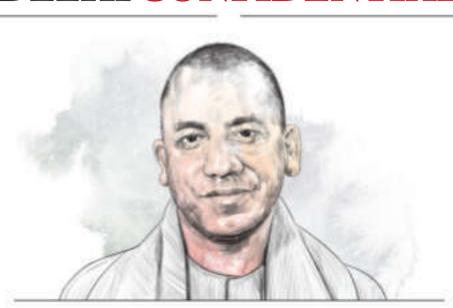
mostly comprises migrants from Puniab, who came here after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Residents have several complaints especially regarding the defunct drainage system. "The drainage is under MCD and they are not doing anything," says Mukesh, 35. He runs a fast food stall in the area. "This entire area is always flooded with sewage water. It is now entering inside homes too".

Despite complaints against the government, they say AAP has fared well. "Ek cheez ki wajah se hum issue nahi banayenge. Kaam toh achha kar hi rahey hain vo," (We will not make an issue out of one thing. They are doing good work," Mukesh says.

GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



'LOCAL' FACE

THE BIP in Uttarakhand has invited Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as a star campaigner for the ongoing urban local body polls. While these polls are generally contested on local issues, the BJP has justified the invitation by calling Adityanath a "mool niwasi (original resident)" of the state. A confirmation from the chief minister's office is awaited. The Uttarakhand BJP wants him to hold rallies in Haldwani, Roorkee and Rishikesh. Sources said Adityanath is the only chief minister from BJP ruled-states (aside from Uttarakhand) who has been invited for canvassing.

BACK IN OUR DAY...

A SPEECH last week on the potential of genomics in precision medicine sent the Union Science Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh, into recollections about his time as a medical student. He said he had a class on writing prescriptions, which was necessary because pharmacists would have to prepare cough or diarrhea mixtures. Students would use fundoscopes and retinoscopes to study eye problems, unlike these days when the retina can be seen on a screen using a machine. Watching these developments unfold has been like viewing a movie, he said.

MAKING SPACE

OF THE five ministers going to Switzerland for the World Economic Forum, three belong to the BIP's allies — Lok Janshakti Party (R)'s Chirag Paswan (Food Processing), TDP's K Rammohan Naidu (Civil Aviation) and RLD's Jayant Chaudhary (MoS Skill Development & Entrepreneurship). The two BJP ministers in the delegation are C R Patil (Jal Shakti) and Ashwini Vaishnaw (Information & Broadcasting), who is leading the delegation. The annual meeting will be held from January 20 to 24 in Davos-Klosters.

VILLAGE VOICE

AMONG THE guests invited to the Republic Day parade are the country's "best performing" village heads, along with their spouses. Panchayati Raj Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh will also host a dinner for them on the eve of Republic Day, it is learnt. Singh's deputy, S P Singh Baghel, and Panchayati Raj Secretary Vivek Bharadwaj will also speak with the sarpanches.

Bengaluru US consulate 'site dedication' on Jan 17

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, JANUARY 12

IN A major development, fulfilling a long-standing demand particularly from techies, students, and residents of Karnataka, the "site dedication ceremony" of the US consulate in Bengaluru will be held on January 17,

sources told The Indian Express. Earlier, those applying for US visas had to travel to the consulate in Chennai, or in other cities like Mumbai, Kolkata and Hyderabad. The US Embassy in New Delhi coordinates the activities among these consulates.

The ceremony to dedicate the US consulate site in Bengaluru will be held at the IW Marriott, sources said.

While the exact location of the consulate has not been revealed, a highly placed source said that temporary operations might begin at J W Marriott, where the United States Commercial Service (USCS) currently operates. Later, the office might be established in the Central Business District or Whitefield, the city's tech corridor. Visa issuance is expected to begin in some time but the place of operation is likely to be announced by Tuesday, the source told *The* Indian Express.

MP to change names of

Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday announced that names of 11 villages in Shajapur district

will be changed.

He made the announcement

"Nipaniya Hissamuddin will be called Nipaniya Dev, Dhabla Hussainpur as Dhabla Ram, Mohammadpur Pawadia as Rampur Pawadia, Khajuri Allahadad as Khajuri Ram, as

Panchayat Silonda) as Rampur, Unchod as Unchavad, Ghatti Mukhtiarpur as Ghatti and

During the programme, Yadav transferred Rs 1553 crore into the accounts of 1.27 crore women beneficiaries of the state government's Ladli Behna Yojana. He also transferred Rs 335 crore into the accounts of 55 lakh beneficiaries of a social security pension scheme.

Anthem row intensifies in TN as Ravi slams CM 'arrogance'

STATE GRAPPLES WITH CRISIS AFTER SLUGFEST BETWEEN TOP 2

ARUN JANARDHANAN CHENNAI, JANUARY 12

A ROW between Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi and Chief Minister M K Stalin escalated on Sunday after Ravi accused the latter of "arrogance" and said that respect for the national anthem and constitutional duties was non-negotiable.

This comes almost a week after Ravi abruptly walked out of the Assembly, citing a breach of protocol after the national anthem was not played at the beginning of a session.

Addressing the Assembly Saturday, Stalin criticised the Governor for walking out of the session on January 6, likening his action to the "childish" behaviour that his father M Karunanidhi described in a popular dialogue he had written for a movie. Karunanidhi also made a name for himself in the Tamil film industry as a screenwriter.

"Like the famous movie dialogue of Kalaignar (Karunanidhi), 'the court hall has witnessed a lot

ALTITUDE

Sonamarg

Existing road

Minamarg

8,500ft

Z-Morh Tunnel

■ The Z-Morh Tunnel will

to tourist destination

Sonamarg from central

road stretch is prone to

Kashmir. The overground

avalanches and snow-ins.

■ The tunnel, whose name

comes from the Z-shaped

FORMER TMC Rajya Sabha MP

SANTANU SEN was suspended

from the party Friday over his crit-

icism of the government's han-

dling of the RG Kar Hospital rape

and murder case. Sen speaks to

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA, about

his suspension, what is happen-

ing in the TMC and the road

ensure an all-weather link

Kangan

Ganderbal

Srinagar

LENGTH

6.4 km



CM M K Stalin has accused Governor R N Ravi of disrespecting 'long-held conventions'.

of strange cases', this Assembly has also witnessed strange scenes as far as the Governor is concerned. The Governor walks into the House but leaves without delivering the address," Stalin said.

He went on to say, "This House is a century-old institution created with the participation of crores of people. It has never witnessed a Governor act against the sentiments of the people and disrespect long-held conventions with political motives."

Stalin accused the Governor of not being able to "digest" Tamil Nadu's development under the DMK. "The DMK will win for the

1Kvehicles/hr 72,700 cr

Drass

Zojila

Tunnel

13.2 km

road stretch that was

Ladakh.

previously at the place

where the tunnel is being

constructed, is part of the

12.000-foot Zojila project

that will connect Srinagar to

■ Expected to be completed

by December 2026, the

COST

Srinagar-Leh Highway

PM TO OPEN KEY Z-MORH TUNNEL TODAY

CAPACITY

seventh time in the elections to be held in 2026. This term will be the foundation for a record seventh term, "he said. He also alleged Ravihad avoided delivering his address to the Assembly in the past three years by citing "absurd reasons". In a strongly worded re-

sponse, Ravi accused Stalin of "arrogance" and "betraving the true intentions" of his party. "Thiru M K Stalin asserts that insisting on due respect to the National Anthem is 'absurd' and 'childish'. Thanks for betraying the true intentions of the coalition of interests and ideologies to which he is a leader that does not accept and respect Bharat as a nation and Her Constitution. Such arrogance is not good. Please do not forget that Bharat is the supreme Mother and the Constitution the supreme faith for her children. They will not like or tolerate such brazen insult," the Raj Bhavan posted on X on Sunday. The DMK has not yet responded to the Governor's latest remarks.

On January 6, as the Assembly convened for its first session of the year, the proceed-

The Z-Morh Tunnel site.

Zojila Tunnel will help

military personnel and

and expenditure on

transport aircraft.

Mamata doesn't get proper information

at proper time: Suspended TMC leader

supplies reach border areas

throughout the year by road.

■ This all-weather link will

also reduce the dependence

operating and maintaining

X/@OmarAbdullah

ings began with the recital of the Tamil Thai Vaazhthu, the state's official song, as per tradition. The absence of the national anthem triggered objections from Ravi, who reportedly appealed to the CM and Speaker M Appavu to ensure its inclusion. With his request turned down, Ravi left the Assembly less than five minutes

after the session began. The Governor's critique follows a larger pattern of friction between the Raj Bhavan and the state government, often reigniting debates about constitutional propriety and political one-upmanship. In January 2023, Ravi suggested that the word "Tamizhagam" was the "appropriate" name for Tamil Nadu, adding that "Nadu" gives the impression of talking about a separate "country". Facing criticism from the DMK and even the AIADMK, he backtracked, but only after a clash with the government and an episode that saw him walk out of the Assembly. The two sides again locked horns in April 2023 over Bills passed by the Assembly but held up by the Raj Bhavan.

at Katra defeats purpose of rail link, says Omar

Omar Abdullah Sunday said while the issue of security on trains to the Valley was understandable, making passengers change trains at Katra will defeat the purpose of the Kashmir-Iammu rail link.

ports claiming that passengers would have to change trains at Katra on both sides of the journey.

"...while we understand the need to secure the train... making passengers change trains will defeat the very purpose of the line and render the thousands of crores of investment pointless," Omar said on X. "Check the train/passengers in Katra or Jammu, sure, but NO change of train will be supported by us. That said, there is no concrete proposal, and when there is we will give our inputs/suggestions."

Swapping trains

Srinagar: J&K Chief Minister

The remarks came after re-

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav at the party office in **Lucknow on Sunday.** PTI

DEFENDS BACKING AAP FOR DELHI POLLS

INDIA grouping

intact, days after

Omar criticism

Akhilesh says

LALMANI VERMA NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

DAYS AFTER J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah criticised the functioning of the INDIA grouping, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday maintained that it was intact.

Referring to his party's support for the AAP in the Delhi elections, he said they were simply following the alliance's strategy of backing a strong regional party against the BJP. The TMC, too, has extended support to the AAP. The Congress is contesting the Delhi elections on its own.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters in Lucknow on Sunday, Yadav said, "INDIA alliance is intact." Responding to a question on

the remarks of various INDIA bloc leaders regarding the role of Congress, Yadav "Samajwadi Party is still following the same path to strengthen INDIA alliance. Only that regional party should take on the BJP which is fighting with it already." Without naming AAP, he said that "other parties should appear to be standing with that regional party".

The remarks came after Omar expressed dismay over the lack of clarity regarding the IN-DIA bloc leadership and its agenda. He said the alliance "should be wound up if it was only for parliamentary polls"

What kicked up a storm after Congress and AAP decided to battle out the Delhi polls on their own was RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav reportedly saying in Buxar

district that there was nothing unusual about the Congress and AAP fighting separately in Delhi, where they had come together "only for the Lok Sabha polls".

Speaking to The Indian Express, SP's Delhi-based spokesperson Akhilesh Kativar said that the SP has extended support to AAP in Delhi going by the same idea described by Akhilesh Yadav. "The way the AAP government has performed in Delhi over the past 10 years, this party has proved effective in stopping BJP. AAP has an organisational structure to connect with the public. SP believes that AAP can stop BJP."

The Shiv Sena (UBT) too has said the AAP, and not the Congress, is in a better position to take on the BIP.

In December last year, amid widening fissures within the IN-DIA bloc, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee had thanked the Opposition leaders who supported her after she expressed her willingness during an interview to a regional television channel to lead the alliance.

"If they cannot run the show, what can I do? If given the opportunity, I would ensure its smooth functioning. I can run it from here (Bengal)," she had said, sending ripples through the

Opposition cluster. NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar appeared to endorse her leadership, saying, "She is a capable

leader and has the right to say it The MPs she has sent to Parliament are hardworking and good." The Bengal Congress however cried foul, calling the row a "BJP conspiracy".

Govt OKs exploratory drilling for oil and gas in Assam sanctuary Environment Ministry had also

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

THE CENTRE'S wildlife panel has approved a proposal to carry out oil and gas exploration in the ecosensitive zone of the Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam's Jorhat district.

The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, approved the proposal by Vedanta Group's Cairn Oil & Gas during its December 21 meeting, as per the minutes of the meeting. Assam's principal chief conservator of forests(wildlife) and chief wildlife warden had recommended clearance for the project in August last year, citing "national interest".

Forest Advisory Committee of the Union

granted in-principle approval during its meeting on August 27 last year. A team of officials from the Union Environment Ministry, the Wildlife Institute of India, and the Assam Forest Department inspected the project site on Nov 15. The panel found that exploratory drilling would cause minimal damage, but said commercial drilling would not be allowed.

ten assurance that no commercial drilling will be conducted there. A senior official in the ministry pointed out that exploratory drilling is a key step in hydrocar

Vedanta Group has given a writ-

bon extraction, which could lead to commercial drilling. Another official said the inspection committee's report recommended no oil or gas extraction from within the eco-sensitive zone, even if reserves are discovered.

tively probed the case. The CBI

11 villages in Shajapur dist Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Chief Mohanpur, Richhri Moradabad

while addressing a programme in Kalapipal tehsil.

Hirapur, Mohammadpur Machhnai as

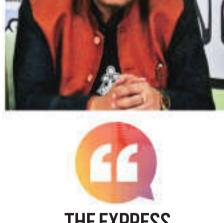
as Richhri, Khalilpur (Gram Sheikhpur Bongi as Avadhpuri," Yadav said.

ahead for him. Excerpts: You have been a councillor and a Rajya Sabha MP. What suddenly went wrong?

I have been in politics since my student days and with the TMC since its inception (1998). To my knowledge, I never said or did anything that can be considered anti-party. In several odd situations, I have strongly defended the party. Suddenly, I have been accused of being involved in anti-party activities. I do not yet know what anti-party activity I have been involved in.

Following the R G Kar incident, you alleged that a nexus operated within the hospital and also slammed







the administration. Did this

EX-RAJYA SABHA MP

lead to your suspension? My wife and I are alumni of the college and my daughter is pursuing her education there. A vear-and-a-half ago, when I was made the chairman of the Rogi

Kalyan Samity (RKS) at R G Kar Hospital, I found out about largescale corruption by (former principal) Sandip Ghosh (who was arrested by the CBI).

I secretly submitted documents to the authorities concerned. I was proved right when Ghosh was later arrested. My daughter faced tremendous mental and emotional torture. She was socially boycotted and harassed by Ghosh and his supporters. Ghosh even tried to fail her through personal intervention.

Despite all this, to help the TMC save face, I kept mum. I did not discuss this with anyone except a few leaders of my party. When the RG Kar incident happened, I tried to stop the movement so that Chief Minister (Mamata Banerjee) madam could address the issue. While some protesters hurled "go back" slogans at me as I was a TMC leader, a few others were trying to provoke my leadership that I was instigating the movement. Following this, I tried to withdraw myself from every**But why?** I do not know. Maybe it is because I never wanted to be a part

of the nexus run by Ghosh and his superiors. They tried to oust me as they could never get me into their coterie. I strongly believe that a revolution has taken place in the health sector of West

thing. Even today, I believe some

of my "friends and well-wishers"

are misinforming and misguiding the leadership about me.

Bengal under the leadership of madam Mamata Banerjee. But even today, proper information is not given to her at the proper time, as was in the case of Ghosh. Are you indicating some The CM is leaving no stone

discord within the TMC?

unturned for the betterment of every section of society. For those giving suggestions and guidance, I think they should be truthful to themselves and pass on factual information to our leader. **FULL INTERVIEW ON**

www.indianexpress.com

Kerala 'rape-suicide': Breathing room for CPM as CBI names parents as accused

SHAJU PHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 12

IT WAS a case that had the CPI(M) cornered. On Friday, in a major relief for the ruling party in Kerala, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arraigned as accused the parents of two minor girls in Palakkad who allegedly killed themselves after being raped.

The CBI charged the girls' parents with abetting sexual abuse and suicide, invoking Section 109 of IPC (abetment of a crime) and various provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The girls, aged 9 and 13, were found hanging in their house a few weeks apart in early 2017. The police found that the girls died by suicide after allegedly being subjected to sexual abuse over several months by five persons, including a juvenile.

Right from the outset, the case took a political turn, with the victims' family alleging that the accused had the backing of the ruling party. The allegation gained traction with the circulation of photos of the accused with workers of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), the CPI(M)'s youth wing, in Palakkad. In 2019, a POCSO court ac-

guitted the four accused who were tried as adults, saying no scientific evidence connected them to the alleged crime. The forensic surgeon who conducted the post-mortem of the elder sister said the victim's injuries



CM Vijayan in

Congress and the BJP unleashed a political storm against the CPI(M) government. They pointed out lapses in the probe.

cused.

could be due to a piles infection. This went in favour of the ac-

Soon afterwards, the

Suresh raised the issue in Lok Sabha, alleging that the CPI(M) government was standing with the accused. Under pressure, the govern-

ment ordered reinvestigation but the Kerala High Court, acting upon a petition from the victims' mother, handed over the probe to the CBI.

In the 2021 Assembly elections, the victims' mother contested against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the CPI(M) stronghold of Dharmadam. With

mother led a symbolic fight for justice for her daughters. Reacting to the latest twist in

Congress MP Kodikkunnil a frock as her symbol, the

the case, CPI(M) minister M B Rajesh, who hails from Palakkad, said: "Truth will come out one day. It has become clear that the allegations against the government as well as the police were baseless. The controversies related to the incident were politically motivated."

State Congress vice-president V T Balram, who is also from Palakkad, said: "We stood

for ensuring justice for the victims. When the CBI named the witnesses (the parents) as the accused, we feared that the other accused might benefit from it. There is no change in our stand that the accused were linked with the CPI(M). The accused benefited from their political leanings." After CBI listed her as ac-

cused, the girls' mother on Thursday changed her stand on the state police, which had made them witnesses in the case. "Now I feel Kerala Police effec-

made us accused when they could not nab the real culprits. We had shared all details with the CBI, which, however, did not probe. Our agitation will continue until the real culprits in the case are booked.' The father of the victims had

deposed that he had seen one of the accused sexually abusing his eldest daughter. Besides, he came to know from two others that they had seen one of the accused, Madhu, exposing himself before his daughter.

Naxalism will be wiped out by March 2026, says Shah



Home Minister Amit Shah addresses the closing ceremony of Maharashtra BIP's convention at Shirdi, Sunday. ANI

On the upcoming Delhi as-

sembly polls, Shah said, "The

year 2024 was especially signif-

icant for the BJP. The Modi gov-

ernment returned to power in

the third term. We won Haryana

third time. We won Odisha. In

Andhra Pradesh, NDA was voted.

Also in Sikkim. In Maharashtra,

we got a a Devendra Fadnavis-

led strong government. If

Maharashtra has ended 2024 on

a happy victory note, 2025 will

see Delhi BJP striking success in

Assembly polls. We will win the

Praising Fadnavis, Shah said,

"He had set in a process of bold

reforms and welfare schemes

(2014 govt under Fadnavis). He

had undertaken measures to

make Maharashtra drought free

— a promise which will be pur-

sued by the government in the

next five years. I would urge the

Opposition not to question but

wait and watch. The government

led by Fadnavis is going to trans-

form the state through mega

projects such as Samruddhi

Mahamarg, Metro, FDI and agri-

conclave, Union Minister for

Transport, Roads and Highways,

Nitin Gadkari, said, "Almost

5,000 Naxals have surrendered

in Gadchiroli. The district is soon

emerging as the highest revenue

generating with steel projects

Gadkari said, "Gadchiroli,

which was a Naxal district, the

most dreaded of remote villages,

was feared and nobody dared to

visit. Things are changing now.'

and rapid development."

Earlier, addressing a party

culture reforms.'

polls," he asserted.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI. JANUARY 12

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that by March 31, 2026, "Naxalism will be completely wiped out of the country".

Addressing the first state BIP executive meeting at Shirdi on Sunday, Shah said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has fulfilled all promises made between 2014 and 2024. From abrogation of Article 370, reining terrorism, Ram Temple construction at Ayodhya. Take note of my words. By March 31, 2026, Naxalism will be completely wiped out."

Taking a pledge to make Maharashtra BJP "unconquerable", Shah exhorted party workers to relentlessly strive to capture each and every seat in the coming local body elections to wipe out the Opposition's "politics of betrayal" in the state.

The victory in the state Assembly polls has put an end to politics of instability which was inherent since Sharad Pawar's 1978 politics, he said, adding, "It has also put an end to Uddhav Thackeray's betrayal who compromised Bal Thackeray principles and Hindutva to join Congress and NCP for power in

Noting that the BJP's victory in Maharashtra will have longterm consequences, Shah said the historic win shattered the IN-DIA bloc's confidence.

Dhaka summons Indian envoy over fencing row

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

BANGLADESH FACED off with India Sunday over tensions at the border as the neighbouring country's foreign ministry summoned High Commissioner Pranay Verma to express "deep concern" over "recent activities of the Border Security Force (BSF)". This came hours after Dhaka alleged that India was attempting to construct fences at five locations along the Indo-Bangla border, vio-

lating a bilateral agreement. After meeting Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin, the Indian High Commissioner said: "I just met Foreign Secretary to discuss India's commitment to ensuring a crime-free border, effectively addressing challenges of smuggling, movement of crimi-

nals and trafficking." "We have an understanding with regard to fencing the border for security. BSF and BGB (Border Guard Bangladesh) have been in communication in this regard. We expect that understandings will be implemented and there will be a cooperative approach to combating crime," Verma said in

Earlier in the day, Bangladesh Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd.)

Actor Rana

Daggubati, kin

hotel demolition

Hyderabad: A case has been filed

against actor Venkatesh

Daggubati, his nephew and actor

Rana Daggubati, their family

members and producer D Suresh

over demolition of a hotel run on

a land given on lease by the

der various IPC Sections, includ-

ing criminal conspiracy, and

man, is one of the accused in a case

related to an alleged attempt to

poach BRS MLAs. He was arrested

in 2022 and later granted bail. He

said the Daggubatis had leased the

premises in Filmnagar in 2014.

After execution of a registered

lease deed, he started the hotel. He

said the accused tried to vacate the

premises even as the deed was in

existence, adding that they en-

tered the property and demol-

ished the hotel in 2024.

The complainant, a business-

house trespassing.

The FIR was filed on January 11 following a local court order, un-

Daggubatis police said Sunday.

booked over



Security personnel from India and Bangladesh during the Joint Retreat Ceremony on the outskirts of Siliguri, Sunday. PTI

Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said that India had halted the construction of barbed wire fencing along the border after strong opposition from the BGB and local residents.

According to the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry, Jashim Uddin told the Indian envoy that the "unauthorized attempt" to construct fences and related operational actions by BSF have caused tensions along the border.

"He emphasised that the construction of barbed wire fences without proper authorization undermines the spirit of cooperation and friendly relations between the two neighboring countries. He hoped that the upcoming BGB-BSF DG Level Talks would be able to discuss the matter at length," it said in a statement.

"Referring to the recent killing of a Bangladesh citizen at Sunamganj by BSF, Foreign Secretary... strongly resented these acts of killing and called for urgent action by the Indian authorities to stop recurrence of such incidents and conduct enquiries into all these border killings and take actions against those responsible," it said.

He said Bangladesh believes such issues should be resolved through dialogue.

KARNATAKA

Three cows maimed, CM orders probe; BJP slams 'jihadi mindset'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, JANUARY 12

TENSIONS PREVAILED Vinayakanagar in Chamarajpet after the teats in the udders of two cows were cut off and the leg of another was injured on Sunday.

An FIR under BNS section 325 (mischief by killing or maiming animal) was filed based on a complaint lodged by Karna, the owner of the cows. "We are tracking the suspect and an arrest will be made soon. We are verifying CCTV footage," an officer said. Police said the cows were tied in the open. Karna said when he went to milk the cows on Sunday morning, he found them bleeding.

He said he suspected that the attack was linked to a protest six months earlier against the decision

Sarpanch in Beed dies after truck

to shift a veterinary hospital nearby, in which he, along with other local milk vendors took part. "We have been selling milk for more than three decades," he said.

While the Opposition BJP demanded strict action against the "jihadis" responsible for the incident, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said that he had spoken to the Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda and said that "whoever is responsible, we will make sure action is taken as per law".

With several BJP leaders condemning the incident, the party announced plans to observe 'Black Sankranti' if the government failed to take action. Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said, "This heinous act reflects a jihadi mindset. We will observe 'Black Sankranti' if the government fails to take action against the accused persons."

Bijapur: Five Maoists killed in encounter, 2 jawans injured in blast

JAYPRAKASHS NAIDU RAIPUR, JANUARY 12

FIVE MAOISTS, including two women were killed in an encounter with security forces inside Indravati National Park in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Sunday, police said. In a separate incident, two jawans sustained injuries in an IED blast in the district on Sunday evening.

The encounter took the number of Maoists killed so far this year to 11. Multiple teams of security forces reached the national park on Saturday based on inputs about the presence of Maoists in the jungle of Bandepara-Koranjed, an area under the jurisdiction of Madded police station.

The encounter broke out Sunday morning, with intermittent firing taking place for hours. Security forces said that the

Maoists were wearing uniforms of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA). A self loading rifle, barel grenade launcher, a 12-bore gun, Bharmar gun, explosives, and other weapons were recovered from the site and further search operations were on, they said.

Meanwhile, the IED blast took Both are said to be out of danger.

place on Sunday evening when a joint team of Kutru Police and the District Reserve Guard was on an area domination exercise in Jaigru under Jangla police station limits.

The encounter and the blast come a day after a CRPF jawan was injured in an IED blast. Head Constable Rakesh Kulur is from CRPF Battalion 196, which was conducting an area domination exercise, moving from Mahadev Ghat, when the blast took place. Kulur suffered serious injuries to his legs and was under treatment.

rams bike, UBT alleges murder **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, JANUARY 12

THE SARPANCH of Saundana village in Maharashtra's Beed district died after a vehicle transporting fly ash from a thermal power plant rammed his motorcycle on Saturday night.

Police, however, said that the incident does not seem to be a planned one as in the case of the murder of Massajog village sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh in Beed that had led to an outrage.

Police said the incident occurred at Mirwat Phata when sarpanch Abhimanyu Kshirsagar was heading towards Saundana village in Parli tehsil on a bike. Parli police said that in the impact of

the collision, the motorcycle was crushed, leaving him severely injured. He was rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival. The driver of the truck has been arrested.

Beed SP Navneet Kanwat said, "So far no foul play is suspected... it is a road accident. The accused has been arrested." Another police officer, however, said that they are trying to find out details of the truck, its owner, and affiliations to confirm if any conspiracy is involved.

The mishap has raised the issue of illegal transportation of fly ash from the thermal power plant in the area that was being opposed by villagers, citing environmental pol-

lution and health concerns in Parli. Meanwhile, BJP MLA Suresh Dhas, who has been raising the issue of sarpanch Deshmukh's murder, alleged that 'fly-ash mafia' was behind the death of Kshirsagar. The illegal ash transportation has led to major pollution in the area, Dhas said, alleging that Walmik Karad, the NCP man who was arrested in a case linked to Deshmukh's murder, was behind the illegal collection and transportation of fly ash.

"The highest pollution takes place in the Parli area, as there are 300 brick kilns there... Owners of at least 150 of them have connections with a former guardian minister of the district," Dhas said.

Shiv Sena UBT leader Vinayak Raut called Saturday's incident a murder. "The death of the sarpanch is not an accident but a murder."

Another tiger enters Bengal, state says won't return it

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA

KOLKATA, JANUARY 12

WITH ANOTHER tiger entering West Bengal from neighbouring Iharkhand, state forest minister Birbaha Hansda on Sunday said that the big cat would not be returned if captured.

This comes close on the heels of tigress Zeenat leaving a trail of panic across five West Bengal districts after wandering off from Similipal Tiger Reserve Park in Odisha, leading to a spat between the two state governments.

"This tiger has come from Jharkhand. It has entered Jhargram. Our forest department officials are on alert and have reached the area. Teams have been deployed... This proves that our forests are suitable for tigers and there is ample prey base or food here. That is why tigers are entering our forests from neighbouring states," Hansda said.

"This tiger has no radio collar.



Why tigers wander, when it is an issue

THE MOVEMENT of tigers between states is common. Such dispersal often goes unrecorded when states share continuous stretches of quality forests. Wandering tigers are not interfered with unless they reach areas where people are not used to their presence. Last year, a tiger from Rajasthan's Sariska tiger reserve ventured out, twice, to Haryana's Jhabua reserve forest in Rewari district. The second time, Haryana brought a cage from Gujarat's Gir and used a drone to track the tiger. A team from Rajasthan sedated and took the tiger back.

We are not going to give back this tiger if and when it is captured here," Hansda added.

