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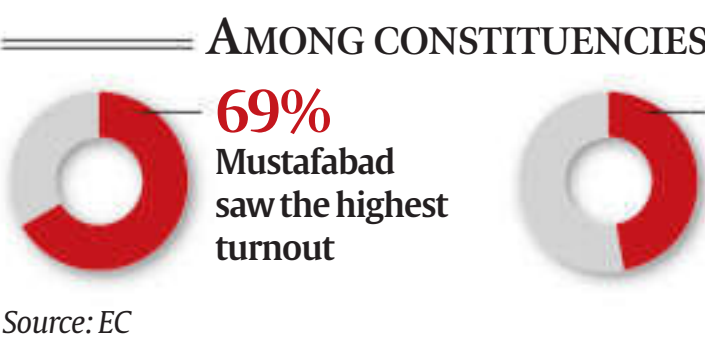
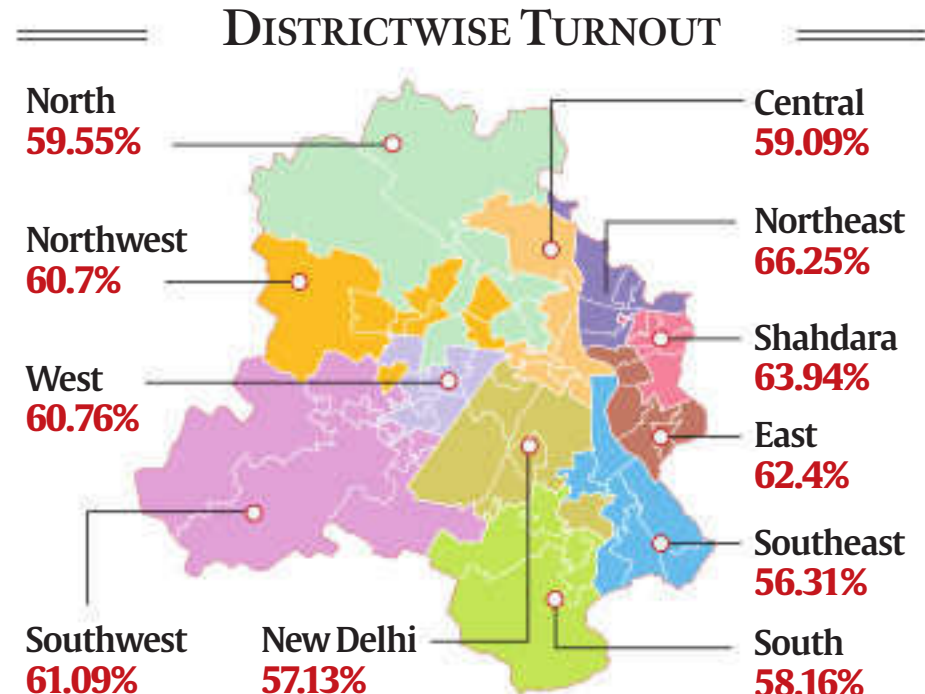
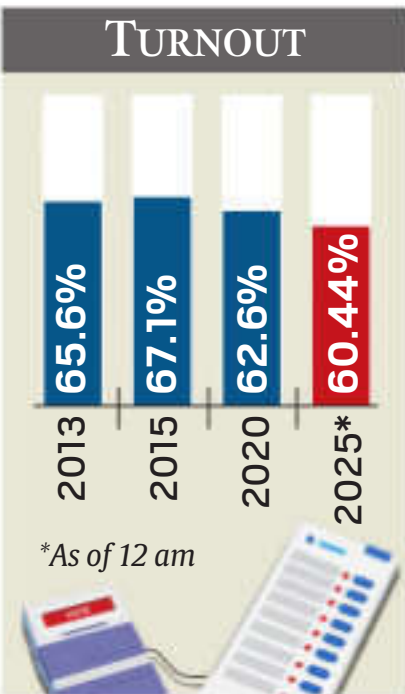
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HOW DELHI VOTED



Total seats
70

Results on
Feb 8

- There are around 1.56 crore eligible voters in Delhi
- 13,766 stations; 699 candidates

AAP & BJP face off over claims of fake voting, distribution of money near booths

ALOK SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

CHAOTIC SCENES unfolded on Wednesday near polling centres in Seelampur, Jangpura, Kasturba Nagar and New Delhi constituencies, among others, as multiple incidents of alleged bogus voting and distribution of money were reported amid the Capital voting for a new government on Wednesday.

In Northeast Delhi's Seelampur, two groups had a face-off after the BJP supporters alleged bogus voting at a polling centre in Aryan Public School. In a three-minute video clip of the purported incident that has surfaced on social media, two groups can be seen arguing.

Policemen, deployed outside the centre, are seen intervening and bring the situation under control.

In a statement, the police later said that a woman made a PCR call alleging that her vote had already been cast by someone else. "The call was made by Mohini, 26, of Usman Pur. Inquiry revealed that confusion arose due to another woman having a similar name... who was a previous tenant at Mohini's residence," read the statement. After verification, the presiding officer allowed both women to vote, the statement added.

In another incident, former deputy chief minister and AAP leader Manish Sisodia alleged that BJP polling agents were distributing money to voters near a

booth in Sarai Kale Khan, which falls under the Jangpura constituency from where he is contesting. In a purported clip of the incident on social media, Sisodia could be seen arguing with the BJP supporters and policemen.

"Sisodia and (BJP candidate) Tarwinder Marwah reached the spot and levelled allegations at each other. The allegations of distribution of money could not be substantiated," a police officer said.

Meanwhile, two men in their twenties were detained for allegedly attempting to cast fake votes at Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Andrews Ganj, which falls under Kasturba Nagar constituency, police said. They were taken to the local police station and questioned, they added.

In New Delhi constituency, AAP MP Sanjay Singh alleged that BJP workers were distributing money at a booth near Rashtrapati Bhavan. He claimed that the suspects fled on seeing him. Singh also shared a video on X of a man moving away in a car. Police said that they were looking into the matter.

Meanwhile, following claims that an "extra table" has been recovered near a polling booth at Tughlak Lane in New Delhi constituency, AAP workers were detained. Moreover, an AAP worker, Harish, was also detained after the police received a complaint that freebies were being distributed and voters were being transported to polling booths in South Avenue, police said.

In another incident, an AAP worker, identified as Rajan Kumar, was allegedly assaulted by BJP workers near a polling booth at Naraina Vihar in Rajinder Nagar constituency. The incident caught on CCTV cameras showed people beating up a man lying on the road, police said. The AAP in a post on X stated that Rajan was admitted to the DDU hospital.

In another incident, BJP supporters alleged that AAP MLA Dinesh Mohaniya and his supporters attacked the BJP office in Sangam Vihar constituency in the evening. "There were allegations and counter allegations from both sides. However, till late evening, no official complaint was filed by any side," said a police officer.

'Feel like Indians today': Pak Hindu immigrants vote for first time after being granted citizenship under CAA

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

"WE FEEL like Indians today..." says 30-year-old Radhe Krishna Advani, a Pakistani Hindu immigrant who voted for the first time in Delhi on Wednesday after obtaining Indian citizenship.

Radhe came to India in 2013 with his mother, father, wife, and two children. He and thousands of such immigrants have been living in two camps in Majnu Ka Tila and Adarsh Nagar. Like many other Pakistani Hindu immigrants from the area, who are daily wagers, he works at a mobile repair shop.

Voting for the first time made him feel that he belonged to India, especially Delhi. "I never voted in Pakistan and once we came to Delhi... we felt at home. Today, we feel that we really belong here," he shares.

On Wednesday, more than 150 Pakistani immigrants from Majnu Ka Tila voted in the Delhi



Pakistani Hindu refugees after voting for the first time, at a resettlement colony in Majnu Ka Tila, on Wednesday. PTI

Assembly elections after receiving Indian citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act last year. The process to grant citizenship to such persecuted immigrants began last year in May with 14 persons.

Radhe credits BJP workers for ensuring he and his family got

their voter IDs. While Radhe and his father, Mahadev Advani, received the voter ID cards, the women of the house could not as their certificates were submitted late. "We got our citizenship six months ago and 1.5 months back, we received our voter ID cards," he says. Now Radhe

wishes that the next government looks into the issues of the people living in both these camps.

"In our area, we have a private company (Tata Power) supplying electricity which is very expensive. We hope the government provides us subsidised

electricity just like the other areas in Delhi," he says.

He says every now and then the residents of the area get notice of vacating the area which makes them feel very vulnerable.

"Kejriwal ko hamne dekh liya... we want BJP in power (We have seen enough of Arvind Kejriwal. Now we want BJP," says Radhe. He says BJP workers "keep working for us and AAP has not done anything."

Radhe and his brother Lakshman (21) say that during campaigning nobody came from the AAP while BJP people kept visiting.

Nehru Lal (30), Lakshman's neighbour, says that voting made him feel like "a true Indian" but he wishes for better job opportunities for his people. Nehru and his wife both voted in the polls held on Wednesday.

"We are daily wage workers and would like to request the government to help us get better job opportunities and education for our children," he says.



A drone keeps a watch at a booth in Jafrabad; a selfie point at a polling station at Jama Masjid on Wednesday. Praveen Khanna & Amit Mehra



'WHY I VOTED'

Development, pollution, women's safety — first-time voters flag key concerns as they vote



AAS MOHAMMAD, 18
Engineering student, Lives in Shalimar Bagh
"Voted for cleanliness, better education, jobs for youth... Current govt has done good work by providing subsidised electricity, water but it needs to focus on roads."



TANUJA, 18
Class XII student, Lives in Pitampura village
"Saw Kejriwal's podcast where he talked about the work he has done... want the government to ensure better safety for women."



ISHA MISHRA, 18
Class XI student, Lives in Pitampura village
"I am happy with the current government but I will vote for vikas (development)... More attention needs to be paid to government schools."



AKSHAT, 23
Lives in West Kidwai Nagar
"I wish there were more buses. A good public transport system is essential for Delhi. I also want to live in a pollution-free Delhi."



MISBAH, 18
Studies at DU's School of Open Learning, Resident of Rajpur Road
"... I'm happy with the current govt, its services. Making buses free for women is something I appreciate. We get zero water and electricity bills too."



NITIN RAWAT, 18, KALASH PRAJAPATI, 19, UJJWAL SWAMI, 21,
Study at DU School of Open Learning, Live in Shalimar Bagh
"We want a government that can rule Delhi like Sheila Dikshit did."



ANJALI, 20
Homemaker, Lives in Narela
"Households which don't have a high income or women who don't work, Modi will give them Rs 2,500 and it will be of great help."



SANJANA CHAUDHARY, 18
NEET aspirant, Lives in Shalimar Village
"I want the government to create better job opportunities for the future."



SUMIT KUMAR, 20
BA Philosophy student, Lives in Harsh Vihar
"Issues like roads and garbage are important to me. Roads in our area have been broken for five months. Blocked drains are a big problem. Traffic is bad."



YUVRAJ SINGH, 20,
College student, Lives in Laxmi Nagar
"I am happy today because I voted for the first time. I expect (the candidate I voted for) will provide better facilities in the area."

— ANKITA UPADHYAY, DEVANSH MITTAL, SAKSHI CHAND, NIRBHAY THAKUR, GAYATHRI MANI

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* Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.
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Narela to Karawal Nagar: Across 70 constituencies

As Delhi voted on Wednesday, *The Indian Express* travelled across the city, from constituency no. 1 (Narela) to constituency no. 70 (Karawal Nagar) and found that people voted for better roads, clean water, a remedy for pollution, garbage-free streets, and a compassionate government.

SAKSHI CHAND, ANKITA UPADHYAY, GAYATHRI MANI, SOHINI GHOSH, VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA, NIRBHAY THAKUR, UPASIKA SINGHAL, SAMAN HUSAIN, PRAGYNESH, SOPHIYA MATHEW, NEETIKA JHA, DEVANSH MITTAL & ISHFAQ BHAT report.

NEW DELHI

IT IS 6.30 am. The heart of the Capital is geared up for a big-ticket contest which will perhaps signal who will rule Delhi once results are declared on Saturday.

At polling station 44, near Sanchar Bhawan, stands a man in a grey sweater. He is in a hurry. "I believe the election this time will be very close. Some people want change. I've come early... could-n't wait to vote," says Desraj, 43.

New Delhi is perhaps the most heated battle in this Capital contest, as Delhi's former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal goes toe to toe with Congress' Sandeep Dikshit (son of former Delhi CM Sheila Dikshit) and BJP's Parvesh Sahib Singh (son of Delhi's former CM Sahib Singh Verma).