In the absence of a radio collar, say experts, it is difficult to identify the home range of the tiger currently moving.

Forest officials said the latest pugmarks of the tiger has been found in Jhargram district's Banspahari. "We have found the

pugmarks of the new tiger in Purulia and Jhargram districts. The tiger is currently located on the border of the two districts. We are putting in all resources like the last time when we captured Zeenat. Teams from Sunderban Tiger Reserve are preparing to visit the area to capture the tiger," Chief Conservator of Forest S Kulandaival told The Indian Express.

"Camera traps are being put up in the area to locate the tiger. What makes the job a bit more difficult is that, unlike Zeenat, this tiger has no radio collar and is difficult to track," said a forest department official. In the first week of January,

Jharkhand forest officials sighted the tiger near Chowka in the Khunti area, from where the big cat moved to Dalma wildlife sanctuary. According to sources in the West Bengal forest department, the tiger likely entered Purulia district from Dalma and then moved to Banspahari in Jhargram district.

On Bengal government's charges of another tigress from Odisha spotted near the state earlier this month, a senior Odisha official said there is "no history of tigers" from Odisha entering Bengal in the past seven years.

The capture of Zeenat and her return to Similpal Reserve Park had led to a verbal spat between the BJP government in Odisha and the TMC government in West Bengal.

epaper.indianexpress.com

There was a verbal duel between Bengal and Odisha and West Bengal over capture and return of Zeenat. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee slammed Odisha over the issue, saying the tigress had left people in the border areas of the state terrorised and they couldn't leave home. "People could not leave their homes, schools had to be closed... "Later, they say, give back the tiger... If you do not have space, let us know. We will keep the tiger forever in our reserves."

Odisha **Forest** and **Environment Minister Ganesh** Ram Singhkhuntia lashed out at her, saying Banerjee was being "immature" and called her "outrage" political as the BJP was in power in Bhubaneswar. "Her statement that Odisha does not have adequate forests reflects her ignorance as around 39 per cent of our total geographical area comprises forests," Singhkhuntia had said in a retort to the West Bengal CM's remark.

AFTER DHAKA STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITIES

How does political motivation justify killing: Voices in Govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

A DAY after the Bangladesh government stated that a majority of incidents against minority communities since August 4, 2024 were "political", not "communal", a source in the Centre said Sunday: "How does political motivation justify any killing?"

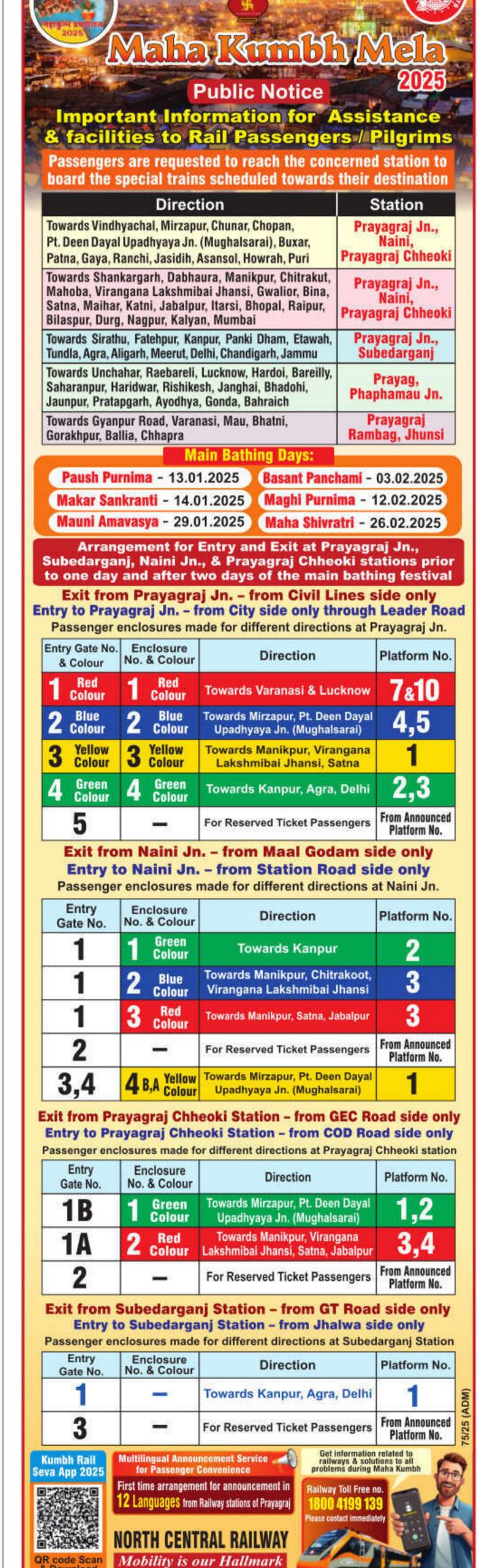
Chief Adviser to the Bangladesh interim government Muhammad Yunus' press wing said Saturday, "Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council has claimed that a total

of 1,769 communal attacks and acts of vandalism took place against minorities in Bangladesh. The Council said those attacks, acts of vandalism, and incidents of looting included 2,010 incidents on the lives, properties, and places of worship of the minority community".

"Of the 1,769 allegations, police have so far registered 62 cases on the merits of the claims. At least 35 culprits have been arrested based on the findings of the investigations. It was found that in the majority of the cases, the attacks were not communally motivated — rather, those

were political in nature. The police investigation revealed that 1,234 incidents were political in nature and 20 incidents were communal. At least 161 claims were found to be false or untrue," the statement said.

A source in the Centre said, "Among those found substantiated, the Bangladesh side has come up with the theory that over 98% of the incidents are not communal but politically motivated. How does politica motivation justify any killing? What steps are taken up to bring culprits to justice or prevent recurrence?"



North central railways

CPRONCE

Rajasthan: 3 die of suffocation

Jaipur: A man, his son and their neighbour died of suffocation after they went to sleep without extinguishing a stove they lit to keep their room warm in Khairthal-Tijara district of

Rajasthan, police said on Sunday. The incident came to light when other members broke the room's door after the trio did not come out of the room until Sunday afternoon.

Station House Officer Bhiwadi

Devendra Pratap Sharam said Dhananjay (50), his son Ankit (14) and neighbour Abhishek Rai (25), lit a stove to keep the room warm and slept without extinguishing it on Saturday night.

The windows of the room were closed and there was no ventilation. Overnight, the stove emitted toxic gases, leading to all three of them losing consciousness and subsequently dying from suffocation.

held for 'setting factories on fire'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE JAIPUR, JANUARY 12

IN A bizarre turn of events, two contractual employees of a fire station in Jaipur were arrested on Sunday for allegedly setting fire to at least three factories to earn additional income.

Explaining their modus operandi, police said the accused, fireman Vijay Sharma (25) and driver Rahul Yadav (23), used to set factories on fire and steal diesel from fire tenders during their trips to extinguish the fire and sell it in the market for profit.

Both of them were working as contractual employees in the fire station of Sarna Dungar under Kardhani police station, Jaipur. They were hired through a private contractor after they

submitted experience certificates for firefighting and driving, police said.

Two Jaipur fire station workers

"During our investigation into multiple incidents of fire in various factories, Kardhani police station in-charge Harish Solanki received an input that the arson in Sarna Dungar (Kardhani) of RIICO area was perpetrated by miscreants who came on bikes. We later searched CCTV footage of the area which led to the arrest of the accused," Assistant Commissioner of Police (West) Amit Budaniya said.

To verify the information by an informer, the police prepared a route map after inspecting videos from about 100 CCTV and did a technical data analysis of the suspects, officials said.

During questioning, Rahul and Vijay admitted to setting fire

Contact Details

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Design, Development, commissioning, Implementation &

Maintenance with service support of customised Enterprise

Resource Planning (ERP) System from qualified and

experienced Agency/Consultants at Rail Spring Karkhana-

Notice No.: RSK-EOI-01-2025

Rail Spring Karkhana (RSK), Sithouli (Gwalior), North Central

Railway, is interested to identify eligible Firms/Agencies for

finalising technical and financial requirement for Design,

Development, commissioning, Implementation & Maintenance

with service support of customised Enterprise Resource Planing

ERP) System from qualified and experienced

Agency/Consultants at Rail Spring Karkhana-Sithouli (Gwalior)

Design, Development, Dy. CME (QA)/RSK. Chief

commissioning, Implementation | Workshop Manager Office

& Maintenance with service Rail Spring Karkhana

support of customised Enterprise | Sithouli, Gwalior (M.P.

Resource Planning (ERP) Contact No.: 9752448003

Detailed work requirement on subject is placed at Annexure C

This gives the Agency/Consultants interested in getting the

necessary details of the objective and other required details. 2.

Firms interested in the subject EOI are requested to see the

details on North Central Railway website

https://ncr.indianrailways.gov.in/ → About Us → Workshop →

RSK Sithouli -> EOI, and, submit required details in prescribed

format placed at Annexure A and B to the contact details given

above. 3. All information/details for the subject work or any other

information pertinent to the subject work can obtained from the

Rail Spring Karkhana-Sithouli through the given contact person

provided above via email or phone, within the office timing (10:00

Chartered Vessels for the period 20.02.2025 noon to 20.02.2026 noon.

Dy. Chief Machanical Engineer/(QA)

Rail Spring Karkhana, Sithouli, Gwalior (M.P.)

POOMPUHAR SHIPPING CORPORATION LIMITED

: Rs. 1,00,000/- Indian/ Foreign Company/Firm

Tender document is available in e tendering web portal

https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app and www.tamilship.com at free of cost. Prospective

bidders are advised to refer https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app for specific important details

and upload their bid. The conditions / requirement mentioned in the website shall meet out

by the bidders. The advertisement is an invitation for bid only. The details given in the

Further all communications will be updated through

(A Government of Tamilnadu Enterprise)

692, Anna Salai, IV" Floor, Nandanam, Chennai - 600 035, India

Telephone No.: 044 - 24330505 / 807, Fax: 91-44-24344593 /24335706,

E-mail: pscship@gmail.com CIN: U63090TN1974PLC006596

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited from reputed IG P&I Insurance Clubs / Companies for Class I & II cover for

: 13.01.2025 at 1600 hours

: 04.02.2025 at 1200 hours

: 04.02.2025 at 1400 hours

: USD 98,400 (Rs. 85,00,000)

to 17:30 hrs.) on any working day (Monday to Saturday).

Global Tender No.PSC/P&I/001/2024-25

Tender download start date

website are comprehensive.

DIPR/153/TENDER/2025

https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app only.

Bid submission end date

Tender opening

Value of Tender

Venue

EMD

experienced Agency/Consultants | pcorskdata@gmail.com

North Central Railway. Details involved are as follows:

System from qualified and E m a i l

Description

at Rail Spring Karkhana-Sitholi

Gwalior), North Central Railway.

64/25 (C)

Sithouli (Gwalior), North Central Railway.

to three factories, police said. As per the police, the duo set

SHAJU PHILIP

JANUARY 12

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.

AN 18-YEAR-OLD athlete in

Kerala's Pathanamthitta district,

who alleged that over 60 people

raped her over the last six years,

was subject to multiple gan-

grapes and was also blackmailed

by one of the arrested accused

who had recorded a video of her,

more accused on Sunday, taking

the total number of those ar-

rested in connection with the

statement given by her to 28.

Another 13 FIRs were also regis-

tered Sunday, in addition to the

five registered previously. The 13

cases filed Sunday include nine

at Elavumthitta police station

and four at Pathanamthitta po-

the arrests made Sunday were

related to the FIRs filed Saturday

Police sources said most of

Kerala Police arrested 14

police officers said.

lice station.

fire to a plastic factory in November 2024, in which an estimated loss of about ₹14-15 lakh was reported, another factory, Ram Industries, on December 24, 2024, (loss of about ₹5 lakh) and Riya Organic Factory on January 7 this year in which an estimated ₹14 lakh of loss was reported.

Police said the accused used to travel to the factories on motorcycle wearing masks to set fire and then return to the station. On getting information about the fire, they would go to the spot with the fire brigade vehicle. While extinguishing the fire, they would show more diesel consumption than the amount consumed by the fire brigade vehicle and get the bills cleared, police said.

Bengaluru woman loses ₹1.2 crore in cyber fraud

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE BENGALURU, JANUARY 12

A 28-YEAR-OLD software engineer in Bengaluru lost ₹1.2 crore to the cyber fraudsters in a 'digital arrest' scam. The incident came to light when the woman approached police to file a complaint last week.

On December 11, the victim received an automated IVR call from an international number claiming a package in her name contained illegal items.

The call, allegedly from DHL courier services, also directed the woman to contact a Mumbai police station.

She got in touch with 'Sunil Datt Dubey' who was posing as a 'Mumbai Crime Branch officer'. Accusing her of being involved in a money laundering scheme worth \$10.9 million (₹93.89 crore), he issued a fake digital arrest order.

The scammers further coerced her into transferring assets. The woman transferred ₹75.63 lakh via RTGS and ₹55.87 lakh as a bond payment. Later, she borrowed ₹40 lakh and paid ₹5 lakh more.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE DEHRADUN, JANUARY 12 SIX PEOPLE were killed and 22

SDRF personnel at the accident spot on Sunday. ANI

injured after a private bus fell into a gorge in Uttarakhand's Pauri Sunday evening, police said.

The deceased have been identified as Sunita (25), Pramila (45), Priyanshu (17), Nagendra (58), Sulochna (54), and Prem (70). The driver and the conductor are among the people who sustained injuries, officials said.

Officials said police and the SDRF were informed around 4.30 pm that a bus plunged around 100 metres into a gorge

near Dehalchauri, after which

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

NOTICE OF INVITING E-TENDER No. SNT-JP-17R-2024-25 Dated: 10.01.2025 DRM (S&T)/ North Western Railway Jaipur, for and on behalf of the Presiden of India, invite E-Tenders from registered tenderer/bidders for the following work 1. Name of work with it location: Provision of Datalogger connectivity to COA at interchanging points at Khatipura, Dausa, Ringas and Dahar Ka Balaji stations over Jaipur Division, 2. Approx. Cost of work (Rs): Rs 38,76,695.29/- 3. Bid Security (Rs): 77,500/- (Online Payment only) 4.Date & Time for Submission up to on www.ireps.gov.in : 05.02.2025 Up to 15.00 hrs. 5. Website Particulars & Notice board location

www.ireps.gov.in and DRM office

Follow us on : 1 0 10 /NWRailways 10 NWRailways

held, 13 fresh FIRs filed and that none of the accused in

the nine cases registered at

Elavumthitta, Pathanamthitta

Kerala teen rape: 14 more

SUBJECTED TO MULTIPLE GANGRAPES, BLACKMAIL: POLICE

district, had been arrested so far. Pathanamthitta SPV G Vinod Kumar said a 25-member police team will probe the cases. South Zone DIG Ajeetha Begum Sultan will oversee the probe. "Police are collecting scientific evidence in all the cases registered in the incident," he said.

According to police sources,

one of the accused, who was arrested Saturday, allegedly blackmailed the now 18-year-old with a video that he recorded when he had "physical relations" with her when she was just 13. After he blackmailed her, she was allegedly sexually assaulted by several of his friends, the sources In one of the cases registered

at Pathanamthitta police station, another accused, who had befriended the teen on social media when she was a class 12 student, allegedly took her to a

SDRF teams from Srinagar and

Satpuli posts, along with district

Pauri to Dehalchauri with 26

passengers. While five passen-

gers were declared dead on ar-

rival, one died later during treat-

ment, at a hospital in Srinagar.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh

Dhami said, "... The local admin-

istration is continuing relief and

rescue operations, and the in-

jured are being treated at the

nearest hospital. I pray to Baba

Kedar for the speedy recovery of

Police Chandra Mohan Singh

said they are trying to ascertain

Additional Superintendent of

the injured."

Reacting to the accident,

The bus was traveling from

police rushed to the spot.

rubber plantation and assaulted her in a car along with five of his friends, police said.

"In February last year, he picked up the girl in a car from a bus stand. Two of his friends also joined them in the same car,

while three others followed in an

autorickshaw," an officer said. In another case, she was allegedly gangraped by four others near the Government General Hospital in Pathanamthitta last January. In yet another incident, two accused allegedly sexually assaulted her at the premises of a closed shop before dropping her

near her house. Sources said the investigation revealed that she was picked up by accused persons on several occasions at the bus stand in Pathanamthitta before they took her to different locations and that because of this, more cases are likely to be registered at the Pathanamthitta police station in the coming days.

Six dead, two **Uttarakhand:** 6 killed critical in Nashik as bus falls into gorge road mishap

Mumbai: Six persons were killed and four were injured after a tempo traveller rammed a truck on a flyover at Dwarka Circle in Maharashtra's Nashik district Sunday. Two of the injured are said to be critical, police said, adding the injured were admitted to four different hospitals, including the Nashik district hospital.

Police said the incident took place near an Ayyappa temple at 7.30 pm when the tempo traveller carrying 16 passengers was on its way to CIDCO area after attending a religious event in Niphad.

"The tempo driver lost control of the vehicle and hit the truck carrying iron rods from behind. Some died on the spot, while some of the injured are in critical condition," an official said, adding that there were no lights or any indicator that the truck was carrying rods.

Police and fire brigade personnel carried out rescue operations along with residents and

passersby, he said. An official said while the tempo was going at high speed, the truck driver too should have taken precautions while carrying iron rods. "We will likely register an FIR against the drivers of both the vehicles. Right now, the priority is to save the lives of as

what led to the accident. No FIR many people as we can," the ofhas been registered in so far. ficial said. **NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**

India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work. Description of work: Supplying and stacking of SKV Welding Portion for fusion welding

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of

E-Tender Notice

for 60Kg/60El (R 260) and 60Kg 90UTS rails with improved preheating welding technology namely compressed air petrol/LPG along with Single shot crucible fitted and with use of three piece prefabricated moulds with Automatic Tapping Thimble (ATT) technology under jurisdiction of DEN (Track) Jhansi. **Approx Cost** :₹ 3707560.00 Earnest Money: ₹ 74200.00 Date of closing Tender: 06.02.2025 at 15:00 hrs.

Date of Completion/period from issue acceptance letter: 12 Months Tender on line can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs on 06.02.2025. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in 69/25(DG)

f North central railways 💢 @CPRONCR 🔠 www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय,

No. SB PHQ/SEC-24/Store/18/2025 Bhopal,

Dated: - 08/01/2025

ऑनलाईन ई-निविदा सूचना

(प्रथम)

पुलिस महानिदेशक, म.प्र. की ओर से सहायक पुलिस महानिरीक्षक, विशेष शाखा सामान्य, म.प्र. भोपाल द्वारा नीचे दर्शित निम्न सामग्री के वार्षिक अनुरक्षण अनुबंध (सीएएमसी) के लिये ई-निविदा के माध्यम से

https://www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जानी है:-Qty. Tender EMD Name of Item **Specification**

			Approx- imate		Rs. line Through ders.gov.in
	T T	शीन अनुरक्षण मद-33-002	91		
1	CAMC of ELEVATORS Make/Model: TKE/MRL Gearless	वार्षिक अनुरक्षण अनुबंध (CAMC) OF ELEVATORS Installed at command center shyamla hils, Bhopal, Make/Model: TKE/MRL Gearless For 3 Year	2 Nos		
2	CAMC of ELEVATORS Make/Model: SCHINDLER/ SCHINDLER 300	वार्षिक अनुरक्षण अनुबंध (CAMC) OF ELEVATORS Installed at command center shyamla hils, Bhopal, Make/Model: SCHINDLER/ SCHINDLER 300 For 3 Year	4 Nos	3000/-	1,00,000/-

1. निविदा प्रपत्र (दस्तावेज) ऑनलाईन वेबसाइट https://www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app पर जमा किये जाऐंगे। जिसे डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है।

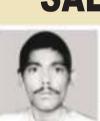
2. निविदा शुल्क ऑनलाईन जमा करना अनिवार्य है। सुरक्षा निधि पृथक-पृथक जमा करना आवश्यक है।

3. निविदा प्रपत्र मध्यप्रदेश पुलिस की ऑनलाईन वेबसाईट https://www.mpeproc.gov.in से निविदा प्रपत्र एवं विस्तृत जानकारी नियम एवं शर्तों को डाउनलोड की जा सकती है । 4. निविदा समय सारणी:-

No. Date & Time **Tender Activity** 09.01.2025 at 17:00 hrs. Bid submission start date 30.01.2025 up to 17:00 hrs. Last date of online e-tender submission 31.01.2025 at 17:00 hrs. Bid will be opened on

सहायक पुलिस महानिरीक्षक विशेष शाखा (सामान्य) म.प्र.भोपाल हेतु - पुलिस महानिदेशक मध्यप्रदेश भोपाल

SALUTE THE SOLDIER



BORDER SECURITY FORCE HC BALRAM SINGH 01.07.1968 - 13.01.2003

Bordermen Salute and proudly remember today their brave comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Batmaloo area(J&K)

> **CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE** 13 January 1989

his injuries enroute to the hospital. For his exemplary

13 January 2000

13 January 1997

severe bullet injuries but continued to fight bravely

until he made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. His

unwavering courage and ultimate sacrifice will always

On the night of 13 January 1989, while patrolling Bhakna Kalan village in Amritsar district, 44 Battalion of CRPF encountered terrorists. Around 2300 hrs. Constable Asin Khan noticed a suspicious individual near a house. When challenged, the suspect opened fire, seriously injuring Constable Asin khan. Despite Shaheed his injuries, Constable Asin Khan retaliated, but the Constable terrorist escaped over a wall. Simultaneously, other Asin Khan terrorists opened fire from another direction. Amid 15-05-1957 To thick fog, the terrorists managed to flee despite the 13-01-1989 force's retaliation. Constable Asin Khan succumbed to

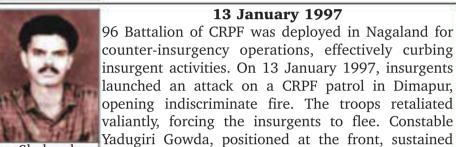
HC Joginder Singh of 5 Battalion of CRPF was

Joginder Singh 13-01-2000

44 Bn

deployed in Karimnagar district, Andhra Pradesh, to maintain law and order and counter extremist activities. On 13 January 2000, extremists opened fire on the troops at Kalva Srirampur village. Displaying exceptional courage, HC Joginder Singh retaliated and advanced towards the extremists, disregarding his own safety. In the ensuing gunfight, he sustained injuries and later attained martyrdom. His unwavering bravery remains etched in the glorious 25-05-1949 To history of CRPF. 5 Bn

bravery, he was posthumously awarded the Police Medal for Gallantry,



Yadugiri Gowda 13-01-1997 96 Bn

14-06-1965 To

Vaghela Govind Bhai

01-06-1964 To 13-01-2005 54 Bn

54 Bn

13-01-2005

be remembered.

On 13 January 2005, troops of 54 Battalion of CRPF launched an operation against insurgents in the Tholibari area of South Tripura district. As the operation yielded no contact, the troops withdrawing. While returning, insurgents ambushed them from a

13 January 2005

Shaheed Constable hilltop, opening heavy fire. The Parmar Ganpat troops immediately launched a counter-attack, led by SI Vaghela 10-11-1967 To Govind Bhai and Constable Parmar Ganpat Bhai. Despite sustaining severe injuries, they fought valiantly, forcing the insurgents to retreat.

Both bravehearts later succumbed to their injuries, attaining martyrdom. Their courage and sacrifice will forever inspire generations.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused

Ms. Moksha Bains

DP/556/SHD/2025 Shahdara District, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Ravi @ Sameer of FIR No.334/2023 u/s 323/341/354/506/34 IPC, P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to

answer the said complaint on or before 13.02.2025. By Order,

Ld. Judicial Magistrate First Class-02, Third Floor

APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr.PC)

Ravi @ Sameer, S/o Anees Ansari R/o Shiv Parasad Ka Makan, Gali No.6, Rajeev Colony, DLF, Ghaziabad UP has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No.334/2023 u/s 323/341/354/506/34 IPC, P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Ravi @ Sameer cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Ravi @ Sameer has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the

Office of Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, P.W.D. Moradabad

Short Term E-Procurement Notice Inviting Tenders (2nd Invitation) No. 41 /E-Tender/MBD Circle/24-25 . On behalf of the Governor of UP, tenders for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, PWD Moradabad online on website http://etender.up.nic.in from registered contractors from 15-01-2025 at 10.0 am to 24-01-2025 at 12.00 Hrs. Technical bid /Prequalification of tenders shall be opened on 24-01-2025 at 12.30 PM. in office of undersigned by tender committee in presence of authorised representatives/bidders who wish to be present. Financial bid of the tenders' who qualify in technical bid shall be opened on date and time as specified by a notice in the

office of undersigned. In case of Government holiday the required process shall be carried out on next working day.

Amount mentioned in column 5 & 7 shall be mandatory deposited by net banking only on E-Tender Portal.

Sl. No	DISTRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost including mantinance (Rs.in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs.in Lacs)	Time of completion of the work (Including rainy season)	Cost of tender documents including GST	Category of road contractor eligible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dı		rainfall in the financial year 202 short-term tenders are invited a					
1	Sambhal	SR of Asmoli to Nandpur Beta (Samli to Nandpur Beta) Road	53.00	4.65	2 Month	2354.00	A B C Road Work
2	Sambhal	SR of Sambhal Joya Saidpur Jaskoli to Shahpur Sot Road	94.00	6.70	2 Month	2354.00	A B Road Work
3	Sambhal	SR of Bhawan to Rafipur Link Road via Dhadhaul	108.00	7.40	5 Month	2354.00	A B Road Work
4	Sambhal	SR of Pathakpur Nadha Road to Serua Link Road	43.00	4.15	2 Month	2354.00	A B C Road Work
5	Sambhal	SR of Bahadur Nagar to Raipur Kala Road	42.00	4.10	2 Month	2354.00	A B C Road Work

3. In PWD technical evaluation of tenders is to be done by Prahari Software. URL for Prahar ishttp://wms.uppwd.gov.in/Prahari/ On opening of the website Prahari login page will open in which user type Contractor is to be selected. User name and password for login on Prahari shall be same as used for contractor's registration on Chnakaya Portal. Bidders have to upload all the basic information and required document on Prahari as given in Prahari in detail. If a bidder does not upload information and document on Prahari technical evaluation of the tender shall not be done and the bidder will be responsible for that.

Rules/conditions & details of the tender are available at website http://etender.up.nic.in. and

http://wms.uppwd.gov.in/Prahari (Er. S.P. Singh) **Superintending Engineer** Moradabad Circle, PWD (Er Suneel Prakash) Moradabad. **Executive Engineer**

UPID-225951 Date 10/01/2025 www.upidadv.gov.in

Provincial Division PWD

Sambhal

UPID 10wX14h HAR(1)

For and on behalf of Governor of UP Mob No. 9557104999 Mail ID:- semoradabad13@yahoo.com

RAMPUR CIRCLE, P.W.D. RAMPUR **Short Term Notice Inviting E-Tender** Dated: 02.01.2025 Letter No. 38/E –Tender R.Cir. /24-25 On behalf of the Governor of UP, tender for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Rampur

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

GENERAL MANAGER (OPERATION)

POOMPUHAR SHIPPING CORPORATION LTD.

: Poompuhar Shipping Corporation Limited, 692,

(old no 473) Anna Salai, IV Floor, Nandanam Chennai - 600 035.

Circle, PWD Rampur online on website http://etender.up.nic.in from registered contractors with UP PWD (as per column no. 10). Due to heavy rain for year 2024-25 roads in district are damaged and the sanctioned of the following works are received on 31.12.2025. Therefore Short Term Tenders are invited. The bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract. Bids must be download online from 10:00 AM on date 15.01.2025 to 03:00 PM on dated 21.01.2025 and the technical bids will be opened online date 21.01.2025 at 03:30 PM in Office of Superintending Engineer Rampur Circle PWD Rampur and Financial bids of the qualified bidders will be opened on date & time as notified.

Details of the works are following:

Sl. No	DISTRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost Excl. GST (Rs. in Lakh)	Bid Security (Rs.in Lakh)	Cost of tender documents including GST (RS.)	Time of completion of the work (Including rainy season)	Category of road contractor eligible	Address of Executive Engineer executing the work	ending	Address of Chief Engineer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1		Special repair of Shikarpur to Tajpur road.	33.00	3.30	2354.00 (Security will be accepted	02 Months (Including Rainy	"A, B & C" in Road Category	CD-2 PWD Bijnor (Hq –	Rampur Circle, PWD	Moradabad Zone, PWI Moradabad
3		Special repair of Rawana to Bulandi road.	47.00	4.35	only net banking)	Season)		Najibabad)	Rampur	
	Bijnor	Special repair of Kiratpur to Mandarwar road to Bahadarpur Budgari road.		4.55						
4		Special repair of Bijnor Nangal Najibabad road Km 29 to Mehmsapur to Dinauda road.		4.60						

The Rate adopted in the BOQ are including all other taxes but excluding GST. > The Bid Security and tender cost should be deposited online through Net Banking as per Column 7 & 8

All terms & conditions can be seen on website http://etender.up.nic.in. The bidder have to login on Prahari URL http://wms.uppwd.gov.in/Prahari to upload required documents as per Government order no. 879(1) 23-7-2020 dt. 25.08.2020 & E.N.C./H.O.D.'s up pwd order No. 4859/4M-LC/2020 dt. 27.08.20202020 dt. 25.08.2020 & E.N.C./H.O.D.'s up pwd order No. 4859/4M-LC/2020 dt. 27.08.2020

Executive Engineer CD-2, PWD, Bijnor UPID-225968 Date 10/01/2025 (Hq Najiababd) www.upidadv.gov.in Email - eepwdnjb@gmail.com

Rampur Circle, PWD, Rampur Ph. 0595 – 2351163 Email - pwdrampur@gmail.com

Superintending Engineer

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EXPRESS NETWORK

40 CRORE PILGRIMS, 45 DAYS, PRAYAGRAJ READY FOR ONE OF WORLD'S BIGGEST CONGREGATIONS

War room, more ticket counters, **CCTVs: Vaishnaw** launches slew of Railway initiatives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI. JANUARY 12

RAILWAY MINISTER Ashwini Vaishnaw Sunday launched several initiatives to enhance Railways' readiness for Maha Kumbh starting Monday in Prayagraj.

According to a press statement by the Railway Board, the initiatives include the launch of a 24x7 Kumbh War Room, CCTV cameras on all nearby stations, multilingual communication system, and additional ticket counters, among others.

"A dedicated war room at the Railway Board level has been inaugurated. It will operate 24x7, with officials from operations, commercial, RPF, mechanical, engineering, and electrical departments monitoring and coordinating the activities," Dilip Kumar, executive director for information and publicity, Railway Board, said. "A total of 1,176 CCTV cameras have been installed at nine stations in the Prayagraj region to provide live feeds for realtime monitoring," he added.

According to officials, the war room will facilitate effective coordination between the district authorities and railway officials, ensuring immediate assistance and operational efficiency. Kumar said a 12-language

announcement system has also been inaugurated at Prayagraj, Naini, Cheoki, and Subedargani stations to assist the pilgrims. "A facilitation booklet in 22

languages has been made for disseminating essential information to the pilgrims," Kumar added.

The Railway Board made an investment of ₹5,000 crore over three years to develop Kumbhrelated projects, setting up facilities such as 48 platforms, 21 foot-over bridges, 23 permanent holding areas with a combined capacity of over 1 lakh pilgrims, 554 ticketing counters, including 151 mobile UTS counters, among others.

Adopt villages to help solve issue of migration, Dhami

Dehradun: Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami Sunday urged expatriates hailing from the state to adopt villages to help address the long-running migration crisis.

Uttarakhandi Diaspora Conference, the CM said there is immense potential for investment

tourism, power generation, aromatic products, manufacturing, agriculture, horticulture, herbal products, AYUSH and wellness are key areas for investment. Significant policy and structural reforms have been undertaken to establish Uttarakhand as a prime investment destination," he said.

realising the state's aspirations.

ENS

All roads lead to the Sangam

DHEERAJ MISHRA PRAYAGRAJ, JANUARY 12

ALL ROADS in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj lead to the Ganga, especially these days and even as the Maha Kumbh, a mela hosted here every 12 years, opens its

Hundreds of boats with devotees make continuous circuits of the Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. A panoramic photograph of the shore, the brightly painted boats and the sea of devotees could easily make the river pass off as a busy maritime artery.

portals on January 13.

While the Maha Kumbh is the path to moksh (salvation) for believers, for 26-year-old boatman Anil Nishad — whose life has been "intertwined" with Ganga since birth, a fact he takes immense pride in — the mela is his livelihood.

A member of the Nishad community, whose traditional occupations are centred around rivers, he casts off his freshly painted pastel green boat, with its repaired deck, tarpaulin-covered frame and life jackets, despite sailing for two straight days.

"Aap Ganga ko humare bina paar nahi kar sakte hain. Ram ko bhi humari madad leni padi thi (You cannot cross the Ganga without boatmen like us. Even Lord Rama needed our help to cross the river)," says Anil, referring to the story of the boatman who helped Lord Rama cross the Ganga during his exile. Wrapping a saffron scarf

around his neck to protect himself from chilly morning breeze as his boat drifts along the Allahabad Fort, built by Emperor Akbar in 1583, he adds, "Locals don't use boats very often since they see and touch the river daily. I barely make about ₹400 per day now. Once the mela starts and outsiders start arriving, I hope to earn enough to get by for the whole year. Otherwise, I will have to migrate to Delhi or Mumbai for work."

Despite the city revamped, renamed Prayagraj from Allahabad



Around 50 lakh devotees took a dip at the Sangam in Prayagraj on Sunday. Vishal Srivastav

and the grandeur of the Maha Kumbh — which has its genesis in the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas — locals say their faith remain firmly intertwined in the twists, turns and ripples of the Ganga. They cite the instance of Allahabadborn Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister and a modernist, who wanted a portion of his ashes

scattered at the Triveni Sangam.

As Prayagraj prepares for the arrival of nearly 40 crore pilgrims during the 45-day mela, the city is undergoing a complete overhaul. While roads are being resurfaced and street lights installed all over, almost every wall at a prime location here either sports murals on themes of religion and women empowerment, or hoardings boasting of government achievements. For locals, the Kumbh makeover has meant that development work pending in areas for years finally got completed.

Anticipating demand, local shopkeepers have stocked up on essential religious items, including puja materials, rudraksha and tulsi garlands, and sacred texts sourced from Nepal, Banaras,

Mathura and Vrindavan.

From Shastri Bridge that spans the Ganga, as far as the eye can see, the river bank is chock-ablock with accommodations sporting tarpaulin roofs in red, blue, yellow and saffron, reminiscent of the abstract paintings made from squares and rectangles by Dutch painter and art theoretician Piet Mondrian. As religious music plays on loop, also visible from the bridge are the huge entryways erected by akharas, amusement areas for children and numerous light poles.

In the crush of saints and pilgrims looking for salvation at the Kumbh, Satyam Kumar, 23, a resident of Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, plans to cycle to Vaishno Devi, a shrine located nearly 1,600 km away in J&K, from Prayagraj after praying to Maa Ganga.

Holding a stuffed rucksack, Satyam, who works at his family's welding shop in Jabalpur, says the mela is a stopover. "I wanted to experience the Maha Kumbh. I had only heard stories of the mela since childhood," he says.

To a query on his prayer to the venerated river, he says, "I hope to become a cyclist in future. I will

pray to Maa Ganga, like I will at

Vaishno Devi, to fulfill my dream." Unlike Satyam, Shivendra Singh, 25, a government job aspirant from Uttar Pradesh's Balia, over 250 km away, has a different reason for being at the Kumbh. Shivendra, who is preparing for the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) exams, says he arrived in Prayagraj nearly seven months back to prepare for the test. To get "different perspectives on life" while he studied for the exam, Shivendra, a farmer's son, decided to open a tea stall for the mela.

"What better place to meet everyone – from babas (saints) to adhikaris (officials) — than the Kumbh? This experience will prepare me for any uncertainty in the future. You are aware of the situation of government jobs in the country, aren't you? says Shivendra, a farmer's son.

Losses in agriculture brought Deepak Kumar, 48, a resident of Phoolpur, around 35 km away, to the Kumbh. "I faced losses in farming. Some people from my village work for this private contractor, so I decided to join them. At this age, I don't want to work

in a city," he says.

Wearing a neon green jacket, Deepak says he makes ₹416 daily for an eight-hour shift that involves keeping river banks clean for a private contractor. "Dekhiye, yeh Ganga ki mahima hai. Yahan har kisi ko aana hi hoga. Ganga me aaye bina kahin mukti nahi hai (This is the glory of Ganga. Everyone will have to come here. There is no salvation without coming to Ganga)," he says, before moving on to clean the next spot.

For Jitendra Giri, a sadhu associated with the Shri Panchayati Akhada Mahanirvani, the Maha Kumbh is the "biggest congregation of sadhus in the world".

Jitendra, who wears a saffron dhoti, sports red chandan (sandalwood) on his forehead and has tied his long dreadlocks on the back of head, says becoming a sadhu involves making balidaans (sacrifices). "But we don't believe in living a miserable life. We have all the facilities that you do. Babas using luxury vehicles is the norm. In fact, we all strive to get there too. I am an orphan. Without these akharas, where will people like me go?" he says.

SKM, agitating farmers to meet today, discuss 'joint struggle'

RAAKHIJAGGA CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 12

ACCEDING TO request of Punjab farmers protesting at Khanauri and Shambhu border points, Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Sunday advanced from January 15 to 13 the proposed meeting for deciding on a joint fight.

The move came a day after the SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) wrote to the SKM to hold the meeting on January 12 or 13 in the wake of "deteriorating" health of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal.

A six-member committee of SKM, which visited the Khanauri protest site on Friday, had invited the SKM (Non-Political) and KMM for a meeting on January 15 in Patiala for unity among farmer bodies for a joint fight against the Centre to press for farmers' demands including a legal guarantee to MSP. In a letter to SKM (Non-

Political) and the KMM on Sunday, the SKM said after considering the request of protesting farmers in a meeting of its national coordination committee, it has been decided that the meeting will now be held on January 13 at 11 am at Guru Tegh Bahadur gurdwara in Patran, Patiala.

The meeting will discuss details of how to carry out a joint struggle by all the three platforms, it said.

Surjit Singh Phul, president of BKU Krantikari, a constituent of SKM (Non Political), said, "We had requested the SKM to hold the meeting at Patran and they have agreed to it. Around 5-6 members from SKM (Non-Political) and KMM will sit for the meeting. We hope that something positive comes out of it."

SKM CALLS FOR JAN 26 TRACTOR RALLIES

New Delhi: SKM on Sunday called for countrywide tractor marches on January 26 and demanded that PM Narendra Modi hold discussions with farmers over their demands. The SKM statement said, "The farmers will parade demanding that the PM immediately convene discussions with all the Kisan organisations on the struggle and save the life of Jagjit Singh Dallewal, immediately withdraw the antifarmer, anti-federal NPFAM, and enact a law for MSP at C2+50% with legally guaranteed procurement."

Raminder Singh Patiala. member national coordination committee of SKM, said, "We had a meeting of our NCC on Saturday night in which we decided to hold the meeting with SKM (Non-Political) and KMM on Monday at 11 am at Patran town. Six members of unity committee will sit for the meeting."

P Krishna Prasad, national finance secretary of All India Kisan Sabha, a constituent of SKM, said, "The meeting will decide on modalities of how to run the protest unitedly and also to press the Centre to initiate a dialogue with farmer unions. As of now PM Narendra Modi is refusing to budge, despite the fact Dallewal's fast-unto-death entered 48th day on Sunday." Raminder Singh Patiala, one of the six members of SKM unity committee, said, "We are working towards achieving broader unity on our shared demands so that we can raise our voices together." **WITH PTI**

tells diaspora

Inaugurating the International

in Uttarakhand. "Sectors such as adventure

He urged the diaspora to contribute to solving the critical issue of migration by adopting and developing villages and towns in the state. He laid stress on the importance of their skills, experience and technical expertise in

He announced the formation of a diaspora cell for better coordination and support for expa-



SEA SIDE UP

Giant kites in Ahmedabad's skies on Sunday ahead of the two-day Makar Sankranti celebrations. The city will host the **International Kite Festival from January 14-15.** Express

IIT-Kharagpur student found hanging in hostel room, probe underway

SWEETY KUMARI

KOLKATA, JANUARY 12

A THIRD-YEAR BTech electrical engineering student at IIT-Kharagpur was found hanging in his hostel room on Sunday morning. The student was identified as

Shaon Malik (21) who hailed from Kasba in Kolkata.

Malik's death came to light after his parents came to meet him at the hostel Sunday morning. They found his room locked from inside and there was no response despite repeated calls. His parents forcibly entered the room and found him hanging, said a police officer.

"The body of the student has been recovered from the hostel (Azad Hall). We are looking into all the aspects," SP (Paschim Medinipur) Dhritiman Sarkar said.

Police said that the postmortem and magistrate inquest have been completed, and the postmortem was videographed and done in the presence of the student's parents.

"Prima facie, there seems to be no external injury. However, it is too early to indicate something. An unnatural death case has been registered on the basis of a complaint by his family," said a police officer.

"Malik last spoke to his mother on Saturday. We have taken his laptop, mobile among other things," the officer said, adding that the parents visited the son every Sunday.

In a statement, IIT-Kharagpur said Malik was an academically gifted student with CGPA above 9. "With a sense of utter shock, the students, staff and faculty members of IIT-Kharagpur deeply mourn the sudden loss of Shaon Malik, a third-year student from the Department of Electrical Engineering... Known for his intelligence, dedication, and promising future in the field of electrical engineering, Malik was also an active member of Druheen — Bengali Technology Dramatics Society at IIT-

Kharagpur."

2 days after notice, 25 owners of meat shops near Kashi Vishwanath booked

MANISH SAHU LUCKNOW, JANUARY 12

FIRS HAVE been registered against the owners of 25 meat shops located near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi for allegedly defying official or-

ders, police said on Sunday. This came two days after the Varanasi Municipal Corporation issued notices to the owners of 26 meat shop operating within a 2-km radius of the temple, directing them to shut down for al-

legedly "violating rules". The notices also pointed out to unsanitary conditions in the shops, including the open sale of meat, which caused public unrest and posed a risk of spreading infectious diseases. Additionally, the notices highlighted violations

of FSSAI regulations. Three FIRs were filed at the Chowk and Dashashwamedh police stations under Sections 223 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant and 325 (mischief by killing or maiming animal) of BNS on the complaint of the municipal veterinary officer, DCP (Kashi Zone)

Gaurav Banswal said. Last year, the Municipal Corporation had unanimously passed a resolution to ban the sale of meat within a 2-km radius of the temple premises. Although notices were issued to shop owners at the

time, no action was taken. The meat shop owners, on the other hand, said they were being harassed through orders to close their shops without viable alternative arrangements and that no action had been taken against liquor shops operating within a two-km radius of the temple despite a resolution prohibited liquor shops in that area

tion of meat shop owners met Varanasi Mayor Ashok. The Mayor asked them to identify alternative locations for their shops and assured them that the MC would allocate them space accordingly. The delegation is scheduled to

To address this issue, a delega-

Next Maharashtra BJP chief? Why Ravindra Chavan made working president

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE

MUMBAI, JANUARY 12

A FOUR-TIME MLA, Ravindra Chavan's ability to deliver results with a "no questions asked" attitude is likely to have tipped the scales in his favour as he was appointed Maharashtra BJP's working president on Saturday, taking him one step closer to becoming the state BJP chief.

"We appoint Ravindra Chavan as the working president of the Maharashtra state BJP," party chief J P Nadda said on Saturday. Highly placed sources in the BJP said the working president tag was just another step for the 54-year-old Chavan towards taking complete charge of the state BJP once the organisational poll process is complete.



Ravindra Chavan's Maratha roots would send out a message to the community

A senior leader said Chavan's Maratha roots would also send out a strong message to the community, which has been in the limelight over the past three years due to the quota agitation

led by Manoj Jarange-Patil. Seen to be a close associate of Maharashtra CM Devendra

Fadnavis, the Dombivali MLA's elevation came as a surprise to many within the party who believed he would be inducted into the Cabinet. Speculation about Chavan being entrusted with an important organisa-

tional role had gained momentum after he missed out on a ministerial berth while state BJP chief Chandrashekhar

Bawankule made the cut. Chavan has also received praise from Bawankule. "He is a loyal and committed karyakarta and does whatever work is assigned to him wholeheartedly and with no questions. This makes him acceptable to all within the organisation as well

Chavan forayed into local body

as party leaders," he said.

politics during his student days and rose up the ranks. He served as a corporator in Kalyan-Dombivali Municipal Corporation in 2000 and was also chairperson of the standing committee. In 2009, he first contested Assembly

> he has retained since. He also served as a minister in the first Fadnavis government between 2016 and 2019 and held key port-

polls from Dombivali, a seat

folios such as Ports, Medical Information Education, Technology, and Food and Civil Supplies. In the Mahayuti government, he was the minister of the Public Works Department (excluding public undertakings) between 2022 and 2024.

Chavan ruffled feathers during his stint as PWD Minister when Khed MLA Ramdas Kadam of ally Shiv Sena termed him as a "useless minister" to highlight the non-completion of the Mumbai-Goa highway. "Even Lord Ram returned after 14 years in exile but the highway is showing no signs of completion," Kadam had said.

Seen to be a streetsmart politician who knows when and when not to take up a fight against rivals, last December Chavan was entrusted with responsibility of the party's enrollment drive in the state, where he achieved the target of bringing 1.5 crore people into BIP's fold. "When the party is in power, organisational roles become very important due to the need for perfect coordination," a senior BJP leader said, adding that Chavan's style of working would ensure it happened.

With Chavan being entrusted with the party's affairs in the 39

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gion, seen to be the stronghold of Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray, another leader pointed out his elevation signals the BJP's intent to make deep inroads in the region. "It also sends out a subtle message to Deputy CM Eknath Shinde, who has been exerting upmanship across Thane, Kalyan, Dombivali and Navi Mumbai," the leader said.

Assembly seats of the Konkan re-

Chavan was also one of the BJP leaders who had opposed the candidature of Shrikant Shinde, Kalyan MP and Deputy CM Shinde's son, during last year's Lok Sabha polls citing the junior Shinde's "high handedness".

In his new role, Chavan is likely to have his task cut out and will need to play a key role in rebuilding the party across the 355 talukas and 36 districts of the state.

The "shat pratishat BIP (100% BIP) goal will also likely hinge on his effort as the party aims to win the 2029 Assembly polls on their own without the need for allies. The newly appointed working

president has had his share of controversies too. In 2016, he left the BJP red-faced after he wrongly evoked former US President Abraham Lincoln who, he claimed. had picked a "piglet" up from the drain and cleaned it, to allude to PM Narendra Modi and Fadnavis uplifting Dalits. As the video of his speech went viral, Chavan tried to control damage and said his speech was edited. "I have never spoken a word against the (Dalit) community," he said. The NCP, then undivided, did not take the incident too kindly and organised a "naming ceremony" in which a pig was named after Chavan.

meet the Mayor next week again.

WORDLY WISE

OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER.

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SARKAR & CAMPUS

Liberalising V-C eligibility is a good step forward. Letting Raj Bhavan — or CMO — choose them is many steps back

ORE THAN THREE-AND-A-HALF years after the government announced that it would implement a new National Education Policy (NEP), the task of reforming higher education institutions remains a work in progress. The challenge is to remove persisting deficits and enable universities to cater to the demands of the modern knowledge economy. Addressing these imperatives requires the higher education regulator, UGC, to not just set standards but also act as an enabler. In the past, the agency has attracted criticism for its tendency to over-regulate. The draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges) Regulations 2025 signal a welcome change in the regulator's approach, but only to an extent. Stringent rules that made undergraduate and postgraduate degrees the qualifying criteria to teach a discipline have been relaxed. This flexibility in recruitment aligns with the NEP's effort to break disciplinary silos. Equally significant are the provisions that allow senior industry experts and public administrators to apply for a VC's post. Lifting the cap on contract jobs, one hopes, will be used to attract diverse talent and not keep the talented insecure and beholden to their bosses. However, by strengthening the role of state governors in appointing university heads, the draft rules mark a disappointing departure from the NEP's thrust on institutional autonomy. Worse, they signal once again that the sarkar, in this case, the Centre, is the arbiter of excellence.

Opening the VC's post to professionals outside academia could increase the pool of experts required to helm higher education institutions. The move creates possibilities for collaboration between academia and industry — key at a time the contours of higher education are being reshaped by technology. The salience of this cannot be overstated when the higher education system, barring select institutions, has been impervious to the imperatives of an aspiring society, especially the skill deficits in the young. Realising the potency of these liberalising initiatives, will, however, require unshackling the university ecosystem from the centralising tendencies of the past, when several VCs were treated as political appointees. That universities are caught in the crossfire between governors and state governments — especially in non-BJP-ruled states such as Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu — shows that academic freedom in the country's higher educational institutions continues to be a fraught issue. In the draft rules, the clause empowering state governors, as chancellors, to constitute a search committee to find VCs undermines the university's autonomy. Raj Bhavan and the UGC will have one nominee each in this three-member panel, while the university will have just one representative.

Opposition-ruled governments are upset at the prospect of what's tantamount to a Central veto in the appointment of VCs. To get the best person to lead a campus needs a process that insulates the campus from political pressure — from the Centre as well as from state governments. A TMC loyalist chosen as a VC in West Bengal or a CPM member in Kerala could be as damaging to a campus as one imposed by Raj Bhavan. The UGC would do well to study how some of the more progressive institutions in the world give a say to participants in the system — faculty bodies, domain experts, even student associations — in choosing heads of institutions. The draft rules will be in the public domain for about a month. The government must reach out to invite a range of ideas and voices; give greater thought to designing rigorous appointment procedures that are insulated from party politics and, most importantly, resist the temptation of believing that a good rubber-stamp makes for a good academic leader.

A RECURRING TRAGEDY

Deaths of rat-hole miners in Assam's coal mine, 10 years after NGT ban, raise urgent questions governments must address

RAWLING THROUGH A narrow hole as the water gushed in, clinging to the box that lifts coal from the pit, Rajeev Barman found his way out of the coal mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district on January 6. But nine of his coworkers, working as rat-hole miners, couldn't make it. After six days of rescue operations, the team has recovered four bodies and is continuing its search for five missing workers. This is not the first time, however, that rat-hole mining has led to disaster and death. In 2018, 15 rat-hole miners died after being trapped for two weeks in a coal mine in Meghalaya. Rat-hole miners dying due to mudslides, leakage of poisonous gas, and rising water levels have often been reported from the northeastern states. And yet the political will required to prevent this recurring tragedy is still missing.

In 2014, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned rat-hole mining. However, the political establishment seemed unwilling to accept this order. On September 24, 2015, the Congress government of Meghalaya, led by the then CM Conrad Sangma, passed a resolution in the legislative assembly requesting the Centre to invoke paragraph 12 A (b) of the sixth schedule to exempt the state from the purview of central mining laws. According to Meghalaya police records, between April 2014 and November 2018, there were at least 477 violations of the NGT order. On March 16, 2022, responding to a question in Parliament on whether the government had taken cognisance of the rat-hole mining incident in the North Eastern Region (NER), the minister of mines, Pralhad Joshi, said, "As per the Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, the State Governments are empowered to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transporta-

Passing the buck to the state government may be a politically viable option to avoid responsibility, but it is not going to stop the dangerous practice. In the northeastern states, where the layers of coal are thin and rat-hole mining offers much higher wages than MGN-REGA and other government-run schemes, this illegal activity gets a free run. This is especially so when the politician-bureaucracy nexus turns an unseeing eye. The implementation of the NGT order, in letter and spirit, needs an acknowledgement of the problem and the political will to address it. This must begin, before any more lives are lost, urgently.

Freeze Frame

E P UNNY



A crack in the MAGA edifice



Scuffle inside the Trump tent on H-1B visas is symptomatic of a larger failure of policy and imagination

BHASKAR CHAKRAVORTI

WITH NO INSURRECTIONISTS invading the US Capitol in Washington, DC, this January 6, America has been robbed of a juicy fight, something we have come to expect after a US presidential election. But all is not lost. Mercifully, there are enough reckless individuals within the extreme MAGA wing of the Donald J Trump coalition who are unreasonable in a different enough way from the reckless individuals in the coalition's tech wing. So, we have a fight.

Laura Loomer, self-anointed MAGA highpriestess, took issue with the nomination of a harmless enough chap called Sriram Krishnan to the harmless enough position of "senior AI advisor" to Trump. Neither Loomer nor Krishnan is particularly consequential, but her warning that Krishnan's nomination signalled a threat to America from "third-world invaders from India" became a call to arms for the extreme MAGA — exactly the outcome a professional conspiracist hopes for. Krishnan, an otherwise chatty tech podcast host, has remained mum and it was left to invaders from a different third-world country (South Africa), techies Elon Musk and David Sacks, to speak up in support of invaders from everywhere. It is also sweet that both Musk and Sacks are White — and have roles in the upcoming administration. Now, techies are up in arms as well. US-born Vivek Ramaswamy bashed his home country for venerating mediocrity.

In the meantime, a demoralised Trump opposition finally has something to cling to: A crack in the MAGA edifice. Finally, a civil war to celebrate. The commander-in-chief in-waiting came out in favour of H-1B invaders, giving the techies an early win. Trump may have been a bit confused about the distinction between an H-1B visa holder and an immigrant he hires to mow the grass on one of his golf courses, but for now, the visa programme is safe. But you can never be too sure with Trump. In his first term, he had issued an executive order temporarily banning H-1B visas, which a federal court had struck down. This time, Trump's bromance with the techies may have caused a change of heart, but all things to do with the heart are ephemeral for the president-elect.

Indians are in the eye of the storm. It was

Firms with H-1B visa holders have a higher rate of patents and patent citations. Immigrants are twice as likely to start a business as native-born Americans. The US system of higher education would come apart without foreign-born students, researchers and faculty. The Darwinian process of immigrating (beginning with the visa hurdles at US embassies or slipping through the border with Mexico) brings a certain degree of can-do-itness, which accounts for the accomplishments of the displaced. Contrary to the misinformation spread by Trump himself, immigrants, both legal and illegal, commit far fewer crimes

than US citizens.

an Indian-born, Krishnan, whose nomination set off the row; Indians are the majority of H-1B visa holders; Indians clearly aren't White Europeans, who according to Loomer "built" America. But let's put this incident in perspective with three wider contextual issues. Issue one: The H-1B visa programme —

the largest temporary work visa for foreigners in the US — is beset with problems. Complaints come from those who want it banned as well as those who want it expanded. The H-1B programme allows employers to hire foreign workers "in speciality occupations or as fashion models of distinguished merit and ability," when US workers of equivalent skills cannot be found. (Who am I to question why "fashion models" deserve the special call-out?). Populist politics is in vogue in the US, so politicians are complaining about the programme being misused to hire cheap — as opposed to American — labour. Since the visa is tied to the sponsoring organisation, it could bond the worker leading to further exploitation. Others worry that US workers are overlooked and as a result, fewer Americans study STEM subjects and the US education system is failing them, creating a vicious cycle.

Champions of the programme argue that the demand for such visas vastly exceeds the annual cap and argue against the caps for each country. Moreover, the electronic registration is abused by companies gaming the system through multiple filings, which leads to delays and a lottery creating uncertainty for everyone. Musk claims the programme is essential to retain the top 0.1 per cent of engineering talent, but not everyone in the programme is highly skilled and many outstanding applicants are denied.

The flawed H-1B is part of an overall flawed immigration policy system in the US. Recent administrations have all promised to fix it and have failed. Don't expect Trump's second coming to find a fair solution.

Issue two: Trump wants to out-compete China and America badly needs that foreignborn talent. A recent US Department of Energy commissioned report found that the US is losing its competitive advantage in STEM to

China. Immigrants have been critical to building artificial intelligence models as well as to installing artificial turf on a Trump property. It has kept the country younger than its European counterparts with a vibrant workforce. Firms with H-1B visa holders have a higher rate of patents and patent citations. Immigrants are twice as likely to start a business as native-born Americans. The US system of higher education would come apart without foreign-born students, researchers and faculty. The Darwinian process of immigrating (beginning with the visa hurdles at US embassies or slipping through the border with Mexico) brings a certain degree of can-do-itness, which accounts for the accomplishments of the displaced. Contrary to the misinformation spread by Trump himself, immigrants, both legal and illegal, commit far fewer crimes than US citizens.

Issue three: The H-1B storm is larger than the teacup in which it is brewing. It is part of a larger war over who can cosy up to the Big Boss. The techies see opportunities for moneymaking in business-building without pesky regulatory guardrails and installing technocratic "efficiency" solutions and the conspiracists see opportunities for money-making from large digital followerships and selling conspiracies. The Boss, in the meantime, thrives on the attention.

While our focus is on immigration, the real issue is a much wider scuffle inside the Trump circus tent, which at some point will explode beyond it. As opposed to the false fears of invasion of America, the ill effects of that explosion will invade every other part of the world. Worsening the broken immigration policy or failures on other pressing matters: Reversing action on climate change, uncontrolled rush into crypto or to Mars, worsening the misery in conflict zones in the Middle East, Africa or Ukraine, unpreparedness for the next pandemic. Who needs invaders from the third world? America has invaded itself.