Two km away from Sanchar Bhawan is Nirman Bhawan — a polling station where 1,100 voters are registered. Among these voters are two big faces — Parvesh and Congress Leader and LoP Rahul Gandhi.

For Akshat, 23, who voted for the first time at a polling station near a school in Laxmi Bai Nagar, pollution and lack of public transport are the main issues. "I wish there were more buses. A good public transport system is essential for Delhi. I also want to live in a pollution-free Delhi."

Nine kilometres away is C R Park in Greater Kailash constituency, which has 13 polling stations. On the way to the stations which are in proximity to each other are various tables where polling agents belonging to the AAP and the BJP — the main rivals in this election — are sitting.

"We've been instructed by our party to check EVMs and their batteries... whether they're fully charged or not," says Chandan (41), a polling agent from AAP.

CHANDNI CHOWK

Haiderpur and Shalimar villages in the Shalimar Bagh constituency are buzzing at 7.27 am. Officers from the Delhi Police and the Central Armed Police Force are on the ground, making sure everything is ready for voters.

At 8 am, Sushma Malik (51), a differently abled woman, comes on her retrofitted scooter with her son Aryan Malik (19). Volunteers arrange a wheelchair and escort her inside. As she comes out, she says: "I voted for improvement. Better roads, better traffic, cleanliness."

Though many people say they are voting for 'vikas' (development)' and 'badlav' (change), they also add they are satisfied with the current government.

In the Adarsh Nagar Assembly constituency, 72-year-old Umesh Prasad, a voter from the nearby Bharola village who runs a vegetable shop, says: "*Maine apna kartavya poora kiya* (I fulfilled my duty), *Jo bhi sarkar bane bus nirdhan ko pareshan na karey* (Whoever forms the government should not trouble the poor)."

Residents of the upper and middle-income group in the posh colony of Model Town voted against freebies.

The sentiment also echoes in Hudson Lane, a part of the Timarpur Assembly constituency, where many voters spoke about rising pollution levels. Dr Ruchi Singh, a voter from the area, de-



mands that whoever forms the government should bring improvement in the lives of the upper middle class as well. "We don't want freebies, we want better roads and infrastructure."

NORTHWEST DELHI

From the narrow, potholed streets of rural Rithala to the landscaped, gated colonies of Rohini Sector 13, the contrast is stark.

In Rithala's Vijay Vihar Phase 1, the first thing that hits one is the smell of sewage wafting through the air, mingling with the dust kicked up by the movement of pedestrians and rickety two-wheelers. The narrow streets are riddled with potholes, some large enough to collect stagnant water from recent rains.

The polling booth at the government primary school — Dilli Rithala Prathamik Vidyalaya — is an old, unassuming structure.

Among the voters is Fatima Bhano, a 38-year-old mother of two, who stands outside the polling booth, visibly frustrated. Her name was missing from the voter list. "They're asking me to go to Sector 4 to vote" she asks.

For Bhano, inflation and high electricity bills are the primary issues. "Even in winter, when we barely use electricity, the bills are so high. How are we to manage?"

Despite her limited means, Bhano sends her children to private schools. "Government schools are in terrible condition. It's all a show," she says.

Down the road, 68-year-old Ameerka Devi, a housewife, has just cast her vote. She spoke of her struggles with accessing clean water: "Water is not potable. I've been drinking it for years, and it's caused stomach infections."

As one leaves Rithala, the smell of sewage fades, giving way to the wide, clean streets of



Rohini Sector 13. Here, gated communities with manicured parks and high-rise apartment complexes dominate the area.

Outside a booth, 43-year-old banker Jyoti Godara and 44-year-old army officer Abhishek Kumar share their disillusionment with the present government.

A first-time voter, 18-year-old Srishti Garg, disagrees. "I'm content with how things are here, but I do hope the government takes stronger action on issues like pollution," says the law aspirant.

WEST DELHI

The polling station of Government Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya (GSKV) in Khyala village of Rajouri Garden constituency, labelled 'Model Polling Station', is abuzz at 9.30 am.

Devender Singh (56) and his mother Charanjit Kaur (82) say one of the pressing issues for them this election is inflation. "This is an industrial area so we have electricity cuts for as long as four hours during summer.

We voted for every possible party in the past but we've also seen there has been no change."

At 12.30 pm in Tilak Nagar constituency's Government Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya, BJP polling agents say voting has been slow but will pick up soon. The constituency also includes the Widow Colony, where survivors of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots reside. There is no Congress booth outside the station.

Atar Kaur, 65, who lived in Trilokpuri before the riots broke out, lost 15 members of her family, including her husband to the riots. "*Humare aansu bas Modi ne hi poche* (Only Modi dried our tears). Whatever little happened for us, was done by him," she says.

At the SC reserved seat of Madipur, Hansraj Model School is an anomaly, with its voters from the upscale Punjabi Bagh Extension. Ruby Singh (56) and Gagan Kaur (32), both voters in the area, say air pollution is a talking point for them. "We go abroad and realise we're so far behind in every

aspect — education, roads, cleanliness. Every time they impose GRAP-3 or 4 when pollution goes up, we are directly affected. This is no way to tackle pollution."

At 4.15 pm in Najafgarh constituency's polling station, Green Valley School, R P Sharma, 70, a retired central government employee, says the BJP has done well to choose a new candidate for the constituency — Neelam Pahalwan, instead of Kailash Gahlot, the ex-AAP MLA from the area who has joined the BJP.

NORTHEAST DELHI

A road cuts Chandu Nagar and divides it into two assemblies. On one side is Adarsh Lakshpat Model Secondary School collecting votes for Karawal Nagar while on the other side stands New Sandhya Public Secondary School which collects votes for Mustafabad. Both schools see a steady flow of voters starting 7 am.

Deen Mohammad (59) and Hakim Mallick (54) are waiting

for a friend to cast his vote on the Mustafabad side. They say they will vote for a party that has a chance to win. "There is no way Tahir (Hussain, AIMIM candidate and an accused in the riots conspiracy case) will win," says Mohammad, explaining why he won't vote for AIMIM.

In Kamal Nagar, the Hindu-dominant area of Mustafabad, a voter, Shiv Kumar (50), says: "*Dekhiye swasthya aur shiksha zaruri hai lekin uss se pehle zinda rehna zaruri hai. Zinda rehne ke liye zaruri hai dharm* (Look health and education are important but before that one must need to survive. To survive you need dharma)."