The writer is dean of Global Business at The Fletcher School at Tufts University and senior (non-resident) fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress



No, Mr Subrahmanyan

CEO's prescriptions against work-life balance are jarring and insensitive

DEEPIKA SINGH

IT IS A brand new week and a brand new CEO type telling us how many hours we should be spending in our workplaces. If Narayana Murthy's repeated batting for a 70-hour workweek was triggering for you, I suggest you sit down and sip a glass of water before hearing the latest one. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) chairman S N Subrahmanyan, in an annual meeting with employees, emphasised that they should work, wait for it, 90 hours a week — including Sundays.

"How long can you stare at your wife, how long can the wife stare at the husband?" he asks. Within a few hours of surfacing, the video went viral, sparking angry reactions, retorts, and condemnation, a notable one being from actor Deepika Padukone who called the statement "shocking" in an Instagram story.

To be sure, unlike Murthy, Subrahmanyan's advice was not doled out on a social media platform for the general public. But thanks to a purportedly leaked video, we got a glimpse of what happens behind closed (glass) doors in many corporate houses.

One may blame the era Murthy and Subramanyam come from for the mentality but our younger corporate dude-bros are no different. Not long ago, Bombay Shaving Company's CEO Shantanu Deshpande was panned for advising 22-year-olds to "put in the 18-hour days for at least 4-5 years". More recently, an old video of Ola's Bhavish Aggarwal went viral in which he could be seen terming work-life balance a "Western construct".

One thread that binds these young and old CEOs is the assertion that "I work on

Subrahmanyan and those of his ilk conveniently seem to be skipping one point of note: They are the CEOs, raking in millions in salary, apart from other bonuses, perks, ESOPs and what have you. The employee that they are expecting to selectively emulate them, on the other hand, is mostly an average paid worker arriving at the office on a bike taxi after finishing off all the household chores because she can't afford a battery of domestic workers that makes ignoring the home a little bit easier.

Sundays, too".

But Subrahmanyan and those of his ilk conveniently seem to be skipping one point of note: They are the CEOs, raking in millions in salary, apart from other bonuses, perks, ESOPs and what have you. The employee that they are expecting to selectively emulate them, on the other hand, is mostly an average paid worker arriving at the office on a bike taxi after finishing off all the household chores because she can't afford a battery of domestic workers that makes ignoring the home a little bit easier.

The advice given by Subramanyam to his employees is untenable under any circumstances but is particularly jarring since it comes close on the heels of news of a few young CEOs succumbing to cardiac arrest and other stressinduced diseases in the recent past. Amid this, asking employees to come even on sick days is likely to trigger a wave of backlash.

To press his point, Subrahmanyan goes on to share an anecdote about a Chinese person he met who asserted that China could surpass the United States "any day" since Chinese workers put in 90 hours a week, whereas Americans only work 50.

But here is the thing: There is little evidence of China surpassing the US as of now. There is something for which there is solid evidence, however — the four-day work-week.

In pilot programmes run by the non-profit 4 Day Week Global in 2022, almost half (49 per cent) of the participating UK organisations said that a shorter work-week led to improved productivity. A survey by Gartner Inc found a

shorter week to be a favoured recruitment and retention strategy.

More recently, Tokyo set a new precedent in workplace reform by introducing a four-day work-week for government employees in a move to support working mothers with the governor emphasising that they would ensure "no one has to give up their career due to life events such as childbirth or childcare."

Subrahmanyan and others' insensitive remarks on personal relationships undermine the importance of family time; they trivialise familial bonds. They are particularly uncharitable towards women who continue to shoulder a majority of household responsibilities, not to mention the emotional burden.

So, here is a small list of things that people do when they are not in the office, or not staring at their wife/husband: Spend time with their children and parents, nurture a hobby, meet friends, attend events around town, cook, clean, work out, rest, unwind. All these activities help increase their happiness quotient, which ultimately leads to honest and fruitful work in the office.

So, instead of pressing them to work 90 hours a week, the question Subrahmanyan needs to ask his employees is: "Why do you need 90 hours to finish your task? Please take a break. Relax and unwind. And instead of staring at your wife, why not help her around the house?"

As the aphorism goes, work smarter not harder.

deepika.singh@expressindia.com

JANUARY 13, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO



PM on India's Needs

PRIME MINISTER RAJIV Gandhi said that he had come to the conclusion that what the country needed most was discipline. Gandhi said discipline was wanting "on the streets, on the road, in public life, in the Central government, the various departments and the state governments." He said, "If there is no discipline, we cannot progress at all."

INDO-PAK RESUME TALKS

THE FOREIGN SECRETARIES of India and Pakistan are to meet in Maldives where they are bound to discuss steps to pull Indo-Pakistan relations out of logiam. Even if the two governments do not appear near taking a policy decision to resume the dialogue on these drafts, the foreign secretaries' meeting might turn out to be significant because of the opportunity it will provide to establish fresh high-level contacts.

TULF DEMANDS ACTION

THETHREE-MEMBER Tamil United Liberation Front delegation, headed by its president, Sivasithamparam, has urged the Indian government to take "effective action" to stop killings of innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka. The delegation impressed upon the Ministry of External Affairs, with whom they had a fourhour discussion, the urgent need for such action to prevent further killings. They said that the Sri Lankan government was bent upon a military solution to the ethnic problem rather than a negotiated settlement.

CHARAN SINGH ON PM

CHARAN SINGH, THE Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party president, called Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on January 12. Before he met with the PM, Singh issued a statement praising the new government and pledging his party's cooperation to it "in making a serious effort to preserve and strengthen national unity, remove unemployment, etc."

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025

THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"E-governance is the future. It is also not a novel idea. Our state's stumbling progress towards it underlines that the country needs proven experts leading all IT-related affairs instead of retired military personnel or professional paperpushers drawn from the nation's burgeoning bureaucracy." — DAWN, PAKISTAN

An ill-judged

speech

Justice Shekhar Yadav's remarks do a disservice

to his office, and institution. They point to a

challenge that cannot be ignored

Satvik Varma

A JUDGE OF a constitutional court is the last

person one would expect to be espousing

divisive ideas of "us versus them." Hence,

the remarks by Justice Shekhar Yadav of the

Allahabad High Court have drawn unneces-

sary attention towards our judiciary. Judges

swear an oath to bear true faith and alle-

giance to the Constitution and to uphold the

sovereignty and integrity of India. Justice

without fear or favour, affection, or ill will is

cardinal to our constitutional values and judicial functioning. Justice Yadav's comments

to withstand isolated statements even by

one of its own. Regrettably, these are no

longer solitary utterances and in recent

times, the Supreme Court (SC) has had to in-

tervene, on more than a few occasions, and

admonish sitting judges for remarks both

on and off the bench. Judges do not merely

comprise an institution whose sole task is

to dispense justice, but they act as the pri-

mary line of defence against any assault on

the Constitution. As a senior SC judge re-

cently said: "High Courts are guardians of

fundamental rights and our Constitution."

Thus, when brazen words stem from con-

stitutional functionaries, it wounds the spirit

ligious syncretism, communal remarks can-

not be passed down as inconsequential. It

was, therefore, comforting that the SC

Collegium summoned Justice Yadav for a sit-

down and, as reported, both counselled and

cautioned him. The judge is believed to have

blamed the media for selective quoting and

distorting his words. However, one can't

overlook that the learned judge was mind-

ful of media presence and even quipped that

he didn't have the slightest hesitation in

sharing his views despite whatever the

in his judicial capacity — for judges speak

only through their judgments — but as com-

ments at a seemingly private seminar, de-

spite being held inside the court premises.

During his speech, Justice Yadav shared that

his colleagues on the bench had quizzed him

about what he may say on the topic,

"Constitutional Necessity of Uniform Civil

Code," and had even reminded him that he

was a sitting High Court judge. Considering

all of this, there can be no doubt that Justice

Yadav was aware that his remarks would

evoke the reaction they did. It is in this

context that his words have been termed

as "hate speech" and an "incitement to

of speech and expression saddled only

with "reasonable restrictions." However,

there are areas where the caveat of reasonable restrictions does not come in the way of speech, inflammatory, or other-

wise. A pertinent example of such un-cur-

Our Constitution guarantees freedom

communal disharmony."

Justice Yadav's remarks were made not

In a country founded on the ideals of re-

of our Constitution.

media may publish.

Of course, our judiciary is robust enough

clearly strayed away from that.

The leaders our universities need

Draft UGC regulations remove ambiguities in processes to select VCs, instil flexibility. But resisting external interference, raising research standards, will pose challenges



ASHOK THAKUR AND S S MANTHA

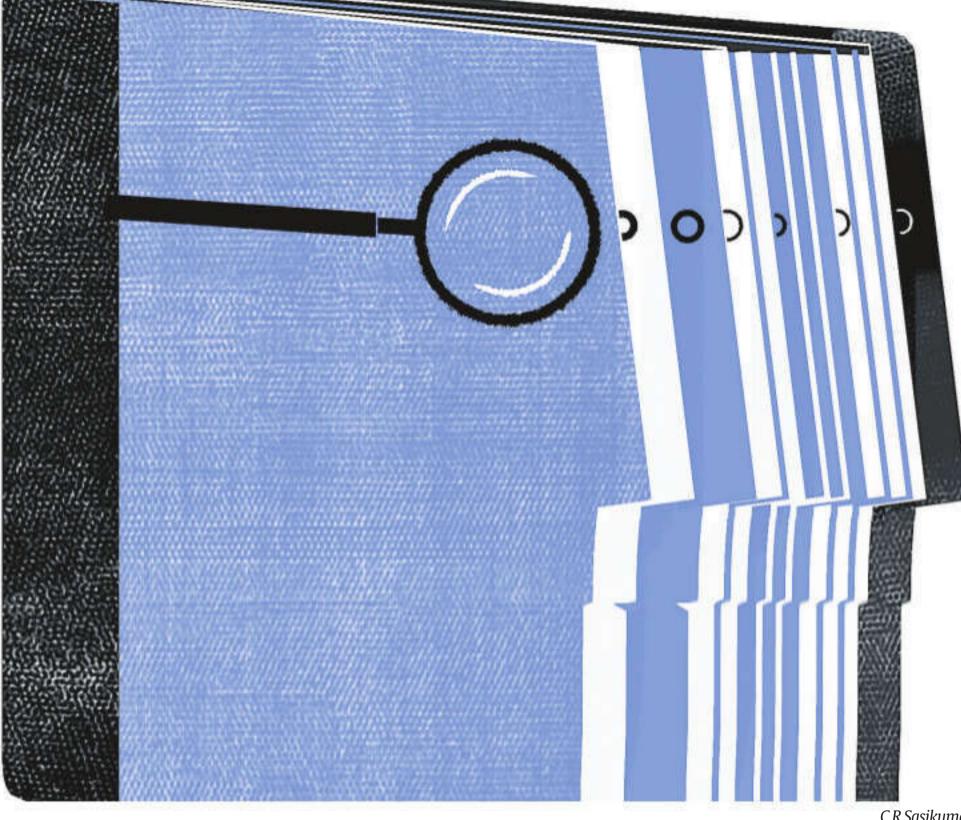
THE UGC'S RECENT draft regulations — Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education — attempt to represent the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP). They also seek to remove ambiguities in the selection process for the post of Vice-Chancellor (VC) as well as open up the position for non-academics. The VC's post is central to the function-

ing of a university. As the academic and administrative head of the university, he/she chairs the council of the university, the board of faculties and the finance committee of the university. The VC represents the university externally, both within and overseas. He/she is also responsible for securing the university's financial base and making it robust enough to allow the delivery of the institution's mission, aims and objectives. The mandate of this post is the creation of knowledge for humanity/universe — the term "university" derives from this objective. Peter Mathieson, VC, University of Edinburgh, once summed up this imperative aptly: "Universities are not just about learning. They are about creating knowledge, questioning the status quo, and making the world a better place through research and education." The regulation clears ambiguities in the

formation of the search-cum-selection committee to appoint VCs. Such powers are now vested in the Governor-Chancellors or Visitors. Earlier, the government would seek the nominee of the Governor-Chancellor from a list of three names it supplied. The Governor-Chancellor will now nominate his representative. A UGC nominee was always a part of the search panel which is as it should be, since the maintenance of the quality/academic standards is its mandate. The third member will be nominated by the apex body of the university like the Management Council or Senate. These bodies may have representatives with affiliations to the ruling party in the state. However, state governments have been complaining that they are left with no voice in the selection of the VC.

In recent times, the VC's post has attracted controversy in some states. Some state governments have tried to replace the Governor-Chancellor with a Chief Minister-Chancellor. This turn of events is ironic because the President of India and the Governors were given this role to keep politics out.

Regarding the opening up of the post of VC to non-academics, one cannot but be reminded of the Kalyani Mathivanan vs State (2015) case in which the Madras High Court famously remarked: "Today, Albert Einstein cannot be appointed as the Vice Chancellor of any University in India, unless he fulfils the qualifications prescribed by the regulator". Flexibility in appointment processes is there-



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At the same time, they could

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in internationalisation.

help bring in a professional

C R Sasikumar

fore an imperative. At the same time, this should not lead to a scenario where the "eminence" of the post may be contested. To avoid such situations, the draft proposes that industry experts, public sector veterans, and senior administrators or experienced professionals can be directly appointed as VCs. This is a bold move. However, resisting interference by vested interests could be a challenge.

A search committee for the selection of a VC in a US university consists of participants in the university's processes – senior administrators like provosts, deans, faculty representatives, staff members, even students (occasionally) and trustees or board members. In the UK, a search committee typically has university governors/trustees, senior university leaders, such as Pro-VCs, Deputy VCs, faculty representatives and external advisors or search firms. Faculty and even students are a part of the search committee paving the way for a most inclusive and transparent search mechanism.

Institutions like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Stanford University are multifaceted and deeply impactful, though it's worth noting that these universities primarily use the title of Chancellor or President to refer to the highest executive leadership. Here, the board of trustees form a search committee that engages with various university constituencies to develop a list of qualifications and desired qualities in a new president, then consults with all stakeholders, and identifies suitable candidates. This involves formal interviews conducting background checks and making

assessments. It's also worth noting that in the US or the UK, there are no regulators who set standards for such appointments.

Some other provisions of the draft regulations are forward-looking. Waiving the requirement of clearing the UGC-NET examination for an entry-level assistant professor's post in technical institutions for instance. A ME or Mtech degree with at least 55 per cent marks would suffice. Removing the cap on contract teacher appointments is in line with the NEP's objectives and must be welcomed. This could help fill up the large number of vacancies in several of the country's universities.

As members of a progressive society, we share the education minister's optimism on these regulations. However, we may need to pause and ponder if we are in sync with the best practices in the world. Our universities are starved of funds today. Eminent people from systems outside the universities, such as representatives of industry bodies or the services sector, may need to understand the ethos of a university before they deliver on its objectives. At the same time, they could help bring in a professional perspective and facilitate the creation of endowments. The challenge for vice-chancellors today — in whatever way he/she is selected — is to help raise the research bar and help in internationalisation. That could help raise the position of our universities and place them among the best in the world. We hope these regulations will help in that pursuit.

Thakur is former Secretary Education Gol and Mantha is former Chairman, AICTE

tailed speech would be remarks made in Parliament, which are covered by privilege as provided under our Constitution. This ensures that no parliamentarian should operate under a looming threat of legal action for their utterances during parliamentary discourse. Still, such immunity from legal action does not extend to these members outside Parliament. We may remember that parliamentarians and even sitting chief ministers and Union ministers have tendered unconditional apologies before the Supreme Court for their public comments. In a system governed by the rule of law, whilst remarks made by judges discharging their judicial functions are entitled to absolute privilege, such protection cannot extend to incendiary public speeches made outside the courtroom. Hence, reports that the Supreme Court collegium has asked Justice Yadav to apologise are in keeping with what the Court has sought from others, including our elected representatives. In the past three weeks, the apology has not been forthcoming and there are now reports that the Chief Justice of India has sought a fresh report from Justice Yadav's

A Private Member's bill — the Hate Crimes and Hate Speech (Combat Prevention and Punishment) Bill, 2022 – was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, but other than sparking sporadic debates, it yielded no constructive action, let alone promulgation. Perhaps it's time to revisit the need for such legislation.

parent High Court.

At moments like this, one is reminded of the principles from the "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life," which were adopted by the full court of the SC in the late 1990s. It resolved that "a judge, like any other citizen, is entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association, and assembly, but in exercising such rights, a judge shall always conduct himself or herself in such a manner as to preserve the dignity of the judicial office and the impartiality and independence of the judiciary." As the eloquent Justice E S Venkataramiah wrote, "The life of a judge does not really call for great acts of self-sacrifice; but it does insist upon small acts of self-denial almost every day." His illustrious daughter, who is a sitting SC judge, reminded us of his words recently.

The framers of our Constitution were entrusted with the seemingly difficult responsibility of stitching together a civic society in a country, which at the time, had witnessed the extremities of religious divides. They succeeded in creating a constitution based on the ideals of liberty and fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual. They created a pluralistic society where religious identities, views and ideas varied, but we were bound together by the virtues of unity in diversity. The Constitution did not seek to create a country for any religious denomination but built a nation for Indians who came in different colours and with varying religious beliefs. The members of the Constituent Assembly chose the opening words to our Constitution's preamble carefully, "We the People of India." This leaves no room for any conversations about us versus them,

> The writer is a Senior Advocate based in New Delhi

Planning for a hotter world

Climate resilience must move to mainstream of financial priorities

VISHWAS CHITALE

ON THE FIRST day of January 2025, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced that 2024 was the hottest year on record since the agency started recording temperature data back in 1901. Even Brazil, China, Indonesia, Germany and Mali declared 2024 as the hottest year on record. However, considering the way India's complex climatic landscape is evolving and the additional burden rising global temperatures will pose, both on public health and the economy, India must prioritise adaptation alongside its emission mitigation plan.

A study by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) shows that nearly eight out of 10 Indians live in a district that faces the risk of either a flood, a drought or a cyclone. What's more, there are hotspots where either two or all three of the abovementioned disasters occur together, such as parts of Odisha and Telangana on the eastern coast and parts of Gujarat on the western coast. There is no denying that climate extremes are now being felt across the calendar year and in almost every part of the country.

There may be a biting chill in many parts of India now, but the record-breaking heat waves of 2024 are not forgotten. The ruling party returned to power with temperatures almost touching 50 degree Celsius in the Indian capital last year. This increasing heat stress remains a major challenge across most states. Nearly 23 states in India are heatwaveprone. In the summer of 2024, India recorded more than 44,000 heatstroke cases and more than 300 heat-related mortalities, as per the bulletin of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. This affects public health and economic productivity. Water reservoirs and the energy demand that keeps India powered are impacted too. In June 2024, while suffering from a 10-day long heatwave, Delhi's peak power demand of 8,647 MW was higher by 16 per cent than that of the previous year.

Monsoons are becoming uneven too, and with significant consequences. According to our research, between 2012-22, various districts in the agriculturally important Indo-Gangetic plains reported a decline of up to 20 per cent in southwest monsoon rainfall. Currently, the average annual crop losses owing to extreme weather events account for 0.25 per cent of India's GDP. Moreover, the Arabian Sea — with a higher rate of increasing sea surface temperatures compared to the Bay of Bengal – experienced a nearly 52 per cent increase in tropical storm cyclones in the last two decades. But while India's cyclone early warning system provides coverage to 100 per cent of the cyclone-prone population, its flood early warning system only provides coverage to one-third of the flood-prone population.

In 2024, various states, including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in the south and Delhi, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in the north, saw severe flooding, including cloudbursts and flash floods. Following the trend of increased heavy rainfall events in the past decade, we must brace for severely impacted monsoons in 2025 and beyond. The recently announced Mission Mausam and the granular-scale data that will be acquired across various cities under it could enhance urban flood preparedness.

India is currently developing its national adaptation plan and has a golden opportunity to get its priorities right to account for the complex and rapidly evolving climate challenges.

First, there needs to be a detailed risk assessment of the impacts of observed and predicted heat stress at a minute scale, and across sectors. Heat does not impact everyone and everything in the same way. Therefore, identifying vulnerable populations within heatwave-prone cities, such as those with chronic health conditions, senior citizens, and children below six years of age, is crucial to prioritise targeted actions. In addition, the dairy and livestock sector, which accounts for five per cent of India's GDP, has seen a decline of up to 20 per cent in milk productivity owing to heat stress. This calls for robust adaptation actions for the dairy sector, where the heat challenge could be addressed by low-cost and decentralised renewable energy-based livelihood solutions such as solar chillers.

Second, nearly half of India's agriculture is rainfed, with the majority of it distributed across the central and southern states such as Maharashtra and Karnataka. Any minor change in the rainfall pattern causes largescale impacts in the agriculture sector. Therefore, we must revamp crop weather

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calendars for rainfed crops to account for the recent changes in the southwest monsoon. This requires contextualisation of local cropping practices to suit the changes in the availability of water and moisture. In the last 10 years, the Indian Council on Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed more than 2,500 varieties of flood- and drought-resistant crops. With the revision of cropping calendars and the incorporation of resilient seeds, climate change-induced crop losses

could be reduced significantly. Third, the disaster risk financing landscape in India must be enhanced, especially for cities. The recently passed Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill 2024 empowers states to strengthen city-level resilience by forming Urban Disaster Management Authorities. This will be crucial in ensuring that necessary infrastructure and finance are made available for cities to mainstream climate resilience. City resilience bonds and green municipal bonds could further help cities mobilise the finance needed for adaptation.

With the 2025 Budget a few weeks away, climate resilience must move from the margins to the mainstream of our financial planning and priorities. It's a good economic investment – from crops to cities – not just an environmental one.

> The writer is Senior Programme Lead at the Council on Energy, Environment and *Water* (*CEEW*)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WOMEN & TALIBAN

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Where daughters can't play' (IE, January 11). The state of women's rights in Afghanistan is appalling. Speeches in the United Nations chambers about gender equity sound hollow when the world is silent as authoritarianism in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime expands. What is happening in Afghanistan requires major international intervention. Concerning sports in Afghanistan, organisations like the ICC should speak out. Saras Anand, New Delhi

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Where daughters can't play' (IE, January 11). The Taliban has repeatedly reneged on promises to restore women's rights in Afghanistan. The regime has continued placing restrictions on women's workforce participation, representation in the media and education. This regressive rule has witnessed the disappearance of women activists and an increase in gender-based violence and human trafficking. The cowardice of the international community cannot be tolerated any longer and the women in Afghanistan deserve freedom.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh

WORK TOGETHER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Crumbling foretold' (IE, January 11). The INDIA bloc

was formed to provide a national alternative to the dominant BJP and in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Congress doubled its tally to 99 seats and BIP was restricted to 240. After that, Congress showed little regard for the aspirations of the regional parties. Congress was adamant and uncompromising while negotiating seat sharing in the assembly elections. The INDIA bloc started crumbling because of Congress' hubris. Under Rahul Gandhi, there have been ego clashes, haphazard campaigning and incoherent party ideologies. To effectively challenge the BJP, the opposition parties must stick and work together.

Atul Thakre, Nagpur

MYTH OF EFFICIENCY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'CEO can't see' (IE, January 11). Putting in more hours might seem equal to greater productivity, but this is rarely true. Humans are creative and comparing their work ethic to mechanical efficiency is flawed and damaging, especially when disguised as a path to success. Many people are enamoured by this false notion and fail to see the harsh reality behind it, often blinded by financial pressures and societal expectations. This conditioning not only undermines mental well-being but also leads to eventual physical exhaustion and breakdown.

Shaswat Jena, *Ghaziabad*

Torres ponzi scheme: Names of 6 more foreign nationals crop up in EOW probe, LOCs issued

VIJAY KUMAR YADAV MUMBAI, JANUARY 12

Letter No. 81/1A

NAMES OF six more foreigners, mostly Ukrainians, have cropped up in the ongoing investigation of the Mumbai police Economic Offences Wing (EOW) into the Torres investment fraud, wherein around 1.25 lakh investors are suspected to have lost ₹1,000

crore. The EOW has now issued Look Out Circulars against them. Police sources said that while

recording statements of witnesses, office staff, agents, and other functionaries of Torres, names of these foreign nationals surfaced. They escaped the country before Christmas (year end) as per their plan, sources said. Among the foreigners alleg-

edly wanted by the investigators

are the director of Platinum Hern Pvt Ltd, which runs the Torres jewellery brand, Victoriia Kovalenko; former director of the company, Olena Stoian; Oleksandra Brunkivska and another Ukrainian associate of the two, Artem (full name not revealed yet).

On January 6, thousands of investors in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Mira Road gathered outside the showrooms of

Torres' jewellery stores in Dadar, Mira Road, and APMC Navi Mumbai, staging protests after they stopped receiving their due interest in December last week.

On January 6, Shivaji police filed an FIR mentioning the fraud amount as ₹13.48 crore from 66 different investors. Later, the case was transferred to the EOW. Besides this, FIRs were filed by Navghar police in Mira Bhayander,

Rabodi police in Thane, and APMC police in Navi Mumbai.

The Torres brand, run by Platinum Hern Pvt Ltd, has allegedly floated multiple schemes offering weekly interests, considered 'too good to be true' with around 500% annual interest on investments. Initially investors, who were lured with incentives like iPhones, jewellery, and other expensive gifts like branded bags, cars, and apartments, were promised returns regularly, but in December last week they began defaulting.

So far three accused have been arrested: the company's general manager, Taniya Tazagul Xasatova, alias Karaxanovna Xasatova, 52; director Sarvesh Ashok Surve, 30; and store in-charge Valentina Ganesh Kumar, 44.

Lankesh case: Evidence witness recounts finding bullets from shooter's training site in forest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, JANUARY 11

A WITNESS to the collection of evidence in the murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh, 55, has recounted, during the trial, the finding of 12 cartridges and bullets in the Kineye forest near Belagavi where the alleged shooter of the journalist was trained by a radical rightwing group ahead of the September 5, 2017, shooting in Bengaluru.

During the trial earlier this week, the mahazar witness also identified a member of the right-wing crime syndicate, Sharad Kalaskar, 28, as the person who led the witnesses and the police to a spot in the Kineye forest where firearm training was provided to Parashuram Waghmare, 30, the alleged shooter.

Waghmare, a former member of right-wing outfit Sri Rama Sene, and Kalaskar who was associated with the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and was convicted recently for 2013 murder of Narendra Dabholkar, 69, are among 17 people arrested by a Karnataka Police SIT in connection with the Lankesh murder case.

Kalaskar, the alleged shooter, along with Sachin Andhure, in the 2013 murder of Dabholkar, is alleged to have provided a round of training to a set of shooters identified for the Gauri Lankesh murder, including Waghmare, a few months before the murder. During the trial, the ma-

hazar witness described his enlistment as an independent witness in September 2018 and the visit to the Kineye forest to find evidence.

The witness told the court that experts divided the region in the forest – indicated by Kalaskar as the place where the arms training occurred – into grades, and searched for metal objects using metal detectors

around trees that were used as targets. The witness authenticated finding of seven empty cartridges and five fired bullets during search operation in Kineye forest in September 2018.

The witness was also taken to a farm near Belagavi where Kalaskar reported that the rightwing group had conducted an explosives training camp with the use of circuit bombs a few months earlier but no remnant evidence was found at the spot indicated by Kalaskar. Earlier in the trial, a ballis-

tics expert from the Karnataka

Forensic Science Laboratory had reported the finding of empty cartridges and bullets of the 7.65 mm calibre in the Kineye forest region in Belagavi The expert also reported that the ballistic analysis of the cartridges and bullets found at the training site matched with

some of the bullets and cartridges found at the crime scene of the murder of Lankesh The forensic report by ballistics expert helped SIT establish the fact that a 7.65-mm pistol used to gun down Lankesh was in the possession of the right-wing group at the training sessions conducted a few

months prior to the murder. The bullets and cartridges found at the forest training site when analysed at the Karnataka Forensic Science lab revealed that one bullet and one cartridge have the same features found on four bullets fired at Lankesh outside her home, indicating that the same 7.65 mm country-made pistol was fired at the two sites.