Four km away, in Babarpur, 17-year-old Anmol Verma, a volunteer at the Sant Parmanand Public School, Mohanpuri, is helping a tired Trilochan Singh (79), who had difficulties walking, to cast his vote.

After casting his vote, Singh says, "Kejriwal has done a lot for schools, and health by setting up

mohalla clinics, free electricity for 200 units. The Centre has also done some work. We have ration cards. But because of the BJP *bade logon ko zyada faida hua* (rich people have benefited more)."

SOUTH DELHI

In Kalkaji, from where Chief Minister Atishi is going up against BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri and Congress's Alka Lamba, the streets have been swept clean. Polling agents draped in symbol-less scarves sit at their desks, urging residents to step out and vote. "We worked very hard for the party, and we believe our candidate (Bidhuri) should get a chance," says Vandana Sethi, 58, a BJP polling agent.

Soon, Atishi arrives to cast her vote. The CM's neighbour, Sunita Maini, 69 says, "My father was a *kattar* (staunch) Congress who fought for India's independence. He used to say even if a dog stood for Congress, we should vote for it. But now, that logic makes no sense. The work being

done here — sanitation, water supply, healthcare, electricity — is good."

Voter sentiments are mixed across constituencies. While some voted based on governance and services, others cast their ballots against inflation and economic concerns.

Outside Ambedkar Nagar's Sona Modern Public School, Kulvir Singh, 51, an operations head at a corporate firm, is in deep discussion with a friend who is a Kendriya Vidyalaya principal. "Apart from freebies, economic well-being is necessary," Singh says. The principal adds, "We looked at manifestos carefully and are voting for the one that aligns with our personal aspirations."

As the day progresses and South Delhi's constituencies approach the last leg of voting, urgency picks up. At Mehrauli Dargah booth, Khatoon Bano reflects on her vote, shaped by the recent wave of demolitions that displaced many in her area. "We'll vote, with this in mind," she says.

EAST DELHI

In 'jamma-paar', the day began with light rain and voting picked up only around 10 am.

In Patparganj — where former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is the outgoing MLA and is contesting this time from Jangpura — many claim due to increased anti-incumbency, change seems to be the buzzword.

Agrim Kulsheshta, 22, the first one to vote at Mayur Vihar pocket 3, polling booth 99 and 100, says, "I voted for change... Mayur Vihar has several developed apartments but the areas here lack development... As you step out of your house, you feel like you are in hell... from traffic jams to poisonous air, potholed roads..."

In line to cast his vote at Trilokpuri constituency, Dharmendra, a WiFi provider said, "We don't have to point out anything because everything is in the open... I would have voted for AAP if they had repaired something or at least provided a sewer connection... My vote has gone to the party that is thinking about the upliftment of Dalits."

Trilokpuri, a reserved constituency, has a sizable migrant population settled from Theni and Tirunelveli districts of Tamil Nadu.

Annaveili (65) says, "I came here with a six-month toddler about 55 years ago from Tamil Nadu... Block 22 where a large number of Tamilians live faces a water crisis... Sometimes, we get stinking water... during the rain, water enters our home..."

In Laxmi Nagar, where BJP is currently in power, Archit Gupta, who works at All India Radio said, "My vote has gone against freebies... I want fresh air, congestion-free roads and footpaths to walk... hospitals and schools..."

In Shaheen Bagh, under Okhla constituency, Huma, a clinical psychologist, appreciated BJP's promise of providing "free pregnancy kits and Rs 21,000 to pregnant women." "I feel this is a great scheme as facilities for pregnant women in Delhi are not good... If it is implemented, mothers, especially single mothers will get a lot of help..." she says.

GROUND REPORT

'No parks, no new infra — my village has been the same for 15 yrs'

At polling station no. 1 in Delhi's

Lampur village, discontent simmers

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA & DEVANSH MITTAL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

YELLOW BARRICADES stand out amid wheat crops in Lampur, Delhi's last village. A kilometre away on the other side is Haryana, where the sight of lush fields is far more common. Located on the Northwestern edge of Delhi, the village falls under the Narela Assembly constituency. On Wednesday, its government school, Nagar Nigam Prathamik (Co-ed) Utkrisht Vidyalaya, doubles up as polling station no. 1 as

our condition here)." He is referring to what he says are better civic amenities across the border.

The 65-year-old, who owns five acres of land, adds, "We've been facing immense losses because of unpredictable weather. There's no insurance for vegetable crops. When a hailstorm destroyed my harvest two years ago, I received no help from the AAP."

The village, predominantly dominated by Sainis, is a picture of neglect with its crumbling infrastructure and glaring lack of development.

"The roads are all broken," says 49-year-old Anil Saini, who has lived in Lampur all his life. "AAP built a community hall here, but it's been lying vacant for years. There are no parks, no new infrastructure. My village has been the



Outside Nagar Nigam Prathamik (Co-ed) Utkrisht Vidyalaya, the polling booth in Lampur village. *Express*

same for the past 15 years."

Navigating the pothole-riddled roads to reach the polling station, 55-year-old Choti Devi and her daughter-in-law Taravati

could be seen covering their faces with their saree *pallus*. Taravati's hopes, like those of many women in the village, rest on promises yet to be fulfilled.

5 DECISION 2025

**DELHI
ASSEMBLY
ELECTION**

VOTER SPEAK

Freebies or development — East Delhi divided

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

WHILE BOTH BJP and Congress have conceded the success of AAP's freebie narrative, East Delhi stands divided – its slum and lower middle class voters favouring freebies or subsidies offered by all the three main parties in fray but its middle class seeking infrastructural development.

The *Indian Express* visited 10 Assembly segments in the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency – Jangpura, Okhla, Trilokpuri, Kondli, Patparganj, Laxmi Nagar, Krishna Nagar, Vishwas Nagar, Gandhi Nagar and Shahdara. There is palpable anger among a large number of people, especially the middle class, who live in upscale gated colonies, when it comes to freebies or subsidies offered by the AAP government – free electricity up to 200 units, free water as well as free bus rides for women, among others.

Vineet Kumar Batra, a resident of Delhi Police Apartment in Mayur Vihar 1, which falls under Patparganj constituency, thinks people are not talking about real issues anymore.

"This time, all parties are offering freebies... No party is talking about actual issues – encroachment, clean water, pollution and better roads... But I don't blame them. They (parties) are also offering what the majority of the people want. People of Delhi have become blind... they want free electricity but not good roads to walk on and clean air to breathe," he says.