Following Lankesh's murder, the police seized three bullets that hit her, one that missed, and four empty cartridges. Those involved in Lankesh murder are also allegedly linked to the murders of leftist thinker Govind Pansare in Maharashtra and scholar M M Kalburgi in Karnataka, besides that of Dabholkar. FULL REPORTON www.indianexpress.com

After woman's

death, Bengal

stops use of 9

govt hospitals

IV fluids in

TANUSREE BOSE

KOLKATA, JANUARY 12

IN THE wake of the death of a

woman at Midnapore Medical

College and Hospital (MMCH)

in Paschim Medinipur district

after delivery, the West Bengal government has issued an order asking public hospitals in

the state to stop using nine in-

travenous (IV) fluids, including

Ringer's Lactate, which has

Four women, who under-

went cesarean deliveries at MMCH Wednesday, fell ill, with

one succumbing Friday. The

condition of three women is said

to be critical and they were

moved to SSKM Hospital in

Kolkata on Sunday. The family

members of deceased woman

The order issued by the health department stated "All Heads of Departments

are kindly requested to cease

the administration of the

above-mentioned fluids/infusion in their designated ar-

eas without delay. Any re-

quests for the same should

be directed to the Office of

the Medical Superintendent

and Vice Principal with ef-

fect from today, the 11th of

ids are Ringer's Lactate – 500

ml, Ringer's Solution – 500 ml, Dextrose 10%-500 ml,

Mannitol Infusion – 100 ml

Paracetamol Infusion – 100

ml, Ofloxacin 100 ml, Levofl-

oxacin - 100 ml, 1/2 DNS -

500 ml 9, and Normal Saline

- 3 L. Chief Secretary Manoj

Pant also sought a detailed

report from Principal Secre-

tary, Health, by Sunday night.

while the condition of the

three women is stable, their

According to reports,

The nine intravenous flu-

January 2025..."

come under scanner.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,No-9097726X,Hav Mohd Amin

Laway, R/O-Chehlan, PO-Hawand Chawalgam, Tehsil/District-Kulgam. In my service records the name of my daughter has been wrongly mentioned as Nazima Jan instead of Nazima Amin as mentioned in Matriculation

certificates. It needs

correction. Objections be filled to JAKLI Record office within seven days.

I, Sumit Arora S/o Shri Subhash Chand Arora R/o House No.

1/1879, Moti Ram Road, Near Durga Mandir, East Ram Nagar, Shahdara Delhi-110032 have changed my minor son's name from Pranshu Arora to Vivaan Arora for all purposes. 0040768306-1

I, Sumit Arora S/o Shri Subhash Chand Arora R/o House No. 1/1879, Moti Ram Road, Near Durga Mandir, East Ram Nagar, Shahdara Delhi-110032 have changed my minor son's name from Pranshu Arora to

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY No. CC-2/Goods/EOI/2024 Date: 09.01.2025 E-Tender Notice No: 77-2025

Earnest money (Rs.): 19,600.00

Tender Doc. Cost (Rs.): 1,180.00

Bidding Start Date: 17.01.2025

Date of opening of above e-tender At **15:30 hrs** on **31.01.2025**

Commercial Manager/Freight Divisional Railway Manager Office. North Central Railway, Nawab Yusut Road, Civil Line, Prayagraj-211001 Fax No: 0532-2407981

haemoglobin count has decreased and are undergoing Tender notification & tender form/ dialysis. "The saline came to the hospital store from Tamluk Drs," said Dr Mausumi Nandy, principal, Midnapore MCH.

Vivaan Arora for all purposes.	have alleged that Ringer's
0040768095-1	Lactate administered on her had expired, leading to her death.

For and on behalf of President of India acting through Senior Divisiona Commercial Manager/Freight, North Central Railway, Prayagraj invites the following e-tender:

Name of work: Tender for Engageme of Consultancy agency to analyze GS7 data and identify loading potential over North Central Railway containing Prayagraj, Jhansi and Agra division. Advertised Value (Rs.): 9,80,000.00

Period of Completion: 90 Days

Last Date and time for upload Bid: Till **15:00 hrs** on Date **31.01.2025**

Contact Authority: Sr. Divisiona

document and term & condition can be downloaded from website www. ireps.gov.in. Tender notification may also be seen from www.ncr indianrailways.gov.in. 67/25 (ADM) @ www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in X @ CPRONCR

Executive Engineer PD, P.W.D, Bulandshahr **E- Procurement Tender Notice**

Dated: 03.01.2025 On behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Executive Engineer, Provincial Division, U.P.P.W.D., Bulandshahr invites following percentage rate bids online through http://etender.up.nic.in from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with P.W.D.

class as per column no. 10 below Road work Category as applied from Date 15.01.2025 to 22.01.2025 upto 12:00 Noon as per the prescribed T-1 of Govt. of U.P. The technical bid will be opened online on dated 22.01.2025 at 12:30 P.M. If the office happens to e closed on the date of opening of the bid as specified, the bid will be opened online on the next working day, at the same time

No	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. In Lac)	Security (Rs. In Lac)	Time of Completion work including rainy season	Tender Cost (In Rs.)	Address of Executive Engineer	Address of Superinten- ding Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer	Categor
1	2	3	4 In	5 n anticipation of	6 Sanction	7	8	9	10
	er Renewal Year 2025-26 Renewal work from PC of Dungra to Chacharai link road in Km 1, 2, 3(250)	31.00	3.10	03 Months	300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,I (Road work)
2	Renewal work from PC of Jahangirabad feeder bypass road to Gutchawali link road in Km 1(600)	6.50	0.65	03 Months	Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,I (Road work)
3	Renewal work from PC of BA road to Jahangirabad Shikarpur via Binnor Devi road in Km 1, 2(600)	17.60	1.76	03 Months	Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,I (Road work)
4	Renewal work from PC of BA road to Shekhpur Rora link road in Km 1(900)	9.90	0.99	03 Months	Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,I (Road work)
5	Renewal work from PC of BA road to Jonipur link road in Km 1(900)	9.90	0.99	03 Months	Rs.856.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Khanpura to Navinagar link road in Km 1, 2, 3(800)	31.00	3.10	03 Months	Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
7	Renewal work from PC of BA road to Dugrau link road in Km 1(420)	4.60	0.46	03 Months	Rs.944.00 150+500+ 18% GST 117.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,l (Road work)
8	Renewal work from PC of Hasanpur Bangar link road in Km 1, 2(130)	12.40	1.24	03 Months	Rs.767.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
9	Renewal work from PC of Budhana to Salamgarh link road in Km 1, 2(400)	15.40	1.54	03 Months	Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D. P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,l (Road work)
10	Renewal work from PC of Shivali- Salampur road to Nibheda link road in Km 1(100)	1.10	0.11	03 Months	Rs.944.00 75+500+1 8% GST 104.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,i (Road work)
11	Renewal work of PC from Km 9 of Bulandshahr-Anupshahr road to Sikri link road in Km 1(700	7.70	0.77	03 Months	Rs.679.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,l (Road work)
12	Renewal work from PC of Shivali- Salampur road to Sannaut link road in Km 1(250)	2.70	0.27	03 Months	Rs.856.00 150+500+ 18% GST 117.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
13	Renewal work from PC of Jinai DharamShala to Birauli link road in Km 1, 2(500)	16.50	1.65	03 Months	Rs.767.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D., P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
14	Renewal work from PC of Dharamshala Jinai to Salagawan via Shivnagla link road in Km 1(970)	10.70	1.07	03 Months	Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road
15	Renewal work from PC of Khalaur to Gyasuddin's house in Aabadi CC part in Km 1, 2, 3(200)	24.20	2.42	03 Months	Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road
16	Renewal work from PC of Khalaur Minor link road in Km 1, 2(500)	16.50	1.65	03 Months	Rs.944.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D., P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C,
17	Renewal work from PC of BA road to Dungra jogi link road in Km	10.30	1.03	03 Months	Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	A,B,C, (Road
18	Renewal work from PC of Salagawan to Bajheda link road in Km 1(360), 2(590)	10.40	1.04	03 Months	Rs.856.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	A,B,C,
	Renewal work from PC of Shikoi Bamanpur road to Pachdevara link road in Km 1(520)	7.10	0.71	03 Months	Rs.856.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Hishwati to Bichaula link road in Km 1, 2(600)	17.60	1.76	03 Months	Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road
21	Renewal work from PC of Khalaur to Gangawas Kali Sadak road in Km	20.40	2.04	03 Months	Rs.944.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	A,B,C,
22	1, 2(850) Renewal work from PC of Mirpur to Bakaura link road in Km 1, 2(850)	20.40	2.04	03 Months	Rs.944.00 300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 =	P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D.,	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone,	A,B,C, (Road work)
23	Renewal work from PC of Bungla Poothri to Chidda to Kheda link	22.00	2.20	03 Months	Rs.944.00 300+500+ 18% GST	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	A,B,C,
24	Renewal work from PC of Khalaur road Km-3 to Kalara's Madhaiya	8.20	0.82	03 Months	144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
25	link road in Km 1(600) Renewal work from PC of Choti Sarai to Agarpur link road in Km 1,	15.40	1.54	03 Months	131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
	2(400) Renewal work from PC of Sahkari Nagar to Agarpur link road in Km 1,	32.00	3.20	03 Months	144.00 = Rs.944.00 300+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, PWD	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
	2, 3(325) Renewal work from PC of Khalaur to Tauli link road in Km 1(680)	7.50	0.75	03 Months	144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
	Renewal work from PC of Jahangirabad Daulatpur road Km	5.50	0.55	03 Months	131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	A,B,C,
	4.15 to Karonji link road in Km 1(225), 2(275) Renewal work from PC of village Kishanpur's Aabadi Saini ki madhaiya link road in Km 1(870),	14.20	1.42	03 Months	131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 =	P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D.,	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, PWD	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C, (Road
	2(165) Renewal work from PC of Aurangabad Bihra Jamalpur to	18.70	1.87	03 Months	131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST	Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR Circle, PWD	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
31	Bondra link road in Km 1, 2(700) Renewal work from PC of Pipala Khedi to Ekhlaspur link road in Km 1(600)	6.60	0.66	03 Months	144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
32	1(600) Renewal work from PC of BSG to Mudibakapur link road in Km 1, 2(500)	16.50	1.65	03 Months	131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+ 18% GST	P.D., P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone	A,B,C,
33	2(500) Renewal work from PC of BSG road Km 21 to Alava Shamshan Bhumi		1.65	03 Months	144.00 = Rs.944.00 300+500+ 18% GST	P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive Engineer	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	A,B,C,
	link road in Km 1, 2(500)	16.50	1,00	05 Monne	144.00 =	P.D, P.W.D.,	Circle, P.W.D.,	Meerut Zone,	work

0.90

1.93

1.37

1.37

Aurangabad Bihra Jamalpur to

Pipala Ekhlaspur link road in Km

Bulandshahr-Syana-Garh road

Satsang Bhawan to Mudibakapur

Bulandshahr-Syana-Garh road Km-

12 to Pali Begpur Aulina Jehra road

Bulandshahr-Syana-Garh road to

Kenalki via Saidpura link road in

37 Renewal work from PC of

38 Renewal work from PC of

36 Renewal work from PC

link road in Km 1, 2(400)

Km 1(700), 2(300)

in Km 4

03 Months

03 Months

03 Months

03 Months

Bulandshahr

Engineer, BSR

Circle, P.W.D.,

Superintending

Engineer, BSR

Circle, P.W.D.,

Bulandshahr

Superintending

Engineer, BSR

Circle, P.W.D.,

Superintending

Engineer, BSR

Bulandshahr

131.00 = P.D, P.W.D., Circle, P.W.D., Meerut Zone,

Engineer,

Meerut Zone.

Engineer,

Meerut Zone,

P.W.D., Meeru

Engineer,

Meerut Zone.

Engineer,

P.W.D., Meeru

Bulandshahr P.W.D., Meerut

Bulandshahr P.W.D., Meerut

P.W.D., Meerut

A,B,C,D

(Road

A,B,C,D

(Road

work)

A,B,C,D

(Road

work)

A,B,C,D

(Road

work)

Bulandshahr

Executive

Engineer

P.D, P.W.D.,

Executive

Engineer

P.D, P.W.D.,

Bulandshahr

Executive

Engineer

Bulandshahr

Executive

Rs.856.00 Bulandshahr

131.00 = P.D. P.W.D.

Rs.856.00 Bulandshahr

Rs.856.00

225+500+

18% GST

131.00 =

300+500+

18% GST

144.00 =

Rs.944.00

225+500+

18% GST

Rs.856.00

225+500+

18% GST

	Renewal work from BC of Jahangirabad-Aurangabad road to Jahangirabad Block road in Km 1(275)	9.60	0.96	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	0 , ,	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Jiroli to Malakpur link road in Km 1(400)	4.40	0.44	03 Months	150+500+ 18% GST 117.00 = Rs.767.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Superintending C Engineer, BSR	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BA road to Paenth Malakpur link road in Km 1, 2,3(620)	28.90	2.89	03 Months	300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Superintending C Engineer, BSR	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BSG road to Charaura Mustfabad link road in Km 1(540)	5.90	0.59	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Lakhwati- Saidpur to Pasauli to Lodho ki madhaiya road in Km 1(400)	5.50	0.55	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Syana- Unchagaon-Bhadkau-Narsena Nahar Patri road Km 31 to Amarpur link road in Km 1,2	22.00	2.20	03 Months	300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Amarpur to Shikoi link road in Km 1, 2(250)	13.80	1.38	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Amarpur to Maujpur link road in Km 1(600)	6.60	0.66	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Pagona to Dugrau link road in Km 1(800)	8.80	0.88	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Rajwana Pali road to Bhawsi via Aurangabad Chauraha road in Km 1, 2, 3(850)	31.40	3.14	03 Months	300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BSG road to Maithna Jagatpur link road in Km 1, 2(650	22.70	2.27	03 Months	300+500+ 18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	(Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Dhakoli to Tibra link road in Km 1, 2(100)	12.10	1.21	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of Barkatpur link road in Km 1(580)	6.40	0.64	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BB Nagar babugarh road Km-3 to Sehra link road in Km 1(400)	4.40	0.44	03 Months	150+500+ 18% GST 117.00 = Rs.767.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BB Nagar Kutchesar to Tibra link road in Km 1, 2(275)	14.00	1.40	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BB Nagar Ladpur to Benipur link road in Km 1(500)	5.50	0.55	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Neemapati to Fatehpur link road in Km 1, 2(100)	12.10	1.21	03 Months	225+500+ 18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Executive Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive		Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Renewal work from PC of BB Nagar to Madhaiya Tibra partial part link road in Km 1(500) Renewal work from PC of Sehra to	5.50	0.55	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	A,B,C,D (Road work)
	Saidpur Bhainsakhur link road in Km 1, 2(100) Renewal work from PC of Walipura	12.10	1.21	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	(Road work)
	to Eklandi link road in Km 1, 2, 3(200) Renewal work from PC of BSG to	24.20	2.42	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Chief Engineer, Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Ishanpur link road in Km 1(300), 2, 3(950) Renewal work from PC of LPK to	31.00	3.10	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	(Road work)
	Daultabad link road in Km 1(610) Renewal work from PC of Gujaro's	6.70	0.67	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Madhaiya link road in Km 1, 2(730) Renewal work from PC of Dhimro's	23.80	2.38	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Madhaiya link road in Km 1, 2(600) Renewal work from PC of	22.00	2.20	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Khushalgarh to Enchaura link road in Km 1(600), 2(100) Renewal work from PC of	7.70	0.77	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Bulandshahr-Anoopshahr road to Taliya Nagla link road in Km 1(650) Renewal work from PC of BA road	7.10	0.71	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 150+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	to Makhaina link road in Km 1(430) Renewal work from PC of BA road	4.70	0.47	03 Months	18% GST 117.00 = Rs.767.00	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	to Chhaturia link road in Km 1, 2(600) Renewal work from PC of Dharpa to	17.60	1.76	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Achejha Ghat link road in Km 1(250), 4, 5(500) Renewal work from PC of Kaulsena	23.40	2.34	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	link road in Km 1, 2(150) Renewal work from PC of Jamapur	12.70	1.27	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	(Road work)
	to Babupur link road in Km 1, 2(400) Renewal work from PC of Jasnawali	15.40	1.54	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Kalan link road in Km 1, 2(460) Renewal work from PC of Raipur	16.10	1.61	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
72	Talaab link road in Km 1(700) Renewal work from PC of Kazampur	7.70	0.77	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Devli link road in Km 1 Renewal work from PC of Anheda	11.00	1.10	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
74	link road in Km 1(500) Renewal work from PC of Jollygarh	5.50	0.55	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
75	Bisundhara link road to Barari link road in Km 1(650) Renewal work from PC of Kisoli-	7.10	0.71	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Ashawar to Sihi link road in Km 1, 2(450) Renewal work from PC of Kisoli to	16.00	1.60	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Ashawar link road in Km 1, 2, 3, 4(50) Renewal work from PC of	33.60	3.36	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
78	Karimnagar Banboi road to Gola Kuan link road in Km 1 Renewal work from PC of Banboi	11.00	1.10	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
79	link road in Km 1(643) Renewal work from PC of	7.10	0.71	03 Months	18% GST 131.00 = Rs.856.00 300+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR Circle, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Superintending C	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut Chief Engineer,	(Road work)
	Dudupur to Maman Kalan link road in Km 1, 2 Renewal work from PC of Maman	22.00	2.20	03 Months	18% GST 144.00 = Rs.944.00 225+500+	Engineer P.D, P.W.D., Bulandshahr Executive	Engineer, BSR	Meerut Zone, P.W.D., Meerut	(Road work)

Rs.856.00 Bulandshahr 1. Time allowed for completion of Whole work in column No. 5, including rainy season. 2. The Tender Document Fee must be deposited through Internet Banking only.

6.60

5.50

3. For the above works, it is mandatory to carry out maintenance work for two years from the date of completion of the work. 4. All registered contractors have to upload turnover certified by C.A. of last 5 years and details of maximum cost of work satisfactorily completed in last 5 years on Chanakya Software before submission of tender.

03 Months

03 Months

03 Months

0.66

0.55

0.97

Details of e-tender uploaded on http://etender.up.nic.in shall also be uploaded on uppwd Chanakya Software before last date & time of submission of bid.

5. Terms & Conditions related to bids are available on http://etender.up.nic.in 6. During execution of work contractor should ensure the all safety Measures for COVID-19 issued by the Uttar Pradesh government. 7. In PWD technical evaluation of tenders is to be done by Prahari Software URL for Prahari is http://wms.uppwd.gov.in/Prahari/.

Kalan link road in Km 1(600)

81 Renewal work from PC of Basendua

82 Renewal work from PC of Kishnapur

to Kumharo ki madhaiya link road in

link road in Km 1(500)

Km 1(643)

UPID-225937 Dt. 03.01.2025 **Assistant Engineer** P.D. P.W.D., BULANDSHAHR www.upidadv.gov.in

(Er. Rahul Sharma) **Executive Engineer** P.D. P.W.D., BULANDSHAHR

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Engineer

P.D, P.W.D.,

Bulandshahr

Executive

P.D, P.W.D.,

Bulandshahr

Executive

Engineer

131.00 = P.D, P.W.D.,

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Engineer, BSR | Meerut Zone, (Road

Superintending Chief Engineer, A,B,C,D

Superintending Chief Engineer, A.B.C.D

Circle, P.W.D., P.W.D., Meerut

Engineer, BSR | Meerut Zone,

Circle, P.W.D., P.W.D., Meerut

Engineer, BSR | Meerut Zone,

Circle, P.W.D., P.W.D., Meerut

Bulandshahr

13 ECONOMY

Market Watch

MCAP OF 5 OF TOP-10 VALUED COS DROPS

The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most-valued firms tumbled Rs 1,85,952.31 crore last week, with HDFC Bank taking the biggest hit. Last week, the BSE benchmark slumped 1,844.2 points or 2.32 per cent, and the Nifty dropped 573.25 points or 2.38 per cent. PTI

I-TO-I PASSENGERS ACCOUNT FOR 10% OF AIR INDIA'S LONG-HAUL TRAFFIC

Al looks to double int'l connecting traffic in 3 years, bets big on premium classes

SUKALPSHARMA NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

AIR INDIA views international-tointernational (I-to-I) transit passenger traffic—or connecting at Indian airports passengers flying from one foreign country to another—as a huge growth opportunity and has been actively strategising and taking steps to attract more transit passengers on its international flights. According to airline's chief commercial officer Nipun Aggarwal, the efforts, which include network expansion and realignment at the Air India group level and tweaking flight schedules to facilitate better flight connections, have started bearing fruit.

"Almost 10 per cent of the trafficthat we carry on our long-haul, wide-body aircraft is now I-to-I traffic...(when the Tata group took over Air India in January 2022) this must have been very low," Aggarwal said in a recent interaction with reporters, adding that he expects the I-to-I traffic share to double to 20 per cent in

Aggarwal also said that Air India has seen growing demand and revenue in premium seats business and premium economy classes—and has decided to double premium seats on its legacy wide-body aircraft that will start going for retrofitting later this year. Air India is already adding premium economy seats to its legacy narrow-body aircraft,

which so far had a standard twoclass cabin. The airline is also developing a first-class product for some of its future Airbus A350-1000 wide-body jets for select

I-to-I opportunity

long-haul routes.

According to Aggarwal, the Ito-I market size overflying India was estimated at 130 million passengers as of 2023-24, but India's largest airport—Delhi—accounted for less than 1 per cent of this, while mega hubs Dubai and Doha accounted for 10 per cent and 7.5 per cent, respectively. Key international corridors that overfly India include Australia and New Zealand to Europe, Europe-Southeast Asia and South Asia, North America-Southeast Asia, and Middle East-South Asia.

This I-to-I opportunity is a key consideration in the Air India group's network development. In the overseas routes, Air India will focus on medium- and long-haul routes, along with a few shorthaul routes that have enough demand for a premium product. Air India Express will service other

short-haul routes. "Even for Air India Express, the first objective when they fly overseas is to see how they can feed our network as a priority," Aggarwal said.

The airlines' short-haul network, earlier focussed more on the India-Middle East routes, is now being rebalanced by adding more flights to the east of India.

"We want to bring traffic from Southeast Asia and Far East and SAARC, and aggregate that traffic at our hubs, and then take them to Europe, US, Canada and those markets. So, we will focus on building strong I-to-I corridors at our hubs, and all other point-topoint opportunities which are there will be served by Air India Express," Aggarwal said.

The airline has also been realigning its international flight schedule to facilitate better and more connection opportunities for international flyers at its hubs-Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru—with Delhi being the

"If you see this Europe to Australia corridor, which is called

the kangaroo corridor, it's one of the largest corridors globally, and it compares with the transatlantic corridor. We were hardly able to capitalise on this corridor, even though we have flights going to Australia and to Europe and the US...we have tried to align the flight timings that were going to Australia with the flights which were going to Europe. And now we will be able to connect the flights which are coming in from Frankfurt, Paris, London with the flights which are going to Melbourne, Sydney, and vice

versa," Aggarwal said. Air India is doing similar realignments between Southeast Asia and Europe, South Asia and Europe, Southeast Asia and South Asia and North America.

"So SAARC (South Asia), Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, all the big markets to the east of India are slowly being connected with the markets that we fly to on the west of India. And that is a conscious strategy we are working on," Aggarwal said.

Betting big on premium classes

Air India's decision to double premium seats on its wide-body aircraft is not without reason. As compared to the pre-pandemic period, the airline has seen front cabin(premium classes) revenue grow 2.3 times, while the back cabin, or economy class, revenue has expanded 1.6 times.

"I feel the front cabin gives more revenue, especially in the case of full-service airlines, and the back cabin basically helps you to fill the plane, particularly on longhaul flights... in all the aircraft that we are adding in Air India, whether narrow-body or wide-body, we are putting a three-class product premium economy, business, and economy," Aggarwal said.

"The premium segment has been a big focus for Air India. We are a full-service airline. We want to be a world-class airline, and this is a segment that we are very focussed on, we very much like, and see huge opportunity in," he

On being asked why Air India has decided to have a first-class on some of its yet-to-be delivered A350-1000 aircraft, Aggarwal said: "We are building an aspirational and world-class airline...most of the top airlines still have a very niche first-class product on some of their large and prominent routes...if you want to compete with the best airlines that are out there, you need to have a first-class product. It is an aspirational product. It defines how you run and build an airline."

While Aggarwal did not indicate when the new first-class product will be launched, he said that it is likely to be deployed on routes to global megacities like New York and London, which do have demand for such a top-end cabin class. Some of Air India's Boeing 777 aircraft have a firstclass cabin, but it is seen as far inferior to first-class products offered by top international airlines.

'Targeted interventions in labour-intensive sectors, MSMEs needed to take growth to the next level'

AN IMPETUS to manufacturing and targeted interventions in labour-intensive sectors such as footwear, apparel, tourism, and furniture are required to take growth to the next level, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president **SANIIV PURI** said. In an interview with AGGAM WALIA and AANCHAL MAGAZINE, Puri, who is chairman and managing director of ITC Ltd, also spoke about continuing government schemes for MSMEs which serve as a large employment base. Edited excerpts:

India's GDP growth is seen slowing to a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in FY25

It's 6.4 (per cent) in a situation where the whole world is in stress. Of course, we would like to see it better but it's still a decent number...the first half is 6 (per cent), second half is 6.7 (per cent). So it is showing that it will pick up. There were transient factors in the first half — the elections, weather etc. We must recognise that it is achieved in a situation where merchandise export is depressed, China has been dumping stock in the globe and in India also. We've also gone through a period where food inflation has been sticky, which impacts the capacity to spend. So, in this situation, the fact that we're growing 6.4 per cent and 6.7 per cent in the second half, it kind of reinforces that we are on a strong foundation. Reinforces that policy interventions over several years have certainly helped to take us this far. We should really be discussing that having come so far, what needs to be done to go to the next level? 6.7 or 7 per cent to 7.5 per cent and 8 per cent.

What measures can be taken for higher growth?

There are several areas where there are opportunities to do things. After a long time, we have seen the resurgence in manufacturing. Certain sectors have really done well. Now, the question would be how can we take the learnings to some other sectors, particularly from an export perspective. How can we provide impetus to labour intensive sectors like footwear, apparel, tourism, furniture, and so on and so forth. Targeted interventions in each one of these sectors is what we've recommended.

Second, MSMEs have a large employment base. What is it that can be done to take the MSMEs forward? We believe that the ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme) has worked well, so that needs to be strengthened and continued. Second, the government has done a very good job in terms of digitisation of the economy and a lot of digital platforms are available for MSMEs, given that many of them have small establishments. So, can we look at a single platform? There are many right now, like Udvam. TReDS, GeM, and ONDC is also coming in. So, a seamless solution

Third, to provide impetus to manufacturing, how do we get more and more sectors to integrate with global value chains. A targeted approach with an inte-

to all of them.



THE EXPRESS **INTERVIEW**

Sanjiv Puri PRESIDENT, CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN INDUSTRY

grated view as far as investments, trade, infrastructure, and skilling is concerned would be helpful. It would also mean that in these areas where impetus is being provided, the duty structure has to be aligned so that the cost of inputs do not make us uncompetitive. CII is suggesting that at some point in time, we should be looking at three tiers with very moderate rates in each one of them.

Do you think the bigger corporates have somewhere failed in stepping up investment as much as it was required, especially on the back of corporate tax cuts?

No, I don't think so. As far as corporate investment is concerned, if you look at the period after the rate cut, it has been a very turbulent period. There was Covid, then there was a pickup, and then the global turmoil. Despite all these situations, private capex as a percentage of GDP in 2022-23 was higher than pre-Covid. It's materially higher than pre-Covid. Now, there might have been some transient factors in the recent past where certain activity slowed down. But if you look at it today, CMIE has said that the announcements of capex have seen a segment jump in Q2. There is also data to show that the order books of industries to do with plant and equipment of capital goods is also good. Third, 35 per cent of our members are saying they will be investing more this year, 45 per cent are saying they will be invest-

ing more next year. Now, what is coming in the way? One is this huge issue of China dumping. That does impact investment and two, the growth in consumption — ultimately capacity is invested to meet certain demands, so consumption impacts. And as the public capex on its own also crowds in private investment, that is also starting to pick up and will also provide some impetus going forward.

Wage growth has been a concern lately. There was a

stagnant growth in salaries between 2019 and 2023.

recent FICCI-Quess study on

I don't know what data was used there. I haven't read the report. There are specialised agencies that actually provide data on how wages are moving in industry. It's a fact that private sector companies do annual reviews to retain talent based on inflation and this is also based on data that the experts publish. So, wages do go up and it is not that when profits go down, wages go down. It doesn't happen that way. The velocity of increase may get a little moderated, but it still increases. To senior and mid-level people, where there is a component of variable pay, that will of course have its impact, but it's not that the wages go down per se. It's very important for companies because otherwise they will not be able to retain talent. I think the larger issue may be on disaggregating the data to figure out which sectors and so on and so forth. I don't have that kind of information. But from an economy perspective, the larger issue is how to create more good quality jobs and which are the sectors that can provide impetus to employment.

You have stressed on the need to create good quality jobs. We have seen a rise in employment in agriculture, which is a reversal of the trend we were seeing earlier and not the ideal way of transition. What is urgently required for the creation of good quality jobs?

As far as agriculture is concerned, it will always remain important. It's about 45 or 46 per cent of the workforce. Even if it goes down, it will still be substantial. We have to bring in agricultural reforms to improve farmer incomes. There's no doubt about it. There are good schemes that the government is pursuing with FPOs (farmers producer organisations) and bringing in technology into agriculture. The journey has to continue and we have to provide impetus to take it forward.