A 19-year-old resident of the

society, Tanasvi, who is voting for the first time, adds, "AAP was in power for 10 years and only made fake promises..."

Rakesh Kumar (64), a resident Fine Home Apartments at Mayur Vihar 1, echoed similar sentiments. "Delhi's condition will improve only when freebies are stopped..."

"The AAP did nothing but indulge in corruption and blamed the Union government for everything. Delhi needs a double engine government this time," adds MK Joshi (81), a resident of Acharya Niketan.

At AAP strongholds like Trilokpuri and Kondli, too, people are looking for change.

Arvind Sharma, who works as a painter and lives in Trilokpuri, says, "I want development and a good future for my children. There are no jobs... all parties are talking about giving cash doles of Rs 2,100 and Rs 2,500 to women and free electricity. All these things are okay but what about salary hikes... You should instead increase salary of daily wagers and provide jobs..."

Amarnath, a carpenter from Trilokpuri, says, "AAP is giving subsidised electricity but it is not enough... In the end you want a stable job..."

In Kondli, however, residents hope for AAP's third term. Himanshu, a 23-year-old student, says, "I voted for Monu (AAP's Kuldeep Kumar). He has done a lot of work. There are some pending works in the area which I believe he will finish."

Suresh Kumar, a voter in Kondli, adds, "The BJP had made some good promises but they think about the rich... I only have

faith in (Arvind) Kejriwal... I hope he will give us pension after returning to power."

Haseena, a resident of Trilokpuri, says, "Saving Rs 800 in electricity bills per month and free bus rides are huge when it comes to poor families like us... I believe AAP will be the only party to give cash dole to women."

For Dharmendra, who works as a driver, corruption allegations against AAP is not an issue.

"At least he (Kejriwal) is helping the poor, instead of filling his pockets only... He does what he says... He is one of us, a common man..."

A few kilometers away, at Laxmi Nagar, Shubham Mishra (28), who works in the finance sector, claims "AAP's term was over in Delhi".

"We get polluted water, face pollution and traffic jam... The roads are bad. I have relatives in UP and NCR cities like Ghaziabad and Noida. The Modi government has done a lot of development there."

Ritika Mishra, a working professional, says, "I am a taxpayer and have the right to expect basic amenities like clean air, water and better roads... but our current government is taking my money and giving it to others."

Rajni Kapoor (43), a homemaker, adds, "I don't want Rs 2,100 or Rs 2,500. Provide jobs and better facilities, we will work hard and earn money."

Muneer Mohammad, a data scientist and a resident of Shaheen Bagh, also seeks change. "I think AAP got the opportunity for 10 years and now someone else should be given a chance..."

Three-tier security to guard EVMs at 19 strongrooms

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE DELHI Police has made elaborate security arrangements to guard 19 strongrooms containing EVMs and VVPATs, with voters on Wednesday sealing the fates of 699 candidates contesting the Assembly polls in the Capital.

Police have set up a dedicated team of personnel led by an additional DCP-level officer for each strongroom across 11 districts in the city. North East and New Delhi districts have three strongrooms each.

"The strongrooms have three layers of security with two companies of paramilitary personnel inside and a layer of Delhi Police personnel outside. They have been deployed round the clock," a senior police officer said. Over 350 CCTV cameras have been installed at the centres, he said.

On Wednesday, voting started at 7 am and concluded at 6 pm. There was no report of EVM malfunctioning in the day, the officer said.

After the completion of the polling on Wednesday, the presiding officer closed the button of the control unit of the EVMs and they were sent back to the strongrooms in the evening, another police officer said.

The EVMs and VVPATs will be kept in a double lock system under the watch of the CCTV cameras.

The Election Commission allows candidates and their representatives to camp in the front of the strongroom, the officer said.



Chief Minister Atishi leaves after casting her vote in Kalkaji on Wednesday. *Tashi Tobgyal*



Rahul Gandhi after casting vote at the Nirman Bhawan polling centre in New Delhi. *Anil Sharma*



Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with party's New Delhi candidate Sandeep Dikshit. *Anil Sharma*



Congress Kalkaji candidate Alka Lamba and BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj after they voted. *PTI*



BJP's New Delhi candidate Parvesh Sahib Singh poses with wife and daughter after casting vote. *Anil Sharma*



Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna at a polling booth on Wednesday. *Anil Sharma*



President Droupadi Murmu after casting her vote at Dr Rajendra Prasad Kendriya Vidyalaya polling station inside Rashtrapati Bhavan complex on Wednesday. *ANI*



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar after casting his vote at Tughlaq Crescent. *PTI*



L-G V K Saxena with wife Sangita Saxena at a polling booth in Civil Lines. *PTI*



BJP MP Manoj Tiwari shows his inked finger. *ANI*



AAP Jangpura candidate Manish Sisodia poses for pictures with his wife Seema. *PTI*



BJP's Bijwasan candidate Kailash Gahlot poses with his family after casting his vote. *ANI*



Security personnel guard a polling station in Jafrabad on Wednesday. *Praveen Khanna*

HELPING HAND

‘Woke up at 3 am... as I was so excited’: School students volunteer at poll booths

SAMAN HUSAIN, ANKITA UPADHYAY, NEETIKA JHA & SAKSHI CHAND
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

CLASS 11 STUDENT Puneet woke up at 3 am on Wednesday. He was among the thousands of student volunteers from government schools deployed at election booths to ensure a smooth polling experience as voters across the Capital stepped out to exercise their franchise.

"I am very excited. I am doing this for the first time, and every time someone thanked me for helping them, it made me happy. It feels like I have grown up. It is a big responsibility," said the 16-year-old as he helped voters at a pink booth at MCD Primary School in Madangir village of the Ambedkar Nagar Assembly constituency.

"Our school sent us, and we will be getting Rs 800 for volunteering today. Three days ago, we trained at Kamla Nehru College. We have to help the elderly and differently abled people. We offer them wheelchairs and also help them cast their vote," explained Puneet whose father works at a cake-making factory in Haryana.

At Satya Public School in Devli village, Satish Kuhl, 17, and Suraj Patel, 15, carefully matched names on voter IDs with those



Student volunteers Dev and Tushar said that EC officials gave them a lowdown of the entire process at the booth. *Express*

on the voting slips carried by people in a long queue. They also helped the elderly and differently abled electors.

They were also told to check the voter slips, ensure that people were not carrying their phones inside the booth and provide wheelchair service to the elderly.

The duo from a government school in Malviya Nagar said they were not provided any training beforehand. Even before they started the day's tasks, they had to face a challenge. "There was some confusion about which school we had to go to. We were first asked to go to

one polling booth and then to another. It took an hour before we were able to figure out that this was the school we had to come to. We have been standing here since morning," said Satish.

For Dev, 17, a student of Govt Boys Senior Secondary School No 2, Roop Nagar, it was an opportunity to learn a key democratic practice. Keen to cast his vote as soon he becomes eligible, he asserted, "We have become a part of a process that selects the government of a state and there is nothing more exciting than this."

He was deployed at a booth near Kingsway Camp. His

schoolmate Tushar Jain, 15, asserted that "the Election Commission officials made us understand the entire voting process and we understood how a ballot is cast."

It was a learning experience for student volunteer Yogesh too. "We even learned to communicate our names in sign language," he said.

Jiya (17), Kashish (15), and Vanshika (15) from Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya volunteered at a polling booth in Pitampura Village. The girls said that they opted to volunteer to serve the people.

While Jiya aspires to become a journalist by pursuing mass communication, Kashish and Vanshika said they will opt for humanities at Delhi University. Jiya said she wanted to understand the process of election which is why she took up the role. According to Vanshika, her mother was also participating in the volunteering work which made her opt for it too.

The school students were among the 8,715 volunteers deployed by the Election Commission across 13,766 polling stations in 2,696 locations across Delhi. These volunteers were appointed to ensure a seamless voting experience – providing wheelchairs and support to the elderly and specially-abled voters.

6 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

CONGRESS'S WAYANAD MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is likely to speak on the Union Budget in the Lower House this week. Party sources said Priyanka was offered a chance to speak during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, but she refused, citing a new "internal norm" of the party which mandates that one member can't speak during consecutive debates in Parliament. The "norm", it is learnt, is backed by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi who wants all 99 members to get a chance to speak in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session in his efforts to further democratise the party's functioning in both Houses of Parliament.

ICON BY ANY NAME

CONGRESS MP Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday had a faux pas moment during his speech at a programme in Patna to mark the 130th birth anniversary of Dalit icon Jaglal Choudhary. Gandhi, who was on a second visit to poll-bound Bihar in less than three weeks, called Choudhary "Jagat Chaudhary" twice and had to be corrected by Congress leaders in the crowd. Acknowledging his mistake, he apologised and went ahead with his speech praising Choudhary's contribution to society.

NIGHT WATCH

After a hectic day of polling in Milkipur, the workers of the BJP and other Independent candidates left for their destinations even as Samajwadi Party's polling agents followed the administration's vehicles carrying EVMs to the strongroom. They had instructions from the party to keep an eye until the EVMs were locked inside the strongroom, which is around 28 km away from Milkipur. The SP leadership has also assigned duties to party workers to keep a watch on the strongrooms round-the-clock until the counting of votes begins on February 8. A party leader said they were cautious as they feared the administration "under the pressure of the ruling BJP can take any step to affect the results".

Days after civic poll rout, Jagan says, 'will be back... different and stronger'

SREENIVAS JANAYALA
HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 5

TWO DAYS after YSRCP suffered embarrassing defeats in a number of urban local body polls, party chief and former Andhra Pradesh CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy vowed Wednesday that he would return soon as "Jagananna 2.0", strengthen his outfit and protect its workers. "Jagananna 2.0 will be different, stronger," he said at a meeting with party leaders and YSRCP corporators of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation at his residence in Guntur's Tadepalli. The meeting also comes amid an erosion of YSRCP cadre and support base after it lost the 2024 state polls. In the urban local polls polls in Eluru, Nellore, Hindupur, Tirupati and Nandigama, TDP candidates and Independents supported by TDP-led NDA won the posts of Deputy Mayor and Municipal Chairperson despite strong local support for YSRCP. In some places, YSRCP members cross-voted for TDP or de-

fectured to it, giving the ruling party easy wins. Jagan told dejected YSRCP leaders that "Jagananna 2.0" would operate differently, focusing on protecting and supporting every party worker amid "harassment" under the TDP-led government. "When in Opposition, challenges are inevitable. But we must remain steadfast in our values. Hardships don't last forever. I faced unjust imprisonment for 16 months due to political conspiracies by Congress and TDP. Yet, I never took a step back. With the people's trust, I became the CM. I assure you — our party will return to power and rule the state for next 30 years," he said at the meeting. Jagan accused the TDP-led NDA government of failing to implement its promised 'super six' schemes, and destroying key institutions, and told YSRCP leaders to take this message to people. "Scams have become rampant, with kickbacks from MLAs to the CM himself. People will soon hold them accountable," he said.

Amid fresh churn in Manipur BJP, Biren in Delhi, braces for stormy Assembly session

SUKRITA BARUAH & LIZ MATHEW
GUWAHATI, NEW DELHI, FEB 5

AHEAD OF the upcoming Manipur Assembly session, the simmering discontent among a section of ruling BJP MLAs has again surfaced, even as CM N Biren Singh landed in Delhi Wednesday. The CM's Delhi trip comes soon after state Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Y Khemchand Singh, a known Biren critic, went to Delhi after being reportedly summoned by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Last week, Manipur Speaker and BJP leader Th. Satyabrata Singh had also met Shah in Delhi. Ahead of the Assembly session from February 10, several state BJP leaders, upset with both Biren's leadership and Centre's management of the Manipur crisis, have again started putting pressure on the party leadership. Without spelling out their proposed course of action, one of the dissident BJP MLAs said, "For the last two years, neither the state leadership nor the Centre has come up with a roadmap for