Agriculture has to improve.

As far as creating good jobs is concerned, providing impetus to labour intensive sectors, MSMEs, and integrating into global value chains — all these will create good quality jobs. The other opportunity we have in India is on the services side, which is really thriving, like GCCs (global capability centers) and IT. There's a lot of demographic dividend in rural areas given the better physical and digital connectivity. We can create integrated rural hubs which have components of health care, skilling, education, career management, and so on and so forth. Some of it can be in public-private partnership. It can be around clusters of villages given that connectivity is better. you can travel to that place, do your training and go back. Because if a person has to come to the city, then there are a lot of expenses like lodging. Skilling and human capital development also becomes important to benefit from all of this.

> **FULL INTERVIEW ON** www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY —

FinMin to meet heads of banks on Wednesday

New Delhi: Finance Ministry has called a meeting of heads of public sector banks (PSBs) on Wednesday to review progress of various financial inclusion schemes, including Jan Suraksha and Mudra Yojana. The meeting is scheduled to be chaired by Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju.

'Import of certain dairy products: Nepal to consider request'

New Delhi: India has flagged concerns over the problems faced by its milk exporters in Nepal, with the neighbouring country agreeing to explore the possibility of facilitating imports of specific products like whey and cheese, an official statement said on Sunday. The matter came up for discussions during the meeting of the India-Nepal Inter-Governmental Committee on Trade, Transit, and Cooperation to Combat Unauthorised Trade, which was held in Kathmandu from January 10-11. "The Indian side highlighted the problems faced in milk exports to Nepal. The Nepali side agreed to consider the request of the Indian side positively for milk products not adequately

produced in Nepal such as

whey and cheese," the

Commerce Ministry said. PTI

What went wrong with gold import figures and why is revision before Budget crucial? have created difficulties in ac-Finance Ministry had been rec-

RAVIDUTTA MISHRA NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

AN UNUSUAL 331 per cent yearon-year surge in gold imports during November, which had an impact on the domestic currency almost hitting its all-time low against the US dollar, and subsequent redflags raised by industry forced the government to undertake a broad-based process of comparing and matching trade data from multiple sources, including tax collection data, to verify accuracy.

This initial reconciliation effort involving imports between April and November resulted in one of the steepest revisions of gold import figures in the recent past. For November alone, the gold import figures were revised down by \$5 billion, and cumulatively between April and November, the import figures were revised down by \$12 billion to \$37 billion. This revision was officially attributed to a problem in a data migration process that commenced since July last year. It was discovered subsequently that an error occurred due to the transition of the data transmission mechanism from the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway (ICEGATE), leading to "double counting" in the case of gold imports.

The revision comes just weeks ahead of the Union Budget presentation and assumes significance, as gold imports had been rising to record



levels ever since the duty on gold was slashed from 15 per cent to 6 per cent in the last Budget. This had led to calls for tightening the

rates in the upcoming Budget to help limit the widening trade deficit, which has contributed to the weakening rupee. **Industry fear of**

increase in gold duty

The likely increase in gold duty rates in the upcoming Budget, based on inaccurate data, could hurt the labour-intensive gems and jewellery industry, for which gold is a key input material. During what would normally be a strong period for exports driven by festive demand, gems and jewellery exports slipped by 13 per cent in November.

This decline comes as the jewellery industry is already facing challenges on both the demand and supply sides. Weak demand in Europe and China has curtailed exports to these lucrative markets, while sanctions on Russia due to the Ukraine war cessing rough diamonds.

The correction in the data, therefore, reduces the chances of an increase in the gold import duty in the upcoming Budget, as the revised numbers suggest that gold imports from January to November 2024 are below the annual average of 800 tonnes.

'200 tonnes of gold smuggled on average'

To be sure, high duties on gold have always been an ineffective revenue strategy, as they lead to an increase in gold smuggling in the country. Even at a 6 per cent duty on gold,

> Delhi Customs last month intercepted a passenger attempting to smuggle gold in their rectum. Up to onequarter of the total vol-

ume of gold entering India is believed to come via illicit trade, according to a report from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) on gold smuggling, which suggests that up to 200 tonnes of gold is being smuggled into the country. India imports around 800–900 tonnes of gold every year, while the annual consumption is around 1,000 tonnes, according to the

report, 'Gold data double counting'

In its official explanation of the counting error, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry stated that data from the Commerce Ministry and the that an error occurred due to the transition of the data transmission mechanism from the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway (ICEGATE). The transition came into effect on 1 July. The ministry clarified that the figures for precious metals

onciled. During the data migra-

tion process, it was discovered

required revision, as it was found that the system had been counting both imports into the SEZ and subsequent clearances into the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) as separate transactions after the migration, due to a "technical glitch."

'Migration still not complete'

The Ministry of Commerce stated that, due to the persistence of "certain technical glitches", the migration is still not complete, and both SEZ Online and ICEGATE continue to capture and transmit mutually exclusive EXIM data to DGCIS.

The ministry confirmed that the revision had been made for trade figures from April 2024 to November 2024, which are published in accordance with the regular publication cycle maintained under international standards for data dissemination. It further stated that a committee had been formed with stakeholders from DGCIS, DG Systems (CBIC), and SEZs to establish a robust mechanism for publishing consistent data.

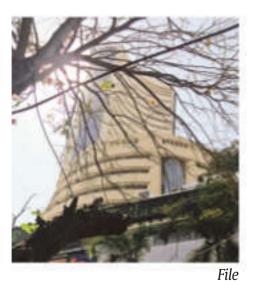
FPIs withdraw ₹22,194 crore in Jan so far amid rising USD, weak earnings outlook New Delhi: Foreign investors have

withdrawn Rs 22,194 crore from Indian equities this month, driven by expectations of a weak earnings season, a steady rise in the US dollar, and concerns over tariff war during Donald Trump's presidency. This came following an in-

vestment of Rs 15,446 crore in the month of December, data with the depositories showed.

Foreign investors have scaled back their investments in Indian equities significantly amid global and domestic headwinds. "This exodus of foreign

money from the Indian markets could be attributed to multitude of factors, such as expectation of yet another weak earning season, concerns over the tariff war under Trump's presidency, slowdown in GDP growth, still high inflation numbers and uncertainty over the commencement of the



interest cut in India," Himanshu Srivastava, associate director, manager research, Morningstar

Investment Research India, said. Additionally, record low level of Indian rupee, surge in US bond yields coupled with rich valuation of Indian markets also makes Indian equities relatively unat-

tractive for foreign investors. According to the data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) ofcrore from Indian equities so far this month (till January 10). FPIs have been sellers on all trading days except January 2. "The single major reason for

floaded shares worth Rs 22,194

the relentless selling by the FPIs is the steady rise in the dollar index which is above 109 now. The surge in the 10-year bond yield to

kets like India," V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said. The overall trend indicates a cautious approach by foreign investors, who scaled back investments in Indian equities significantly in 2024, with net inflows

above 4.6 per cent is ensuring

capital flows from emerging mar-

of just Rs 427 crore. This contrasts sharply with the massive Rs 1.71 lakh crore net

inflows in 2023, driven by optimism over India's strong economic fundamentals.

Banks likely to face earnings pressure in Q3 on muted loan growth, higher credit costs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, JANUARY 12

BANKS ARE likely to report subdued earnings in the third quarter ended December 2024 amid muted loan growth, challenges around deposit mobilisation and pressure on net interest margins.

Some of the lenders may see some worsening of asset quality driven by a rise in slippages in the agriculture sector and unsecured loans, including credit cards.

"O3FY25 has been a tough quarter with higher credit cost, decelerating loan growth, shortage of deposits even amidst slowing loan growth, moderate pressure on NIM and lower trading gains. Asset quality is the over-

whelming theme," Nuvama Institutional Equities said in a note.

Microfinance loans (MFI) and unsecured loans will continue to see elevated stress. Lenders such as ICICI Bank, Federal Bank and state banks are likely to face less stress while MFI lenders would see a sharp deterioration, it said.

"Apart from banks with a

higher exposure to unsecured segments, particularly MFI and credit cards, we expect most banks to report under-control slippages and steady to improving asset quality trends." Axis Securities said. Lenders' commentary around stress in the microfinance segment peaking-out would be keenly eyed, especially for small finance banks (SFBs) and banks with a prominent presence in the seg**Lenders' commentary** around stress in the microfinance segment peaking-out would be keenly eyed

ment. Axis Securities expects credit costs during the quarter to jump up significantly around 10 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) for its coverage banks, thereby weighing on earnings.

"We do not see any respite on earnings for banks, which is likely to de-grow by nearly 6 per cent QoQ in Q3FY25 estimate," Axis Securities said.

The credit growth of banks tapered to around 11.12 per cent (as

per cent in the recent past. This is primarily driven by a significant slowdown in the unsecured loans alongside banks, mainly private banks intending to bring down their loan-to-deposits ratio (LDRs) to a balanced level, Axis Securities said. LDR is used to calculate the percentage of loans issued by a bank in comparison to its deposits. A higher LDR means that a bank is taking more risk by offering loans more than its deposits and low percentage means a bank is not using its deposits effectively.

of December 27) as against 15-16

Amidst concerns around asset quality in certain segments (majorly unsecured lending), weakerthan-expected macro data and constraints around LDR (for certain banks), banks have been cau-

growth, Axis Securities said. The brokerage expects banks under its coverage to deliver around 12 per cent year-on-year (YoY) credit growth in Q3FY25, in-line with industry growth. The systemic growth rate for FY25 is expected to hover around 11-12 per cent, it said. According to Geojit Financial Services' fund manager Pawan Parakh, stock prices of banks are close to the bottom. "Going ahead, as interest rates reduce, the fight for deposits

tious towards chasing aggressive

should ease. Low interest rate environment augurs well for asset quality as well," he said. Over the next one to two quar-

ters, investors should gradually build up exposure in this segment, he said.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025 14 THE WORLD

POPE AWARDED MEDAL OF FREEDOM WITH DISTINCTION

U.S. President Joe Biden spoke with Pope Francis on Saturday and awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction, the nation's highest civilian honor, the White House said. It was the first time during his four years in office that Biden awarded the medal "with distinction," it said. **REUTERS**

TOPOFTHE WORLD



Incumbent President Zoran Milanovic

Croatians vote for president, incumbent ahead in surveys

Zagreb: Croatians were voting on Sunday in a presidential runoff election, with opinion polls giving incumbent Zoran Milanovic a lead over Dragan Primorac, the ruling party's challenger for the largely ceremonial position. Polling stations opened at 0600 GMT and will close at 1800 GMT, with exit polls expected minutes later. Preliminary results will be known by about 1900 GMT and full, official results are expected in the following days. Around 3.8 million people in the NATO and European Union member are eligible to vote in Sunday's second round. The state poll panel said turnout by 11.30 am was13.8%. REUTERS

SRI LANKA

Eight Indian fishermen held for 'poaching'

Islamabad: The Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday said it has arrested eight Indian fishermen for allegedly fishing in the island nation's territorial waters and seized two fishing trawlers. The arrests took place on Saturday night "during a special operation conducted in the sea area north of Mannar", it said in a press statement. With this arrest, so far this year 18 Indian fishermen have been arrested and three trawlers confiscated, the Navy statement said.

FRANCE

Mayotte isles hit by new tropical storm

Cape Town: The French territory of Mayotte was battered by a new tropical storm Sunday, just weeks after the worst cyclone to hit the islands in nearly a century laid waste to entire neighbourhoods and villages and forced a huge recovery effort by authorities. Mayotte's people were ordered to stay indoors or find a solid shelter if they didn't have one, and store food and water, as Tropical Storm Dikeledi brought heavy rains to the island. Mayotte had only just begun the process of rebuilding after the devastation of Cyclone Chido last month.



An air tanker drops fire retardant at the Palisades fire, as seen from Woodland Hills, Los Angeles, Saturday. Reuters

Winds likely to strengthen, firefighters try to prevent spread of LA fire to east

REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, JANUARY 12

AIRCRAFT DROPPED water and fire retardant on steep hills to stem the eastward spread of the Palisades wildfire in Los Angeles on Saturday as on-the-ground firefighting intensified amid warnings of wind of up to 70 mph that could make matters worse.

Over the past 24 hours, the Palisades Fire spread over an additional 1,000 acres, consuming more homes, officials reported.

Six simultaneous blazes that have ripped across Los Angeles County neighborhoods since Tuesday have killed at least 16 people as of late Saturday, the

Washington Post and other media reported, citing the Los Angeles County medical examiner's office. Reuters could not immediately reach the coroner.

The blazes have damaged or destroyed 12,000 structures, fire officials said. At least 13 people are estimated to be missing.

The death toll is expected to mount when firefighters are able to conduct house-to-house searches. Cal Fire official Todd Hopkins told a press conference that while 11% of the Palisades Fire was now contained, it has burned over 22,000 acres.

Evacuation orders throughout the Los Angeles area now cover 153,000 residents, putting 57,000 structures at risk. Another 166,000 residents have been warned that they may have

Incompetent officials handling fires: Trump

Meanwhile, President-elect Donald Trump criticized local and state officials he believed had handled the situation badly.

"The fires are still raging in L.A. The incompetent pols have no idea how to put them out. Thousands of magnificent houses are gone, and many more will soon be lost. There is death all over the place... they just can't put out the fires. What's wrong with them?" he said on his Truth Social feed.

RISK MAY RISE TO 'EXTREME'

PALISADES FIRE - 11% contained

EATON FIRE

— 27% contained **LIDIA FIRE**

HURST FIRE -89% contained

- 76% contained

KENNETH, SUNSET

FIRES — fully contained Source: The New York Times

FIRST SUCH MEETING AFTER ASSAD'S FALL

Saudi hosts Western & regional leaders, urges lifting of Syria sanctions

Meet discusses steps to support new govt; EU ministers will meet at end of month to discuss easing sanctions

PESHA MAGID

RIYADH, JANUARY 12

EUROPEAN FOREIGN ministers will meet at the end of January to discuss the lifting of sanctions on Syria, the EU foreign policy chief said on Sunday in Riyadh ahead of a meeting of top Middle Eastern and Western diplomats and Syria's new foreign minister.

Kaja Kallas, the EU foreign policy chief, said the foreign ministers would convene in Brussels on January 27 to decide how the 27-nation bloc would relax sanctions on Syria.

After 13 years of civil war, Syria's President Bashar al-Assad was ousted in a lightning offensive by insurgent forces led by the Islamist Havat Tahrir al-Sham a month ago. Any European decision to ease sanctions would be conditional on the new Syrian administration's approach to governing, which must include "different groups" and women and "no radicalisation", Kallas said, without elaborating. Sunday's conference was the first meeting of Western and regional leaders hosted by regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia since Assad ouster.

Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said he stressed "lifting the unilateral and UN sanctions imposed on Syria as continuing ... sanctions will hinder the aspirations of the Syrian



Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in Riyadh, Sunday. Reuters

people to achieve development." Germany on Sunday proposed allowing relief for the

Syrian population, but retaining sanctions on Assad allies who "committed serious crimes" during Syria's war. "Syrians now need a quick dividend from the transition of

power, and we continue to help those in Syria who have nothing," German Foreign minister Annalena Baerbock said. British foreign minister David Lammy joined the Riyadh talks

along with ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as the UN special envoy for Svria. Geir Pedersen. REUTERS

UN SPECIAL envoy to Syria Geir Pedersen had told the Security Council that crises like a lack of transparency over the militias who had not yet folded into the new de-

Likely hurdles for

inclusive transfer

fence ministry and the actions of the Israeli military inside the Syrian territory could raise doubts about an inclusive and peaceful formation of a transitional government.

Top Israeli

in Doha for

REUTERS

security team

JERUSALEM, JANUARY 12

Gaza truce talks

A TOP level Israeli security dele-

gation arrived in Qatar on

Sunday for talks on a Gaza

hostage and ceasefire deal, a

spokesperson for Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

said, in a possible sign of so-far

Egypt and the United States are

making renewed efforts to reach

a deal to halt the fighting in the

Qatar and fellow mediators

elusive agreements nearing.

Bangladesh's Yunus asks UK to investigate graft scandal of Hasina's niece

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DHAKA, JANUARY 12

CHIEF ADVISER Muhammad Yunus has called for an investigation into the properties of British minister Tulip Siddig and her family, indicating that they may have acquired them through unlawful means during her aunt Sheikh Hasina's tenure as Bangladesh premier, reports said Sunday.

In an interview with the Times newspaper, Yunus condemned the use of properties gifted to Siddig and her family by "allies of her aunt's deposed regime". He demanded the return of assets to Bangladesh if she is found to have benefited from "plain robbery".

"It's about plain robbery," Yunus said, accusing the previous government of embezzling funds through fraudulent practices. Siddiq, a member of Britain's Labour Cabinet, serves as the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and City Minister. The newspaper Sunday carried another report titled" (UK) PM urged to sack Tulip Siddiq".

According to the Sunday Times, Yunus' comments will add to the pressure on her to resign, though there are suggestions that Downing Street is already looking for a replacement.

S Korea's Yoon won't attend 1st impeachment trial hearing: Lawyer

REUTERS JANUARY 12

SOUTH KOREA'S impeached president, Yoon Suk Yeol, will not attend the first hearing of the trial to determine whether he is removed him from office or reinstated, due to concerns about his safety, *Yonhap* News reported Sunday, citing his lawyer.

"The officials in the Corruption Investigation Office (CIO) and the police are trying to execute illegal and invalid arrest warrants through illegal methods, raising concerns about personal safety and mishaps," lawyer Yoon Kabkeun was quoted as saying. "In order for the president to appear for



the trial, the issue of personal safety and security must be resolved."The Constitutional Court hearing is scheduled for Tuesday.

The anti-graft office plans a second attempt to arrest Yoon in a probe over his failed attempt to impose martial law in early December. An arrest bid on Jan 3 failed after a 6-hour standoff with security personnel in Seoul.

Yoon's lawyer did not respond to Reuters calls seeking

Zelenskyy urges Nato to honour promises, send air defences soon

REUTERS KYIV. JANUARY 12

PRESIDENT UKRAINE'S Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on allies on Sunday to honour all promises to supply Ukraine with weapons, including those to

counter Russian air attacks. Ukrainian air defences downed 60 out of 94 drones launched by Russia overnight, the air force said on Sunday. It said that 34 drones were "lost", in reference to Ukraine's use of electronic warfare to redirect Russian drones.

"Every week, the Russian war continues only because the Russian army retains its ability to terrorise Ukraine and exploit its superiority in the sky," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram app. He



Ukrainian servicemen at a position in Zaporizhzhia, Saturday

called on Ukraine's allies to fulfil agreements already made. "The decisions made at the NATO summit in Washington, as well as

those adopted during Ramstein meetings regarding air defences for Ukraine, have still not been fully implemented," he said.

enclave and free the remaining 98 hostages held there before President-elect Donald Trump

Russia forms task force as Kerch Strait oil spill spreads

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, JANUARY 12 AN EMERGENCY task force ar-

rived in Russia's southern Krasnodar region on Sunday as an oil spill in the Kerch Strait from two storm-stricken tankers continues to spread a month after it was first detected, officials said.

The task force, which includes Emergency Situations Minister Alexander Kurenkov,



Cleaning ops in Russia's Krasnodar region, Saturday

was set up after Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday called on authorities to ramp up the response to the spill, calling it "one of the most serious environmental challenges we have faced in recent years".

The Emergencies Ministry said Saturday that over 155,000 tons of contaminated sand and soil had been collected since oil spilled out of two tankers during a storm four weeks ago in the Kerch Strait, which separates the Crimean Peninsula from Krasnodar. Officials in Ukraine's partially Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia said Saturday that the mazut had reached the Berdyansk Spit, some 145 km north of the Kerch Strait, contaminating an area 14.5-km long.

Officials in Crimea announced a regional emergency last weekend after oil was detected on the shores of Sevastopol, the peninsula's largest city, about 250 km from Kerch Strait.

abused his power in the conflict

over the house. Yang, 67, described

what he called a pattern of perse-

In response to Putin's call for action, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry spokesman Heorhii Tykhyi accused Russia of "beginning to demonstrate its alleged concern' after the scale of the disaster became too obvious to conceal its terrible consequences." "Russia's practice of first ignoring the problem, then admitting its inability to solve it, and ultimately leaving the entire Black Sea region alone with

the consequences is proof of its ir-

responsibility," Tykhyi said Friday.

takes office on January 20. Netanyahu's office said on Saturday that the delegation includes Mossad Head David Barnea, the head of the Shin Bet domestic security service Ronen Bar and the military's head of the hostage brief, Nitzan Alon. Trump's Middle East envoy

Steve Witkoff, met Saturday with Netanyahu, after having met Friday with Oatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Israeli and Palestinian officials have said since Thursday that some progress has been made in the indirect talks between Israel and militant group Hamas but did not elaborate. The sides have been keeping a tight lid on the details being worked out.

RIFT BETWEEN HIS THREE CHILDREN REFLECTS AN INTENSIFYING DEBATE OVER SINGAPORE'S SEMI-AUTHORITARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

Lee Kuan Yew's will has casued a bitter feud in his family — over his mansion

SUI-LEE WEE

SINGAPORE, JANUARY 12

THE BUNGALOW was built for a Dutch trader in colonial times, but it has become part of modern Singaporean lore. It was where Lee Kuan Yew lived for decades, where he started his political party, and where he began building Singapore into one of the richest countries in the world. Lee had said that he wanted the house to be demolished after he died rather than preserved as a museum, with the public "trampling"

through his private quarters. But the wording of his will has left the property's fate in limbo

and caused a rift among his three children – one that reflects an intensifying debate over Singapore's semi-authoritarian political system. Now, an extraordinary voice has joined those who complain that the city-state's prosperity has come at the cost of a government that lacks accountability: one of Lee's own children.

"The idea that one good man at the center can control this, and you just rely on his benevolence to ensure that everything is right, doesn't work," Lee Hsien Yang, the youngest child, who wants to honor his father's wishes for the house, said in a recent interview with The New York Times. After Lee Kuan Yew's death in 2015, the elder child, by then Singapore's prime minister, argued that his father's instructions for the bungalow were ambiguous. His siblings wanted it demolished, though one continued to live in the house, and as long as she did, its fate remained unresolved.

Then, after her death in October, the dispute resurfaced and escalated sharply. Lee Hsien Yang, called Yang by his parents and siblings, announced that he had obtained political asylum in Britain because he feared being unfairly imprisoned in Singapore over the disagreement.

Yang said his brother — Lee Hsien Loong, who stepped down in May as prime minister — had



Lee Hsien Yang, Lee Kuan Yew's youngest child has lashed out at the country's political system over its 'lack of accountability'

cution by the Singapore government in recent years. In 2020, his son was charged with contempt of court for criticizing Singapore's courts in a private Facebook post. That year, his wife, a lawyer who had arranged for the witnesses at the signing of the patriarch's will, was barred from practicing law for 15 months. In 2022, they left Singapore. Loong, 72, who now holds the title of senior minister, declined to comment.

Yang acknowledged that his father had detained opposition politicians and union leaders, but said that he "had the best inLee Kuan Yew transformed a

terests of the country at heart."

colonial outpost into an economic powerhouse in a generation. He made no bones about intervening in the lives of Singaporeans and prioritized the community over the individual — a notion that some observers say points to the irony of the family feud.

Months after Lee's death, the government formed a committee to explore options for the house. That marked the start of Yang's troubles with the state. Loong told the panel that he was "very concerned" that the demolition clause in the will was "reinserted under dubious circumstances."

To the younger siblings, it ap-

their father's will, Yang said, pointing out that a court had declared it as binding. For Yang, the People's Action Party had lost its way. He joined

peared that the committee was

"conducting an inquisition" into

the Progress Singapore Party, a new opposition group, and considered running for president, a ceremonial post. In 2022, police asked to interview him and his wife, saying they had lied in the misconduct proceedings. The couple agreed to be questioned at a later date, but soon left Singapore. It was not until 2023 that a minister revealed in parliament that they were being investigated by authorities. NYT

15 IDEA EXCHANGE NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

ON URBAN VS RURAL INNOVATION

We had an independent assessment of the first 1,000 labs which are the most mature. The number of innovations, on an average, from a rural school is higher as compared to that in an urban school

Soumyarendra Barik: In the four years since you took over the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), the number of tinkering labs increased from 6,000 to more than 10,000. What's your assessment of the entire programme? What have you learned through the process about the Indian society's appetite for innovation, and what are some of the challenges?

When I came, all the mandates that AIM had for its first phase (AIM 1.0), were met. We were to make 10,000 Atal tinkering labs in schools for children from Class six to 12. We were to make 101 Atal incubation centres — business incubators which take an idea to a startup and provide services. We were to make 50 community innovation centres. And then we were to run Atal 'New India challenges' for 200 ministries. The first three got done. In the 'New India challenge', we still have a balance of 50 or so. But by and large, the targets were met. In terms of the appetite, there are 10,000 Atal tinkering labs across 722 districts. About 66 per cent of them are rural. And about 95 per cent are in schools. There's a lot of hunger.

What it took to get here is quite simple — maker spaces, a 3D printer, vinyl cutter, mechanical tools, electronic tools and entrepreneurship tools. There's a lot of excitement. This is also, interestingly, the only space in India's schools where there's no exam, where a student can explore, look around a problem and work on a solution which is exactly the opposite from the rest of the education ecosystem, where a teacher teaches you a solution. Obviously, in real life the problems come before solutions. We had an independent assessment of the first 1,000 labs which are the most mature. The number of innovations, on an average, from a rural school is higher as compared to that in an urban school. Sixty per cent of these are in government schools.

The greatest challenge for innovation and entrepreneurship to soar in our nation are cultural. Families want their children to be safe and not take risks. For an academic to trust a business person is a challenge. For a business person to believe that an academic can also be interested in practical problems is a challenge. For the government to think that the private sector can as efficiently deliver on some of the tasks is a challenge. For the private sector to think that the government can also be progressive and fast-moving is a challenge. These cultural chasms are the biggest challenge. It is a mindset thing. It has nothing to do with our capability.

Soumyarendra Barik: Could you cite some examples where the region, socio-economic background, literacy level of parents has not mattered and their experience in the societal system has shaped their problemsolving abilities?

The discovery of problems is the most fascinating part for me. For instance, Sivakasi is known for manufacturing fireworks. We have an Atal Tinkering Lab there. These are children of parents who are labourers in these factories. For these children sometimes the factory is their home. The greatest hazard in this process of making firecrackers is when you have to mix chemicals. And if your proportions and processes are not right, there can be an explosion and then it can really burn down a bunch of huts. We all have seen cement mixers on highways which continuously rotate a drum on a truck. They have taken inspiration from that and tried a mechanical drum to work with these chemicals to make that particular step safer. The fascinating part is that later, we built an Atal Community Innovation Centre in Kalasalingam, which also has a university, which is near Sivakasi. One of the things that happens at these centres is that they do these events. So people from around can come and know what is happening and exhibit what's happening. These kids came and they put up their project. Kalasalingam faculty walked by and a chemical engineering person, a physics person, and one from mechanical engineering said that this was quite interesting because now you can even model this. You can say that these are chemicals to be mixed. These are their properties. These are their time constants, catalytic energy. This is how it should be mixed. This is the angle and the velocity of rotation, angular momentum of the drum. The life of this family is now a mathematical problem. Kids absolutely love it because now they see why they have to learn physics and why they have to learn engineering. If we can give such experiences to children, then we don't have to tell them to study this or that. They will do it.

Soumyarendra Barik: While we have a vibrant startup ecosystem, our key

WHY CHINTAN VAISHNAV

Dr Chintan Vaishnav was the Mission Director for Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), a Government of India initiative to encourage grassroot innovation across the length and breadth of the country, for close to four years. Before that, over the past decade, he split his time between teaching and research at MIT

and living and working with rural communities in India. As a teacher, innovator and entrepreneur, he has firsthand experience of the various parts of the innovation ecosystem, both in India and the US. He also served as the Chair for the Startup 20 engagement group during India's G20 Presidency



ON INNOVATION IN POLICYMAKING

In science, technology and innovation, the policy processes, which are always consensus based, have the danger of diluting the outcome. We have to be bold enough to follow that one right way

'Greatest challenge for innovation in India is cultural. Families want their children to be safe, not take risks'

Chintan Vaishnav, former Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission, on AI putting us in an unknown paradigm, need for startups to benchmark themselves and how we have lost a generation. The conversation was moderated by Soumyarendra Barik, Special Correspondent, The Indian Express



Chintan Vaishnay, former Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission (right) in conversation with Soumyarendra Barik, Special Correspondent, The Indian Express Tashi Tobgyal

competitors, the US and China, are much ahead in terms of creating original work. Even our big businesses spend very little on R&D. Will that not hinder innovation and prevent us from being competitive?

It is true, it is a problem. We'll have to come at it from multiple angles. My theory of change is that hopefully there will be a tipping point beyond which there will be enough examples that more would want to do it. But, at the moment, the scenario is very conservative. For instance, when I came to AIM, I would meet large corporations and ask them, 'when do you increase your R&D spending?' Or alternatively, 'when do you work with a startup that has done the research that you would have wanted to do?' Their answer would boil down to: if we see a clear connection to our top line or we see a clear connection to the bottom line. And I want either my top line to improve or my bottom line to improve. In other words, I want my portion of the pie to be expanded. But then there are sectors after sectors, with AI, where the pie is disappearing. Then what do you do? The disappearing pie conversation is not happening. That's what we need.

Ravi Dutt Mishra: A heated debate on H1B visa is on and it is a part of a bigger problem. Since the politics of the US and Europe is changing, what should we be doing differently?

The picture is as hazy for me as it is to everybody else. I don't think there is a lot of strategising to be done. It's just the basic value proposition that we are useful to each other or not and in what ways. The United States ecosystem understands which startups to leverage. Zoho, for instance, has gone across the world.

Anil Sasi: There is still a considerable gap between risk takers and risk funding in startups. A lot of the initial funding still comes in from family. To what extent do you see this gap narrowing and how crucial is funding beyond the non-traditional means?

As to reducing the gap in the future, there are fairly large swaths of our economy that we have not yet tapped into. So a very large fraction of India's GDP is vernacular businesses. These are not businesses that are in the startup land at all. They understand business very well. They don't consider startups as an asset class. By one measure, 60 per cent of India's GDP is in vernacular businesses. We'll have to engage with them; with small amounts of risk. If you want to put a lot of money, that's a late- stage game. But if you want to put some money in, it's an early-stage game. The government has given a lot of early stage grant money. Our experience with that has been that the return is pretty handsome. This is government money, so it is not really saying that only if you give me my return will I invest in your risky idea. This is more risk-loving capital. The one challenge is that the quality of ideas is still is variable.

Anil Sasi: How important is it for startups to benchmark themselves to what's happening in developed markets? Also, in this new AI space, which is still uncertain about monetisation, do you see Indian firms having an opportunity?

This sort of theory about thinking global from the get-go is now at least known to people. So they will strive in that direction. In certain sectors which are leading, say FinTech, e-commerce, there's also know-how. But that knowledge is still in limited spheres and not widely available. As it does become more available, there'll be more of it. At the same time, there could be an over-fascination with unicorns and global ideas. In some sense, you can have a very healthy market in our country and that would be fine. But in neither cases can you really compromise the fundamentals of business.

this innovation into manufacturing? For young people doing startups, and for investors too, doing a startup in services, SaaS (Software as a Service) and ecommerce, it is a practical choice. Most of our young entrepreneurs do not have deep pockets. They are choosing something with

a fast clock speed to build a software, where the return is in three years, say best case, five years, worst case, 10 years. There is nothing wrong with it. That trend will go on and we should keep an eye on the other trend, but we should never expect our people to be more impractical because this person is already taking risks against their family's wishes. We have to embrace them. When somebody sells their first startup and has a little deeper pocket, then they will do something in bio manufacturing among others. There are many examples

Harish Damodaran: Why is it that most

services? Why are we not able to bring

of our innovations are coming in

Soumyarendra Barik: We are now exploring cutting-edge sectors like semiconductors. The change and money is being driven by the bigger firms but the suppliers are often from China or Taiwan. We are going towards Taiwan plus one or China plus one in smartphones. How can that change?

of this. Capability is there, but weaving it

together, taking it together, it takes its years

So China plus one or Taiwan plus one is not our achievement? It just happens to be there? How will we get into this sphere of

ON LACK OF INNOVATION IN MANUFACTURING

Most of our young entrepreneurs do not have deep pockets. They with a fast clock speed

vision and have a bigger picture and a strategy to make, to become globally competitive? I think that will have to start in education. Why is it not happening or scaling across the world? Because it takes teachers to do a lot more work. Maybe AI will help. We will have to teach. The children will then create something new because they have those skills and a perspective.

Raj Kamal Jha: If Kota and JEE remain the gateways, how do you link Atal Labs to this? Do IITs have a role to play in outreach to schools?

It's experimentation all along. Some of the IITs, BITS Pilani among others, have begun to reserve two seats for somebody coming on the basis of innovation. That's a great start. The tension of the JEEs versus tinkering is going to remain, because again, an average parent wants a secure path, a prestigious path. They don't link this to science and mathematics at all. One of the things that we are trying to do is to bring parents into the fold and invite them into these exhibits. But, on a very small scale, the Atal Tinkering Labs with 10,000 labs are still only in five per cent of our schools. So we're not transforming the country. But you step back and look at what is happening to our human capital. For every 100 that enter school, 28 go to college, 72 don't. What about those 72? The present battle is to open Atal Tinkering Labs to everybody and not only somebody who is good at mathematics and physics. We have the potential to do a lot. There are a lot of people who can do so much. We still don't have a pathway. All of those institutions will have to change. And this new pathway will have to be there. JEEs will do JEEs. We need scientists. Nothing wrong with it.

Yashee: We talk of involving parents, but is there an element of involving teachers in these tinkering labs? In schools, teachers are not really thinking about innovation. They have a syllabus to complete.

Teachers are, of course, the linchpin. In Jammu Kashmir, we said that we will not restrict tinkering lab training to only those schools that have tinkering lab, nor to only those teachers who are in charge. We said we will get into the state departments training programme, and we will train everybody, all teachers. The results are phenomenal. Last year, in the Atal Tinkering marathon, where there were 20,000 teams. The national average was 3.2 per cent. Jammu Kashmir was 36 per cent.

Soumyarendra Barik: In your four years working closely with the government, do you see a scope

for innovation? In science, technology and innovation, the policy processes, which are largely consensus based, have the danger of diluting the outcome. Because you're trying to cater to a diversity of opinions and in science, we have to be bold enough to follow that one right way. We have to drive towards people who have spent a long time with some of these subjects, like quantum and semiconductors, sophisticated subjects that a person working their entire life is still struggling to understand. The second thing is that something is fundamentally changing. AI, as its influence grows, is for the first time putting us in a paradigm after the industrial revolution, where the clock speed of technological change is faster than the clock speed of institutional decision making. This is not a paradigm we have had. Even with the fastest growing technologies like say mobile phones, it took 20 years before it reached saturation. So we had time to catch up. We won't have that time. We are in a non-deterministic paradigm. You have an input and a predictable output. Here, the thing in between is learning. So, you may not have a predictable output. As a result, decision-makers who are very well-meaning simply don't have the tools to grapple with this.

Raj Kamal Jha: Then you also have lakhs of young men and women, out of school or college, preparing for a few thousand government jobs. How do you see your roadmap for innovation making a difference to this? Have we lost a generation?

Yes. And I don't know how long it will take. I feel that the innovation ecosystem work will take 40 years. It has taken that much time for other nations. There's more technology and globalisation, so it may shorten it a little bit. But building those institutions will take time. And we are disruptors. The incumbent is the exam only. And in the classic Christiansonian sense, the incumbent is going to ignore all of this until this trend gets to a point where somebody from this trend can marry easily, and can have a better retired life.

are choosing something and faster returns. It is a practical choice and there is nothing wrong with it

What draft rules on VC appointments say, why states are upset

EXPLAINED

EDUCATION

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

SEVERAL STATES have objected to provisions in The UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025, that could give the Chancellor — who is typically the state Governor — a bigger role in appointing Vice Chancellors (VCs) of state universities.

How VCs are appointed

Regulations notified by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2018 said a search-cum-selection committee comprising eminent persons in higher education shall shortlist 3-5 candidates by public notification, nomination, a "talent search process", or a combination of these processes.

The Chancellor — or Visitor in a central university — appoints the VC from among the recommended names.

In the case of state and private universities. one member of the committee is nom-

inated by the UGC Chairman. For state universities, the rest of the committee is constituted in accordance with state law.

The Kerala University Act, 1974, for example, says the VC will be appointed by the Chancellor "on the unanimous recommendation of a committee appointed by him consisting of three members", one elected by the university Senate, and one each nominated by the UGC Chairman and the Chancellor (Governor).

Central universities are established under an Act of Parliament, and are administered by the Centre. The Visitor, their ceremonial head, is the President of India.

The composition of the committee to appoint the VC of a central university is determined by the Act that governs the university. For the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University, for example, the committee has two nominees of the university Executive Council, and one of the Visitor.

States vs Centre over VCs

Over the past several years, non-BIP governments in states have clashed with the Governor, who is a nominee of the Centre. over the appointment of VCs.

KERALA: The tussle began in 2021, when then Governor Arif Mohammad Khan claimed he had been forced to act against his conscience by the LDF government in the reappointment of Gopinath Ravindran as VC of Kannur University. In 2023, the Assembly passed a Bill to replace the Governor with eminent educationists as Chancellors of universities in the state. The Bill is yet to receive the assent of the President.

WEST BENGAL: The Supreme Court is seized of the matter arising out of the state government's challenge to a June 2023 order of the Calcutta High Court upholding the unilateral appointment of interim VCs in 13 universities

by Governor CV Ananda Bose. In July 2024, the SC appointed former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit to head separate search-selection committees to shortlist candidates for the positions. There has

been some progress in this process since. Earlier, the West Bengal Assembly passed The University Laws (Amendment) Bill 2023 to replace the Governor with the Chief Minister as Chancellor of state-aided universities. It is yet to receive the Governor's nod. **KARNATAKA:** In December 2024, the Assembly passed a Bill to replace the Governor with the Chief Minister as Chancellor of Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayati Raj University. The Bill is yet to receive the Governor's assent.

In November, the Karnataka Cabinet had decided to do the same for other state universities as well. The state Higher Education Minister had said a draft Bill

was in the works to amend the Karnataka State Universities Act to bring in critical administrative reforms for the 42 universities under the state government.

MAHARASHTRA: In 2021, when Uddhav Thackeray's Maha Vikas Aghadi government was in power, the legislature passed a Bill that restricted the Governor's power to only approving VC candidates recommended by the state government, and gave greater authority to the state's Higher and Technical Education Minister instead.

The Bill remained pending with then Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. After Eknath Shinde became Chief Minister in

2022, the new government withdrew the Bill and the original process, in which the Governor had the final say in the appointment of VCs, was restored.

TAMIL NADU: In 2022, the DMK-led government passed two Bills to allow the state government to pick VCs for state universities, but these Bills were not approved by the Governor. Last year, Governor RN Ravi asked the government to recall the notifications to set up search committees for VCs of several state universities on the grounds that they did not include the nominee of the UGC chairman. The appointments remain pending.

New UGC regulations

■ The draft rules say "the Chancellor/ Visitor shall constitute the Search-cum-Selection Committee comprising three experts." The 2018 regulations did not specify who would constitute the committee.

■ The new regulations specify the composition of the committee: a member each nominated by the Visitor/Chancellor, the UGC Chairman, and the apex body of the university (Senate/ Syndicate/ Executive Council). This gives nominees of the Centre the majority.

■ Besides professors, individuals at senior levels in industry, public policy, public administration, or public sector undertakings, can also become VCs, says the draft.

Question of federalism

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said the draft regulations "undermine federalism by stripping states of their rights to appoint" VCs, and "vest unchecked power in the Chancellor".

The Tamil Nadu Assembly has asked the Centre to withdraw the draft regulations. Chief Minister M K Stalin has said giving Governors broader control over VC appointments is a "direct assault on federalism and state rights", and an attempt to "undermine democratically elected state governments".

However, UGC chairman M Jagadesh Kumar has said the draft regulations seek to provide a "robust process" for selecting VCs. "aligning with the overarching goals of quality and transparency in higher education" The 2025 draft removes the ambiguities of the 2018 regulations, he said. It is aligned with the National Education Policy 2020, he said. (WITH SHAJU PHILIP, SANATH PRASAD

SWEETY KUMARI, PALLAVI SMART)

did not meddle with it.

EXPLAINED SCIENCE

WHAT IS PINK FIRE RETARDANT, BEING USED AGAINST CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES?

ALIND CHAUHAN NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

AS MULTIPLE wildfires blaze in Southern California, authorities are using planes to drop a large amount of bright pink fire retardant. While its use is not new in the United States, growing research has raised questions about its effectiveness and potential environmental impact.

What is the fire retardant?

Fire retardant is a mix of chemicals used to extinguish or slow the spread of fires. To tackle wildfires in the US, authorities commonly use a brand known as Phos-Chek, which mostly contains an ammonium phosphate-based slurry. Salts like ammonium polyphosphate do not evaporate easily like water, and stay for longer.

Stanton Florea, a spokesman for the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, told *The New York Times* that the retardant is sprayed ahead of the fire to coat vegetation and prevent oxygen from

allowing it to burn. Colour is usually added to the fire retardant to ensure that firefighters can see it against the landscape. This helps them create fire lines, potentially saving lives and property. Phos-Chek is pink because the colour is "by far the most visible. And, it is pretty," Melissa Kim, vice president of research and development at Perimeter Solutions, which manufactures Phos-Chek, told NBC Los Angeles.

What are the concerns?

Environmental experts have argued that spraying fire retardants using planes is ineffective, expensive and a growing source of pollution for rivers and streams. A 2024 study by researchers at the

University of Southern California found that Phos-Chek "is laden with toxic metals", and estimates retardant use has released "850,000 pounds of these chemicals into the environment since 2009," as per a report by the Los Angeles Times.

These toxic metals include chromium



A tanker drops fire retardant during a wildfire in California. The New York Times

and cadmium, which can cause cancer, and kidney and liver diseases in humans. However, their adverse environmental impact is potentially bigger in scale, especially when retardants enter waterways and kill aquatic life.

The effectiveness of Phos-Chek also remains unclear because it is one of the numerous firefighting tactics deployed in a major fire. After the flames are extinguished, it is difficult to assign credit.

Studies have found that the effectiveness of aerial retardants also depends on factors like slope, fuel type, terrain and weather. Timothy Ingalsbee, a former wildland firefighter and executive director of the nonprofit Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics and Ecology, told the LA Times, "Aerial retardant is effective over a narrow range of conditions, and the windows of opportunity for those conditions are narrowing each year due to climate change."

As global temperatures continue soaring, wildfires are expected to become more frequent and intense. This will only increase the use of aerial fire retardants.

Data show that more than 440 million gallons of retardant were unleashed between 2009 and 2021 in the US. The USC study estimated that as a result, more than 400 tonnes of heavy metals were released into the environment, The *NYT* reported.



EXPLAINED CULTURE Kumbh origin, history, appeal

The Kumbh Mela begins in Prayagraj today. Why is it held in four cities periodically? What are Ardh and Maha Kumbh? And why do millions flock to the Mela, making it the largest gathering of devotees on Earth?

YASHEE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

IT IS cold in Prayagraj, foggy with a chance of rain. Yet, on Monday, hundreds of thousands are expected to arrive in the city, to camp on the banks of the Ganga. During their visit, they will stay in tents and bathe in the river, and the most devout will take a dip before dawn when the stars are still twinkling.

Prayagraj is hosting the Maha Kumbh or Poorna Kumbh — which is held every 12 years. Many myths are prevalent around the Kumbh Mela, there are many theories about its origin. Some say the festival finds mention in the Vedas and Puranas. Some say it does not go back more than two centuries. What is certain is only that it is the largest gathering of religious devotees on Earth.

What is the Kumbh Mela, and why is it held in four cities by turns? What is Ardh Kumbh and Maha Kumbh? What do the millions who attend it seek? The answers lie in a mix of myths, history, and the enduring faith of an ancient people who trust as much in the munificence of invisible deities as in tangible life-givers like rivers.

Mythological origins of Kumbh

The Sanskrit word *kumbh* means pitcher. The story goes that when *devas* (gods) and asuras (loosely translated as demons) churned the ocean, Dhanvantri emerged carrying a pitcher of *amrit*, or the elixir of immortality. To make sure the asuras did not get it, Indra's son, Jayant, ran off with the pot. The Sun, his son Shani, Brihaspati (Jupiter), and the Moon went along to protect him and the pot.

As Jayant ran, the *amrit* spilled at four places: Haridwar, Prayagraj, Ujjain, and Nashik-Trimbakeshwar. He ran for 12 days — and as one day of the *devas* is equal to a year of humans, Kumbh Mela is celebrated at these locations every 12 years, based on the relative positions of the Sun, the Moon, and Jupiter.

Prayagraj and Haridwar also hold the Ardh (half) Kumbh every six years. The festival held after 12 years is called Poorna Kumbh or the Maha Kumbh.

All four places are on the banks of rivers — Haridwar has the Ganga; Prayagraj is the sangam (meeting point) of Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati; Ujjain has the Kshipra, and Nashik-Trimbakeshwar the Godavari.

It is believed that taking a dip in these rivers during Kumbh, amid the specific alignment of the heavenly bodies, washes away



Devotees make their way to the banks of the Ganga in Prayagraj on Sunday, a day **before the Maha Kumbh begins.** Vishal Srivastav

one's sins and accrues *punya* (spiritual merit). Sadhus and other holy men gather at Kumbh Melas, and regular people can meet them.

"While the importance of the Ganga in Hindu religion is well known, the Kshipra is believed to have emerged from the heart of Vishnu in his Varah (boar) avatar. The Godavari is often called the Ganga of Dakshin (south)," Dr Dipakbhai Jyotishacharya, who runs the Parashar Jyotishalaya in Gujarat's Vapi, told The Indian Express.

Deciding the site

According to the Kumbh Mela website, when Jupiter — which takes 12 years to complete a revolution around the Sun — is in Aquarius or Kumbh *rashi* (whose symbol is the water bearer), and Sun and Moon are in Aries and Sagittarius respectively, Kumbh is held at Haridwar.

When Jupiter is in Taurus, and the Sun and Moon are in Capricorn or Makar (thus, Makar Sankranti is also in this period) the Kumbh is held at Prayag.

When Jupiter is in Leo or Simha, and the Sun and Moon in Cancer, the Kumbh is held at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, which is why it is called Simhastha Kumbh.

Debate over Kumbh's antiquity

Reference to the Kumbh in the Skanda Purana is sometimes cited as evidence of its antiquity.

Girija Shankar Shastri, head of the Department of Jyotish at Banaras Hindu University, said, "The Skanda Purana is widely cited to explain the origins of the Kumbh Mela, but those references have not survived in the extant versions of the Purana." In fact, Prof Shastri said, "No scripture can be definitively said to contain a reference to the Kumbh Mela as we know it today. While the Samudra Manthan is described in many books, the spilling of amrit at four places is not."

Dipakbhai Jyotishacharya said that a book published by Gorakhpur's Gita Press, called Maha Kumbh Parva, claims that the Rig Veda has shlokas that mention the benefits of participating in the Kumbh Mela.

Many believe that the periodic fairs were started by the 8th-century Hindu philosopher Adi Shankaracharya as a place where Hindu ascetics and scholars could meet, discuss and disseminate ideas, and guide lay people.

The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) described a fair in Prayag in the seventh century. However, the Indologist Kama Maclean has pointed out that while Xuanzang does mention a fair, it cannot be established that he was describing the Kumbh Mela (*Pilgrimage and Power*, 2008).

Maclean has written that an ancient bathing festival of Magh mela (fair held in the Hindu month of Magh) was held at Prayag, which the *pandits* of the city rebranded as the "timeless" Kumbh sometime

"The origins of the Kumbh are linked to the worship of the Ganga as the great life force of the northern plains. Fairs on the banks of sacred rivers are indeed an ancient Hindu tradition. Gradually, travelling sadhus spread the idea of four Kumbh Melas on the banks of sacred rivers, where lay men as well as sanyasis could gather. Apart from pilgrimage, such huge gatherings also presented an opportunity to earn influence and followers," Dubey told The Indian Express.

after the Revolt of 1857 to ensure the British

history at the University of Allahabad who

has studied the Kumbh Mela in depth, has

written that the fair at Haridwar is likely to

have been the first to be called Kumbh Mela

as Brihaspati is in Kumbh rashi for this fair.

D P Dubey, a retired professor of ancient

In the book Kumbh Mela, Pilgrimage to The Greatest Cosmic Fair, Dubey, citing records from the Mughal era to those kept by sanyasi akhadaas, writes, "The Kumbha Mela came to be organised sometime after the twelfth century CE. The tradition of holding this religious festival possibly crystallised during the heyday of the Bhakti movement, a movement of the socio-religious reforms set on foot by a series of Hindu saints and reformers."

What pilgrims do at Kumbh While some come for only one ritual dip

in the river to wash away sins, many, termed *kalpwasi*, stay at the riverbank, to take a break from the daily fight of earning material resources and earn spiritual credit instead.

With any large crowd comes the chance of commerce, and the Mela has also served as a market crucial to local communities. Historically, there are records of Venetian coins and European toys being spotted at the Mela markets.

The various sadhu akhadaas set up camp. They go for ritual baths, called *shahi snan*, in elaborate processions. In the past, tussle over which sadhu akhadaa is important enough to bathe first has led to bloody battles, so now, an order is generally pre-decided.

"The Kumbh Mela has played an important part in history by mobilising and uniting society. These days, it is easy to advertise the time and venue of the next mela, but centuries ago, it was the sadhus that made astrological calculations and spread the word. People travelled to the venues without trains or motorised vehicles, without the option of luxury tents, driven only by faith. During the freedom struggle, the *melas* were a venue to spread nationalist thought," Rakesh Pandey, retired History professor at BHU, said.

Trump's call to rename Gulf of Mexico: history of names 'America', 'Mexico'

epaper.indianexpress.com

RISHIKA SINGH

sounds nice."

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

US PRESIDENT-ELECT Donald Trump said last week that he would rename the Gulf of Mexico "Gulf of America", while talking about trade deficit and illegal immigration

help Mexico a lot...we do most of the work there and it's ours... we're gonna be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, which

from Mexico. He said, "We

has a beautiful ring... and it's appropriate." In response, Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum said North America should be renamed "Mexican America", as men-

tioned in some 17th-century maps. She

added sarcastically, "Mexican America, that

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

most in Europe.

Many voyagers followed him. Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci was the first to write about the existence of a "New World" in his letters, though

many of his accounts are taken with a grain of salt today. When a German scholar, Matthias Ringmann, found these letters, he and fellow cartographer Martin Waldseemüller decided to create a world map. It showed a narrow strip of land marked "America", inspired by Vespucci's first name.

Where do the names come from?

The most frequently cited theory about

the origin of the name "America" stems

from its first documented use on a map.

When Christopher Columbus sailed to the

Americas in 1492, he did not know he had

reached another continent unknown to

The US Library of Congress says: "Martin

Waldseemüller's 1507 world map... supported Vespucci's revolutionary concept by portraying the New World as a separate continent... It was the first map, printed or manuscript, to depict clearly a separate Western Hemisphere, with the Pacific as a separate ocean. The map represented a huge leap forward in knowledge..."

Coming to Mexico, the story behind its name is often linked to a powerful empire. It is said to be derived from the Nahuatl language spoken by the Aztecs, who ruled the region between the 14th and 16th centuries. According to a Mexico government website, the most accepted theory says the name "is formed from three Nahuatl words: metztli meaning 'moon': xictli which translates to 'belly button' or 'centre'; and the affix -co indicating 'place'." It refers to the olden city of Tenochtitlan that now lies in the heart of Mexico City. Mexico's official



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum last week. Reuters

name (first used in 1824) is "United Mexican States", inspired by the USA since it too is a federation of states.

And what about the Gulf of Mexico?

According to *The New York Times*, "The gulf's name first appeared on maps used by Spanish explorers in the 16th century, well before the founding of the United States. Last Wednesday, Sheinbaum displayed a map from 1607 that included the Gulf of Mexico."

It is a significant region for the US, especially for energy resources. The government's Energy Information Administration states: "Gulf of Mexico federal offshore oil production accounts for 14% of total US crude oil production and federal offshore natural gas production in the Gulf accounts for 5% of total US dry production. Over 48% of total US petroleum refining capacity is located along the Gulf coast, as well as 51% of total US natural gas processing plant capacity."

Can Trump rename the Gulf of Mexico? The Associated Press reported that any

renaming would not be a "unilateral deci-

Hydrographic Organisation — of which both the United States and Mexico are members —works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation." For instance, multiple nations have

sion" of the US. It added, "The International

made overlapping claims regarding the South China Sea. However, there is no prior dispute over the Gulf of Mexico and before Trump, no major US politician ever demanded its renaming.

John Nyberg, the director of the International Hydrographic Organisation, told *The NYT* there is "no formal international agreement or protocol in place for naming maritime areas".

SLAM SNIPPETS



Aus Open: Lebanese Habib makes history with first round win

HADY HABIB'S history-making run at the Australian Open will continue after the first man to represent Lebanon in a Grand Slam singles tournament in the Open era became the first to win a match, defeating Bu Yunchaokete of China 7-6 (4), 6-4, 7-6 (6) on Sunday in front of a loud group of supporters.

"This is probably one of the best days of my career, honestly. It's such an incredible feeling to get this win — not only for myself but for Lebanon and Lebanese tennis," said the 26-year-old Habib, who is ranked outside the top 200 on the ATP Tour. "As you guys could see there, the crowd was absolutely wild. It made it even more special to win in front of them. ... I felt the energy out there."

In between, he lived in Lebanon where his father is from — from the ages of about 6 to 12, he explained, and picked up the sport there. He represented Lebanon at the Paris Olympics last year, losing to four-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz in the first round. **REUTERS**

Ponchos at premium as rain wrecks day one

THE FASTEST moving thing at the Australian Open on Sunday was not a tennis ball but a \$25 poncho at the tournament's gift shop as wet weather wreaked havoc with the action on the opening day of the Grand Slam.

Persistent rain forced the cancellation of a quarter of the scheduled singles matches and fans not lucky enough to have a ticket for the main showcourts, which have roofs, sought shelter from the elements around the Melbourne Park precinct.

The main gift shop ran out of ponchos by early afternoon and umbrellas, priced at \$35 and \$40, were selling like hot cakes forcing staff to continually restock. Thousands of fans braved the elements hoping the rain would abate but four hours after the start of the first matches on the outer courts. **REUTERS**

Vekic sends regards to wildfire-hit LA

DONNA VEKIC drew a heart and wrote "LA" on a courtside camera lens following her Australian Open victory on Sunday before turning her thoughts to her coach Pam Shriver, who is back home in California helping her family amid devastating wildfires. Six simultaneous fires that have ripped across Los Angeles County since Tuesday have killed at least 16 people as of late Saturday, several media reports said citing the Los Angeles County medical examiner's office. "It's a very difficult situation for her. She's home in Los Angeles. Her house is okay for now, but so many have lost everything and it's a horrible situation," Vekic said after beating Diane Parry 6-4 6-4 in the opening round. "We were doing our pre-season in Los Angeles this year, so we were just there two weeks ago. I really can't believe what's happening. We're very sad that she's not here with us. "We really miss her here. We're in touch daily and I hope everything will be okay." **REUTERS**

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

The favourite and the forgotten

Double defending champion Sabalenka starts with a routine win while former top-five player Nishikori mounts spirited comeback

NAMIT KUMAR JANUARY 12

IN HER first Major as World No.1 and with a target on her back being the heavy tournament favourite, a first round against a seasoned opponent could have been a potential banana skin for Aryna Sabalenka on the opening day of the 2025 Australian Open.

Instead, Sabalenka powered through the defences of 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens 6-3, 6-2 in the kind of dominant fashion expected of a two-time defending champion arriving in Melbourne in the form of her

The Belarusian picked up a routine straightsets victory under the roof of the Rod Laver Arena, her 28th in her last 29 matches at the Australian Open. It was the kind of win that signalled a warning to the rest of the locker room, reaffirming the top seed's status as the one to beat in the women's section this Aussie

Sabalenka, attempting to become the first woman since Martina Hingis in 1999 to win three successive women's singles titles in Melbourne, fashioned a 4-0 lead in the first set and looked set to dominate proceedings before suffering a mini-blip, Stephens breaking back to bring the score to 4-3.

The World No.1, now 26 and in the best physical and mental shape of her career, was touted for great things even as a teenager, given her evident talent and the easy power she enjoys. But her early career was marked by tentativeness, and she was known for frequent double faults when the pressure was on.

All that now seems a thing of the past as,

when the pressure was applied on Sunday, she readily found another gear. Sabalenka broke Stephens again, took the set in the next game, and wrapped up the match in another 30 minutes. "In that moment, I would get frustrated and probably would lose the first set," Sabalenka said post-match, per Reuters. "I'm really glad that I improved my mental toughness, let's say."

Sabalenka enters the Australian Open having won three of her last five tournaments, including the tune-up event in Brisbane last week. While the next fortnight may throw up several challenges, as far as statements of intent go, this was as matter-of-fact as it gets.