No change of guard in Manipur for now, say BJP sources

peace and they are just diverting attention by saying 'we will seal the border', 'we will implement the NRC' or 'launch a war on drugs'. But the main issue is restoration of peace and normalcy. We are saying if there is no change in this before the Assembly session begins, something big and unprecedented will happen during the session." Another BJP MLA said, "More than two-third of the BJP MLAs are not happy with the current leadership. So everyone is going to make some move in the interest of the public and the state. The turmoil is intolerable. We cannot wait anymore." Manipur has been roiled by a conflict since May 3, 2023, which has killed over 250 people. The 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs of the 60-member Manipur Assembly have not been attending its sessions since the start of ethnic strife,

and are not expected to attend the upcoming session too. NPP MLA N Kayisii passed away last month. The remaining MLAs comprise 30 BJP members, five members of its ally Naga People's Front, one from another NDA ally JD(U), two Independents, five Congress members and six from the NPP which withdrew support from the Biren government last year. Amid fresh political churn, the Congress said it was "observing" dissension within the BJP. "We don't have the numbers to move a no-confidence motion but we are told there is internal bickering within BJP and more than 10 MLAs are against the CM. Our Political Advisory Committee is taking stock of the situation and we are observing it. We will... do what it takes to restore stability to Manipur," said AICC in-charge of Manipur, Girish Chodankar. Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra said a proposal to bring a no-confidence motion would be discussed, among other things, in CLP meet on the eve of session. "At the same time", he said, "BJP has a divided house at present." Meanwhile, Congress veteran

and ex-CM Okram Ibobi Singh has alleged that Biren has "threatened" MLAs against moving and supporting a no-confidence motion against his government. However, sources in the central BJP ruled out any change of guard in Manipur in near future. They pointed out that in the North Eastern Council meeting held in Agartala last December, Shah clarified that Biren would continue. "Following the appointment of former Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla as Manipur Governor, who is now directly monitoring the developments there, the Centre is in the process of bringing back normalcy in Manipur. The NIA is arresting anyone who is creating troubles, both from Meiteis and Kukis. The message is clear. So any change at the top is highly unlikely," said the source. Biren's visit to Delhi is to "seek the Centre's support for the infrastructure projects that have resumed in the state", sources said, adding that the CM is expected to push for more funds for the infrastructure and security measures in Manipur.

EIGHTH BENGAL GLOBAL BUSINESS SUMMIT



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee at the business summit in Kolkata, Wednesday. Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani, JSW Group chairman Sajjan Jindal, RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group chairman Sanjiv Goenka, and ITC chairman and MD Sanjiv Puri are also seen. Partha Paul

Bengal business boost: From synergy panel to mine project

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 5

REAFFIRMING HER government's commitment to industrial growth, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee Wednesday announced the formation of a new state-level synergy committee to facilitate ease of doing business in the state. She also announced the commencement of her proposed pet project, Deocha-Pachami coal mine project — mining of basalt on 326 acres of land in Birbhum district — which she said would act as a catalyst for the state's industrial sector. Addressing the eighth Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) in Kolkata, Banerjee said that the new synergy panel, headed by the chief secretary, would address investment-related issues, and serve as a one-stop, time-bound clearance mechanism to resolve challenges across various sectors. On Deocha-Pachami project,

the CM said the mining at "Asia's second largest coal mine" will start Thursday and around 1,240 million tonnes of coal and 675 MT of basalt is expected to be mined from there. "Job opportunities will also be provided to land donors. Family members of the landowners will be provided jobs," she said. The two-day summit, which began Wednesday, saw participation of prominent industrialists like Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani and JSW Group chairman Sajjan Jindal. Promising to double investment to ₹1 lakh crore by the end of the decade, Ambani said Bengal was seeing a "renaissance in economy and business" and that it was the best time to invest. He praised the CM for being a "tireless leader and one of the most-ablest administrators in the country". Announcing an investment of ₹16,000 crore to build an 800 MW power plant in Salboni in Paschim Medinipur, Jindal said: "It's always

inspiring to see the passion and love with which Mamata Didi is transforming Bengal." JSW will also invest in Durgapur Airport development as the second largest airport of Bengal. The ITC inaugurated two key projects Wednesday — ITC Infotech Global AI Centre of Excellence at Rajarhat and a state-of-the-art FMCG manufacturing facility at Uluberia. The Rajarhat centre will "drive advanced AI research, contributing significantly to the development of West Bengal as a leading AI hub in India, while the Uluberia facility will produce ITC's personal care products and serve as a neem research centre, ITC chairman Sanjiv Puri said, adding that ITC has invested over ₹7,500 crore in Bengal over the last decade. Ambuja Neotia Group announced investment of over ₹15,000 crore over 5 years spanning healthcare, hospitality, tourism, residential and a first-of-its-kind golf-themed township.

Embassy helps 18 Indians return from Libya: MEA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

The Indian embassy in Libya has facilitated the return of 18 Indian nationals who were stranded in Benghazi for several weeks, the Ministry of External Affairs said. It is learnt that the Indians were lured to the Libyan city by fake recruitment agents. "The Embassy of India in Libya facilitated the return of 18 Indian nationals from Benghazi, Libya. They would be arriving in India tomorrow," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on X Tuesday. "They had gone to work in Libya & had been stranded for several weeks. The Embassy worked closely with local authorities and assisted Indian workers with required authorisation and travel documents," he said.

Feud deepens as anti-BSY camp floats new name to lead state unit

AKRAM M
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 5

WITH BJP organisational polls on the horizon in Karnataka, the internal tussle in the state unit between the factions led by MLA Basangouda Yatnal Patil and state BJP chief B Y Vijayendra appears to be intensifying. While the Yatnal faction has been camping in Delhi for the past two days to meet the party's top leadership and seek a leadership change in the state, the Vijayendra camp is scheduled to meet in Bengaluru on February 12 to discuss possible elections for BJP state chief's post. The Yatnal camp has claimed that "good news" is on its way and adding to the intrigue is the emergence of former state minister B Sriramulu as a contender

ADOPT 15-POINT RESOLUTION Six Opp-ruled states demand rollback of UGC draft regulations

Ministers say it undermines federalism

SANATH PRASAD
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 5

SIX OPPOSITION-RULED states have adopted a 15-point resolution against the UGC draft regulations, which, they contended, goes against the federal structure by giving Governors broader powers in appointing vice-chancellors. Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka convened for a conclave of State Higher Education Ministers 2025 in Bengaluru on Tuesday, and broadly agreed to fight the draft regulations legally and urge UGC to withdraw the draft 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.