Comeback win

The first comeback from a two-set deficit



Aryna Sabalenka breezed past Sloane Stephens 6-3, 6-2 in the 1st round of the Australian Open. Reuters



in 2025 came on the very first day of Grand Slam tennis. Former World No.4 and US Open finalist **Kei Nishikori** saved two match points to mount a resurgence and beat Brazil's Thiago Monteiro 4-6, 6-7(5), 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 in an opening-day thriller at John Cain Arena on Sunday.

Injury problems have curbed Nishikori, now 35, for years, as he made several attempts to return to the elite level of men's tennis, where he spent most of the 2010s in. A strong finish to 2024 on the lower-rung Challenger Tour and a return to full fitness put him in good stead to start this season, which he began with a run to the final of the ATP 250 event in Hong Kong last week, catapulting him back into the top 100 of the rankings.

That Nishikori continues to have signs of life was evident in the vintage performance of over four hours on Sunday to make it to the second round of the Australian Open for the first time since 2015.

The Japanese player, still the only man from Asia to reach a singles Major final, saved two

Key Results

MEN'S SINGLES:

Kei Nishikori defeated Thiago Monteiro, 4-6, 6-7 (4), 7-5, 6-2, 6-3; Casper Ruud (6) defeated Jaume Munar 6-3, 1-6, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1; Alexander Zverev (2) defeated Lucas Pouille, France, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4. **WOMEN'S SINGLES:**

(14) Mirra Andreeva defeated Marie Bouzkova 6-3, 6-3; (1) Aryna Sabalenka defeated Sloane Stephens 6-3, 6-2; (18) Donna Vekic defeated Diane Parry 6-4 6-4; (5) Qinwen Zheng defeated Anca Todoni 7-6(3) 6-1.

match points on his serve down 4-5 in the third set before finding the baseline solidity of old and outlasting his opponent in the marathon match. Nishikori's victory was not the only fiveset grind of the day. Sixth seed and three-time Grand Slam finalist Casper Ruud avoided becoming the first top name to be bundled out of Melbourne after prevailing 6-3, 1-6, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1 over Spain's Jaume Munar.

Nagal loses opener

India's top-ranked singles player, Sumit Nagal was defeated in straight sets by World

No.25 Thomas Machac to end the Indian challenge this year in Melbourne.

Having been dealt a tough draw, Nagal, the only Indian player to qualify for singles action at the Australian Open, lost 3-6, 1-6, 5-7 to the promising Czech. Nagal was put under pressure early in the encounter and failed to make good of his chances, especially in the third set.

Despite the two-set deficit, he had fought back and fashioned a 3-0 lead in the third before allowing Machac back into the encounter and eventually folding.

Rain dampener

While action featuring the top players was seamless, chaos prevailed at Melbourne Park with the first half of the day disrupted by rain. Despite starting on a Sunday to ease the scheduling pressure, allowing the 128 first-round singles matches to take place across three days, rain spoiled those plans with as many as seven matches pushed to Monday.

Such was the scramble that, according to a news report in The Guardian, Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz, the two best players in the world, were forced to share one half of an indoor court as both of them prepared for their opening assignments, against Nicolas Jarry and Alexander Shevchenko respectively.

Ten-time former champion Novak Djokovic, looking to bounce back after a Slamless year, will also kickstart his tournament on Monday against Indian-origin American Nishesh Basavareddy.

Casella scores wonder goal in Toofans' big win

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE JANUARY12

WHEN ZACH Wallace played a crossfield aerial ball from midfield, it seemed like just another attacking move. But when the ball reached Argentina's Maico Casella, it turned into one of the moments of the Hockey India League so far at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium. Casella unleashed a shot on the volley, from an acute angle, that rocketed past Krishan Pathak in the Kalinga Lancers goal. It was a goal that reminded one of an iconic football moment: Marco van Basten's famous strike for Netherlands at Euro 1998.

Casella's goal helped Hyderabad Toofans on their way to an impressive 5-1 triumph against Kalinga Lancers. For Toofans, Gonzalo Peillat (6', 30'), Casella (21'), Tim Brand (47') and Arshdeep Singh (54') scored.

Lancers got off to a dream start with Alexander Hendrickx (5') but couldn't score after that. But their joy was short-lived as the Toofans struck back within a minute with another drag flicking ace Gonzalo Piellat firing

The Toofans took the lead in astounding fashion in the 21st minute when Casella scored one of the top contenders for the goal of the tournament. Peillat struck his second goal via yet another delightful drag flick before halftime as Toofans bounced back from a lacklustre start, playing on consecutive days.

Tim Brand got on the scoresheet as he found the back of the net in the 47th minute to give Toofans a comfortable 4-1 lead. Despite the cushion, the Toofans didn't take their foot off the pedal and were rewarded with a fifth goal in the 54th minute. The Lancers had taken off their goalkeeper in search of goals and Arshdeep Singh made the most of that by looping the ball into an empty net. His overall play meant Arshdeep was also named player of the match.

Thierry Brinkman hit the post twice on the night but the Toofans deservedly prevailed for a comfortable win and moved up to second on the points table.



Gonzalo Peillat (6', 30'), Maico Casella, Tim Brand and Arshdeep Singh scored in the Hyderabad Toofans' 5-1 win. HIL

Jansen stars on opening night of Women's Hockey India League

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN

JANUARY 12

IFIT was up to her, Janneke Schopman said after the Hockey India League (HIL) auction in October last year, she'd have assembled a squad with all the top Indian players she had worked with during her time as the national head coach. Indeed, from the start of the auction, she put her paddle up for a lot of the firstteam Indian players, but crucially, didn't go overboard for any of them. Because she was waiting for the one name she really wanted: the Netherlands' Yibbi Jansen. When her name came up, Schopman went all out to ward off the interest from the other teams.

The FIH Player of the Year in 2024, Jansen is a superstar of the all-conquering Dutch women's team. She was the leading goalscorer at Paris 2024 as the Netherlands clinched gold.

And it was Jansen who starred on the opening night of the inaugural women's HIL as Odisha Warriors thumped Delhi SG Pipers 4-0 to confirm their pre-event status as the team to beat. Jansen (16th minute and 37'), Baljeet Kaur (42') and Freeke Moes (43') were on target, as they turned on the style in the third quarter, pump-

"She is the best drag-flicker by far in the world," Schopman had described Jansen after the auction. "Everyone wanted her, but we made our strategy in a way that we will get her. Some of the Indians, who I'd have loved to have on our side, went for high prices. But we stuck to our plans and got Yibbi for just under what we had planned." The Rs 29 lakh recruit proved her worth

straight away. Jansen scored with the first penalty corner of the night, rifling her side into the lead after what was a closely-fought first



Yibbi Jansen (16th minute and 37'), Baljeet Kaur (42') and Freeke Moes (43') were on target for Odisha. HIL

Dutch star. Freeke Moes, and it allowed Jansen to do what she does best.

At half time, the match was still in the balance as Lily Owsley and Sunelita Toppo were quarter. The opening was created by another impressive for Delhi in attack, but Aussie vet-PC of the second half and Jansen was at it again.

The FIH Player of the Year in 2024, Jansen is a superstar of the all-conquering Dutch women's team. She was the leading goalscorer at Paris 2024 as the Netherlands clinched gold.

eran Jocelyn Bartram stood strong in goal for Odisha, with Deep Grace Ekka also solid in de-

Schopman was pleased with the lead, and the fact that Jansen lived up to her billing, but knew the game was not over yet as the Navneet Kaur-led side held a solid attacking threat.

But in the third quarter, the floodgates opened. Michelle Fillet won Odisha their first

The Delhi goalkeeper was not even in the frame to save this time, as the ball flew past the plaver on the post as well.

The third goal came from the stick of Baljeet, who was among the last few young players to make their India debut under Schopman. Moes then added gloss to the scoreline shortly after. In the final quarter, Delhi threw the kitchen sink in trying to reduce the deficit but the Odisha defence held firm.

"There goes a lot of work behind the scenes; Ido a lot of strength training and hockey training and then I put some extra time for my penalty corners. So yeah, it takes a lot of time but it is something I love so it doesn't feel like work," Jansen had told Hockey India recently. "I think the HIL is going to be a big adventure and I am really looking forward to it."

And it is an adventure that has gotten off to a delightful start for the Dutch goal-scoring

What makes Anahat the most promising squash player in the country?

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN JANUARY12

AFTER THE third game of the prestigious British Junior Open U17 final, India's Anahat Singh – the top seed – was in trouble. She had dropped two games and trailed against Egyptian prodigy Malika Elkaraksy. As she came out of the court in Birmingham before the fourth game started, her mentor and Indian squash legend Saurav Ghosal was upset, not because she was losing the final but because he was certain Anahat wasn't playing to the level she was capable of.

"Initially, just nothing was working out," Anahat told *The Indian Express*. "When I came out of the court after the third game when I was 1-2 down, he was quite angry with me. That was one reason I started playing better. It motivated me because I didn't want him to get more upset (smiles). He knew I wasn't playing my best and was telling me to focus on my basics. Even if I played at 50% of my capability, I'd make sure I'd win. It was just one last push. I'm glad I got through it."

Eventually, the 16-year-old defeated 14year-old Malika in the final, 4-11, 11-9, 6-11, 11-5, 11-3, winning what is considered one of the

pinnacle age-group events on the tour, apart from the World Junior Championships. Now Anahat has won a title in three categories: U11 in 2019, U15 in 2023, and U17 in 2025.

"I know what she's capable of, Different circumstances require different approaches," Ghosal told this daily. "In the final, I just felt her intensity wasn't where it needed to be, affecting her performance. Sometimes, a wake-up call is needed to remind her to trust her abilities and produce what she can. The girl she played, a 14-year-old Egyptian, is a talented player who has a great future. So I think Anahat did well to turn it around."

Anahat saw that as a sign of the expectations on her. "If my coach isn't happy that I won a tournament, then obviously there's a lot more to do," she said, adding with a smile that Ghosal was still upset after the final. "I've only won one tournament this year; there's much more to achieve. He is right, I didn't play my best this week, and I wasn't happy with it either. So, he has the right to be angry!"

'Natural ability'

Identified by PSA as one of the five players to watch out for in 2025, Anahat's ceiling is high. On the PSA circuit last year, Anahat picked up nine titles, and that has pushed her up close



Anahat Singh is being mentored by Saurav Ghosal. Britishjunioropen.com

to the top 80. While her eyes are on winning medals at the Asian Games already, in the short term she hopes to enter the top 50, maybe even top 30 by the end of the year. Of course, there is LA 2028 as well, where squash has been added to the roster. But Anahat doesn't want to

think too much about it right now. "She has a lot of natural ability, retrieves a

lot of balls, and is physically good. Mentally, she's strong too. She hates to lose and is very competitive, which is essential," Ghosal said. But the team around her – Ghosal and her epaper.indianexpress.com

coaches Grégory Gaultier and Stephane Galifi

– know there are areas to work on. "Off the court, she could be more professional in preparation. That's where Gregory (former world No 1) and I help. She is generally a laid-back person. I just think on the squash court she needs to be a little bit more intense so that she can play the game that is required at the top level." Ghosal levels of intensity? "Well, I was good. But Gregory is actually a great example, every time he stepped on court you could literally feel his intensity." The Indian ace added that all this will take time, but she has the right attitude to learn.

There is no doubting the youngster's talent and drive. "The British juniors is one of the most prestigious events there is," Indian star Joshna Chinappa, a two-time title winner there, told this daily. "The best players play in this event year after year and it's a significant achievement from Anahat to have won three titles so far. She has a lot of great strokes and also plays quite a mature game for someone so young. She has a long way to go but is on the right track."

Ghosal, however, is keen to take age out of the equation. "We are keeping her benchmarks high and putting the good kind of pressure on her not to worry about how old or young she is, but to focus on raising her level. There is one girl in particular, Egypt's Amina Orfi, who is only 17 and already in the world's top 10. So, there's an example in front of her."

Indeed, Egypt poses the stiffest challenge in squash. Ten Egyptians are in the current women's world's top 20. Anahat herself has had her share of disappointments at the World Junior Championships quarterfinals. A medal, thus, has been elusive in the premier tournament. It is the goal that she has set for 2025. For Ghosal, it comes down to preparing with the mindset of beating them. "You can't do that by playing like them, you have to tactically know what to do. Anahat has the ability, but she has to put the work in," he said.

Anahat's response to being asked what she needs to work on to improve her game was simple: "Everything." Even before the question about her dream of a World junior medal was completed, she interjected. "I need to turn those quarterfinal finishes into a win. This time I am going into the tournament aiming to win. Not focusing on just winning a medal anymore, it doesn't seem to be working out if I am thinking like that! If I am supposed to win it, I am supposed to win it now." Ghosal approved. "I am glad she is thinking that way."

Adventure enthusiast Saikia is BCCI secretary; Prabhtej elected treasurer

DEVENDRA PANDEY

MUMBAI. JANUARY 12

DEVAJIT SAIKIA, an advocate and a former wicket-keeper batsman from Assam, would succeed Jay Shah as the new secretary of the Indian cricket board (BCCI). He was elected unopposed—a poll was not contested as there were no contestants, electoral officer AK Joti stated in his declaration of results—to the seat left vacant after Shah assumed the office of the International Cricket Council chairman in December last year. Saikia will remain in his post for the next ten months, until the next round of elections for the office-bearers.

Similarly, Prabhtej Singh Bhatia from Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangh (CSCS) would be the new treasurer as he replaced Ashish Shelar, who became the Information and Technology minister in Maharashtra government. Both are relatively unfamiliar names, but come with a wealth of experience in multiple streams.

Advocate General of Assam.

As a cricketer, Saikia's career lasted one season and four games, which yielded only 53 runs in six innings, eight catches and a stumping. Soon, he burned his cricketing ambitions and traded the gloves and bat for a degree in law. In 1997, six years after his last Ranji game at the age of 21, he quit his job at the Reserve Bank of India and began legal practice, specialising in criminal and insurance laws. at the Guwahati High Court. But his ties with the game remained, as he continued participating in six-a-side tour-

moment came when he took on Assam Cricket Association (ACA), alleging that the association had misappropriated funds. After years of legal tussles and more allegations, a new regime took over the association, with Saikia as its secretary, in 2019. Two years later,

A classmate of Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, he was appointed as

he was appointed the state's youngest ever

naments and club games in the state as well

Indian Lawyers' Teams. But the breakthrough



Prabhtej Singh (left) and Devajit Saikia (second from left) were elected as treasurer and secretary of the BCCI on Sunday.

senior standing counsel of the State in 2019 and represented the government in the High Court and Supreme Court. Apart from cricket

association, he is into administrating other sports bodies too. He is the secretary of the 115-year-old Guwahati Town Club as well as

the Guwahati Sports. An adventure enthusiast, he rode a Harley Davidson along the famous Route 66. He regularly hits the Manali-Spiti Valley route too.

In 2022, he was elected joint-secretary of the BCCI. When Shah vacated, he became the acting secretary till the board found its outgoing secretary's nomination. Now, he succeeds Shah in a crucial time for Indian cricket, when the red-ball team is in flux and the captaincoach combo of Rohit Sharma and Gautam Gambhir under intense scrutiny. As the secretary, he would oversee the team selection, apart from handling the board's day-to-day affairs.

Beer baron

Unlike Saikia, Prabhatej does not wear too many hats. Son of former CSCS president Baldev Singh Bhatia, who played an important role in the State getting full-member status in 2016, he has served as Apex Council member in BCCI's 2019-2022 tenure. He was among the three-member committee that probed into the allegation of Wriddhiman Saha receiving threats from a journalist. The 33-year-old, though, has not held any posts since.

He is the co-founder and CEO of Simba Beer. His family has been in the liquor distribution industry for several decades, after his grandfather opened a liquor shop in Rajnandgaon, where he settled after partition, in 1948. He was doing his undergraduate degree in Economics and Finance at the Exeter University when the idea of starting a craft beer firm in India—his was one of the firsts to tap into the boom—struck him. In 2014, his dream materialised, despite his father's suggestion to open a distillery or a winery. Last financial year, it generated an annual revenue of 30.6 million dollars. His favourite brew, though, is Silver Moon, a premier green tea brand.

The two took official charge of their office during its special general body meeting in Mumbai. "The two (02) elective posts of the office-bearers - secretary and treasurer were uncontested, and it was not necessary to conduct a poll in respect of these Two (02) Posts, stated Joti in his declaration of results.

FA Cup: 10-man **Utd beat Arsenal** on penalties



Manchester United 'keeper Altay Bayindir saved a penalty in the second half and one during the shootout. Reuters

REUTERS LONDON, JANUARY 12

JOSHUA ZIRKZEE scored the winning penalty for 10-man Manchester United against Arsenal after their hectic FA Cup third round tie finished 1-1 after extra time at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday.

Arsenal's Kai Havertz was the only one of the first four penalty takers to miss, denied by a brilliant stop from Altay Bayindir, before Zirkzee – booed off in a defeat by Newcastle United last month – stepped up to win the shootout 5-3.

After an underwhelming first half, United took the lead in the 52nd minute through Bruno Fernandes' curling effort from just inside the box after a great run by Alejandro Garnacho.

The game turned on its head 10 minutes later though, as United's Diogo Dalot – already booked for a wild challenge on Myles Lewis-Skelly – received a second yellow card for a reckless tackle on Mikel Merino.

Two minutes later, Bayindir's poor attempted punch fell at the feet of Gabriel, whose shot took a wicked deflection off Matthijs de Ligt and in to put the Gunners in charge of the tie.

Arsenal could have completed the comeback when they were awarded a questionable penalty after Havertz went down under minimal contact from Harry Maguire.

But Bayindir produced a superb save from Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard, before the Gunners spurned several chances

to score a winner. United will find out their opponent in the fourth round when the draw is made later on Sunday evening.

Return of Mr. 300

Karun's first-class comeback with Vidarbha has spurred a rich vein of form and interest from India selectors

VENKATA KRISHNA B

CHENNAI, JANUARY 12

SCROLLING THROUGH X (formerly Twitter), one could hear the plea Karun Nair made back in December 2022.

"Dear cricket, give me one more chance," he would tweet with a fingers crossed emoji accompanying the words. In the middle of a domestic season back then, it seemed India's cricketing eco-system, except for quizzers, had forgotten one of only two triple-centurions in their Test history. Even his state team, Karnataka, had moved on from Karun, who spent the most of 2022-23 season just taking throw downs and facing amateur net bowlers. Cut to January 2025, and Karun is the story of the ongoing domestic season, as his fourth successive century and fifth of the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy put Vidarbha into the semi-finals on Sunday.

As India enter a transitional phase, with seniors Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli struggling in Tests, Karun happens to be a player that the selectors are watching with keen interest. "It was an emotional moment when I put that tweet," Karun tells The *Indian Express* shortly after his unbeaten 122 and an unbroken 200-run stand with Dhruv Shorey (118 n.o) saw Vidarbha overcome Rajasthan by 9 wickets at the Moti Bagh Stadium in Vadodara.

"For six-seven months, when I didn't play any cricket, all I did was travel three hours a day just to have a net session. I had no other option. I wasn't considered for any format and I was really emotional at that point of time. I had to move on and work on myself. Moving on wasn't easy, I needed a couple of months to get over it and then start practising my skills and mindset. I would say, I was just preparing myself so that when I got another opportunity, I was not going to give anyone an excuse to drop me. For that, I needed to score runs and be consistent. So I just worked hard to get that back in my game," Karun says.

In the days and the months that followed, Karun would indulge in soul searching and most of it would happen at the Just Cricket academy in Bengaluru. With his coach Vijay Madyalkar by his side, Karun would get down to batting hours together with the sole focus being a return to firstclass cricket. Techniques weren't changed, nor were there any tweaks. What Karun would focus on was batting for long periods. It isn't new to him. In his early days, that's what set him apart and earned him a national call-up.

Now he had to start doing it all over again, but first up, he had to find a team and



Karun Nair scored his fourth successive century and fifth ton of the Vijay Hazare Trophy in Vidarbha's nine-wicket win over Rajasthan on Sunday.

former India international and current BCCI

GM Abey Kuruvilla came to his rescue. "He was my selector during my U-19 days, and I had the freedom to walk up to him and say, 'Sir, I'm looking for a team to play, could you please help' and that's how I moved to Vidarbha. I'm really thankful for him and for the Vidarbha association because I was just looking for an opportunity and when it came, I just wanted to grab it,"

Karun says. In the 2023-24 Ranji season, Karun

would tally 690 runs on the back of having a strong outing for Northamptonshire in

his maiden County appearance. Though he played only three matches and had scores of 78, 150 and 21, his hunger had stood out and in 2024, returning to County, he scored a double century as well. Having already hit a ton this Ranji season, it is during the Vijay Hazare Trophy that Karun has again made heads turn.

He started with an unbeaten 112 and has followed it up with scores of 44*, 163*,

For six-seven months, when I didn't play any cricket, all I did was travel three hours a day just to have a net session. I had no other option. I wasn't considered for any format and I was really emotional... Moving on wasn't easy, I needed a couple of months to get over it and then start practising my skills and mindset."

KARUN NAIR

ON BEING SIDELINED FROM THE GAME

111*, 112 and 122. Before being dismissed for 112 against Uttar Pradesh, he made a world record for most runs in List A cricket between dismissals with 542 runs.

"I'm not sure how I do this," Karun says in response to his old habit of scoring big runs at a stretch. "I think most of it is down to taking it one game at a time and moving on from the previous innings. Right through my career, I've been fortunate that way. And in the time I missed playing cricket, I was just waiting to bat and that's what I'm doing now.

"When you sit out for six-seven months, you realise what you are missing and with me, it was just batting. It is for sure one of my good phases," Karun says.

Speaking to his former state teammate Robin Uthappa recently, Karun said he has been visualising a comeback to the national fold. With the Test team in transition, Karun is back on the selectors' radar, especially because of his all-round game, and how well he can play spin.

"Everyone wants to play for their country and I'm no different. I would love to play Test matches again and for that, I know I have to keep doing my job again and again," Karun says.

During the 2018 tour of England, his omission from the Oval Test - where Hanuma Vihari flew from India and made his Test debut – surprised one and all.

With India set to travel to England this June, a return to the Test fold on the back of County experience and runs in the domestic circuit would complete an incredible turnaround for the former triple-centurion.

Brief scores: Rajasthan 291/8 in 50 overs (Kartik Sharma 62, Shubham Garhwal 59, Deepak Hooda 45; Yash Thakur 4/39) lost to **Vidarbha** 292/1 in 43.3 overs (Karun Nair 122 n.o, Dhruv Shorey 118 n.o); **Gujarat** 196 in 45.2 overs (Hemang Patel 54; Nishant Sindhu 3/40) lost to **Haryana** 201/8 in 44.2 overs (Himanshu Rana 66; Ravi Bishnoi 4/46).

BRIEFLY

NZ name trio of young pacers for CT

Wellington: Fast bowlers Lockie Ferguson and Ben Sears were recalled to New Zealand's 15-man squad on Sunday for the Champions Trophy next month in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. Sears was a traveling reserve for last year's Twenty 20 World Cup but missed New Zealand's test series in India in November and the first half of the domestic season with a knee injury. He returned from injury on Thursday in a T20 match for Wellington province. Sears, Will O'Rourke and Nathan Smith have been named to play at their first ICC tournament but Jacob Duffy, who was outstanding in the T20 and oneday international series against Sri Lanka, has been named as a traveling reserve.

Guardiola says Walker wants to move abroad

Manchester: Manchester City captain Kyle Walker wants to explore a move away from the four-time defending Premier League champion, manager Pep Guardiola said Saturday. Walker, who has won six league titles and the Champions League during a trophyladen spell at City, was left out of the team for the 8-0 rout of Salford City in the FA Cup. "So two days ago Kyle asked to explore the options to play abroad at the end of his career," Guardiola said. "He has been our right back and given us something that we didn't have and have been amazing. But now in his mind he would like to explore already, to go to another country to play the last years for many reasons."

B'desh omit Shakib, Litton from CT squad

Dhaka: Bangladesh on Sunday omitted former skipper Shakib Al Hasan, who has been suspended from bowling in international and domestic cricket because of an illegal action, from their Champions Trophy squad. Shakib, who failed a test of his bowling action at the Loughborough University in England last month, also could not procure a positive assessment in a second independent test conducted at the Sri Ramachandra Centre for Sports Science in Chennai recently. The omission from the 15-member Champions Trophy squad could also mark the end of the 37-year-old's ODI career. The tournament begins on February 19.

Jemimah stars as India seal series vs Ireland Punjab Kings announce

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JANUARY 12

AFTER JEMIMAH Rodrigues' maiden ODI century and a collective batting effort powered India to their highest-ever ODI total of 370/5, their bowlers completed the job as India took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series against Ireland in Rajkot on Sunday.

Electing to bat first in the second ODI, India skipper Smriti Mandhana, who has been having a stellar run in the format, scored 73 off 54 deliveries and out on a 156-run opening stand with Pratika Rawal (67). At her attacking best, runs flowed for Smriti, while Pratika grew in confidence at the other end. But their dismissal off successive deliveries brought Ireland back into the game.

On a day when there were plenty of bright spots on India's batting front, Harleen Deol's approach was an exception. Even though the No.3 came at a time when India had lost two quick wickets, she was too slow to get off the blocks. Against quality sides, such a timid approach can let opponents take control. Even Ireland did precisely that before Jemimah came to the rescue with frequent boundaries. Off the first 21 deliveries that Harleen faced, she



Jemimah Rodrigues' ton powered India to their highest-ever ODI total. **Sportzpics**

had only 5 to her name, before gradually picking up pace and ending up with 89 off 84 deliveries.

In their 183-run stand, it was Jemimah's intent that made it a match-winning effort. Her innings was a sight to behold. With a lot of overs to play with, she went about

building an innings but once she touched fifty, the Mumbai player took just 28 more deliveries to reach her first ODI century.

"It has been a long wait to get this hundred. Glad that the team gave me a role at No. 4 and I could deliver," Jemimah told the broadcasters at the innings break.

"Today, the important thing for me was to be there till the 50th over. Getting runs is not a problem, I am good at that, but being there till the end was important and glad I could do that. Having Harleen there, initially we took time to assess the conditions. I know I can accelerate but while I took time, Harleen spoke to me to keep believing. We can't take any team lightly. We have followed domestic cricket here, 390 has been chased," Jemimah added.

With the steep target in front of them, Ireland put their best foot forward and for the second successive match, managed to bat the entire 50 overs.

Sarah Fobes got a good start at the top making 38 before Christina Coulter Reilly made 80 off 113 deliveries at No.3. Batting fluently like Jemimah did in the first half of the game, Reilly was all class. But the rest hardly put up a fight as Ireland ended with only 254/7 with Deepti Sharma being the pick of the Indian bowlers with three ickets.

Brief scores: India 370/5 in 50 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 102 off 91 balls, Harleen Deol 89 off 84 balls, Smriti Mandhana 73 off 54 balls, Pratika Rawal 67 of 61 balls) beat **Ireland** 254/7 in 50 overs (Christina Coulter Reilly 80 in 113 balls; Deepti Sharma 3/37) by 116 runs.

Shreyas as skipper for 2025

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JANUARY 12

SHREYAS IYER will lead the Punjab Kings in the upcoming IPL 2025 season after being roped in by the franchise during the IPL 2025 Mega Auction last November.

The 30-year-old Mumbaikar expressed gratitude to the Punjab Kings management. "I am honoured that the team has

reposed its faith in me. I am looking forward to working again with Coach Ponting. The team looks strong, with a great mix of potential and proven performers. I hope to repay the faith shown by the management to deliver our maiden title," Iyer said in a statement.

Last year, Iyer became the eighth captain to win the coveted IPL title as he led the Kolkata Knight Riders to their third championship, beating SunRisers Hyderabad in the final. Despite three seasons with the franchise, Iver was relased by KKR, following which he became the second-most expensive IPL auction signing ever when Punjab snapped him up for Rs 26.75 crore in the auctions.

Punjab will be Iyer's third franchise in the IPL and a third stint in a leadership role. After having started out in the IPL in 2015 with the Delhi Capitals, Iver was raised to captaincy in the 2018 season. He also led the Capitals to their first IPL final in the 2020 season.

Despite losing out on spots in the T20I and Test teams in 2024, Iyer had a banner year. He was part of the Mumbai team that

won the Ranji and Irani trophy and under his leadership, Mumbai won their second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in December 2024. Iyer plundered 345 runs in the tournament with a 188.42 strike rate and a near-50 average

while smashing a century. Iyer will form a reunion with his former DC head coach, Ricky Ponting, with PBKS.

"Shreyas has a great mind for the game. His proven capabilities as captain will enable the team to deliver. I have enjoyed my time with Iyer in the past in IPL, and I look forward to working with him again. With his leadership and the talent in the squad, I am excited about the seasons ahead," said Ponting.

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