A similar conclave will be held in Kerala on February 20. The ministers expressed concerns over the draft regulations "centralising the process of appointing V-Cs", leaving no room for the states to weigh in. Karnataka Minister for Higher Education Dr M C Sudhakar said, "... Recently, concerns over Governors' functioning have become questionable, extending beyond administrative matters to political appointments of vice-chancellors. Previously, while such appointments existed, there was never such a strained relationship between Governors and state governments as we see today. The situation has changed dramatically, with incidents like Governors walking out of Assemblies, which were unheard of." The ministers also opposed the proposal of allowing individ-

uals from private sectors to be picked as V-Cs as it would "hinder the overall administration and academic activities of the universities". Underlining that education is a crucial domain where states must have autonomy and freedom to make decisions, Telangana's Minister for IT and Industry Shridhar Babu said, "Any attempt to centralize control undermines the spirit of federalism and restricts the ability of state governments to shape their own higher education policies." However, UGC Chairman Prof M Jagadeesh Kumar had told *The Indian Express*, "The Draft UGC Regulations 2025 aims to ensure highest standards in universities by introducing a more inclusive and transparent selection process. The proposed draft regulations seek to uphold autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions. The primary objective is to enhance quality of education, promote research innovation, align university governance with global best practices, and fulfil the transformative vision of NEP 2020..." Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister Govi Chezhian said that education is intrinsically linked to culture, language, and local needs of each state, making it essential that state governments retain control over key decisions. Denying states their role in appointing V-Cs, he said, not only disregards state's investment in education but also weakens the effectiveness of higher education governance. Calling the draft regulations unconstitutional, Himachal Pradesh Higher Education Minister Rohit Thakur said, "States must have the authority to manage their own universities and appointments without undue interference from the Centre."

DMK likely to sail through in Erode East bypoll fight

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 5

ERODE (EAST) witnessed a 67.97% voter turnout as of 11 pm in the byelection, where the DMK faces a direct contest from NTK, led by Tamil nationalist leader Seeman, following an election boycott by the AIADMK, BJP, and other opposition parties. The bypoll was necessitated after Congress MLA EVKS Elango-van died in December 2024, just a year after he won the seat in a bypoll following the passing of his son, Thirumahan Evera. Given this history, Congress ceded the seat to its ally, the DMK, which fielded V C Chandhirakumar, a former DMK leader who joined the ruling party. After casting his vote,

Chandhirakumar said the ruling party would secure a resounding victory that would set the tone for 2026 Assembly polls. "The people are satisfied with the government's performance. There is no discontent like in North Indian states, where bypolls are imposed due to political manoeuvring. This is a natural election," he said. This poll has been relatively low-key with the absence of high-profile campaigners, including CM M K Stalin and Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin, reflecting DMK's confidence in an easy win. Housing Minister S Muthusamy and Erode MP K E Prakash led the campaign. Despite NTK's bid to frame this election as a battle between Dravidianism and Tamil nationalism, DMK's strong voter base and the ruling party advantage make an NTK upset unlikely.

BY POLL BATTLE IN NORTH AND SOUTH

As Milkipur betters 2022 turnout figure, Akhilesh says presiding officers fulfilling fake voting target

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 4

MORE THAN 65% of total 3.70 lakh voters exercised their franchise till 11 pm in Milkipur Assembly bypoll Wednesday, surpassing the turnout in 2022 at 60.23%. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged "fake voting" and rigging by officials, a charge rejected by the police. According to the EC turnout app, the polling percentage was 65.35%. The Milkipur bypoll has turned into a prestige battle between the SP and the BJP as the seat is part of the politically significant Ayodhya district. SP chief Yadav alleged that presiding officers are "fulfilling the target of fake voting". He alleged that police are checking identity



Outside a polling booth during Milkipur bypolls, Wednesday.

Yadav posted on X an audio clip from a purported sting and said, "This is a sting operation of the truth of presiding officers who are fulfilling the target of fake voting for the ruling party." He alleged that police are checking identity

cards of voters to "create fear". In another post on X, Yadav said, "The Election Commission should immediately take cognisance of pictures related to the news that Ayodhya Police are checking the ID cards of voters in

Milkipur," he said, attaching a picture with the post. Ayodhya Senior SP Raj Karan Nayyar denied the allegations. He said the photo in question depicted police personnel verifying the identification credentials of a polling agent, and emphasised that law enforcement officers are not conducting any verification of voters' identification documents. SP leader and Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad alleged the BJP was "creating pressure on officers." The main contest is between SP's Ajit Prasad and the BJP's Chandrabhanu Paswan. Stakes in Milkipur were raised by Ajit's father Awadhesh Prasad's win from Faizabad in LS polls. With SP looking to retain the seat, BJP sees the bypolls as a chance to avenge its Faizabad loss. —WITHPTI

Pak PM: Want to resolve issues, including Kashmir, with India through talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 5

PRIME MINISTER Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said Pakistan wants to resolve all issues, including Kashmir, with India through talks as he reiterated his "unwavering" support for the Kashmiri people. Sharif made the remarks while addressing a special session of the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) Legislative Assembly in Muzaffarabad on the occasion of "Kashmir Solidarity Day", an annual Pakistani event to show support for the Kashmiris. "We want all issues, including Kashmir, to be resolved through talks," Sharif said.

"India should come out of the thinking of August 5, 2019, and fulfil promises made to the UN and launch a dialogue," he said, referring to the abrogation of Article 370. Sharif said that the only way forward for Pakistan and India was a dialogue, as already written in the Lahore Declaration of 1999, which was agreed upon when then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Pakistan. India has repeatedly said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. India has also repeatedly told Pakistan that the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.



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U.S. MILITARY PLANE LANDS IN AMRITSAR WITH 104 INDIANS ON BOARD

‘It seems they had hot food after ages, many felt betrayed by agents’

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL & KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
LUDHIANA, AMRITSAR, FEB 5

MANY MEN and women who landed in Amritsar on Wednesday told Punjab government officials that they were led astray by travel agents.

Punjab government officials who received the 104 deportees will now facilitate their journey to their hometowns. Many, officials said, feel embarrassed and are reluctant to inform their families of what transpired.

A senior Punjab government official who met the deportees at the airport told *The Indian Express*, “We have put them in contact with their loved ones and are arranging safe transport for home. It seems they have seen hot food after ages. We are also collecting information on the agents who sent them via illegal routes. Some of them were in the UK for a year or



Punjab's NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal meets the deportees at Amritsar airport. Rana Simranjit Singh

so and then travelled to the US.”

The official said barring the children, the individuals on the flight were handcuffed. An official said while most seemed fine after landing, some broke down.

“We served them hot food, including dal, rice, roti and sabzi. Children were also given biscuits, juice and colouring books.

It seemed they had had hot, fresh food after ages. Many felt betrayed by travel agents, and some were initially reluctant to reveal their names. They are also embarrassed,” the official said.

“They are narrating harrowing experiences. Some requested us not to tell their families about the deportation. We

are counselling them. We have given them the helpline numbers of the Punjab NRI wing and district employment bureaus,” said the official.

In Punjab, relatives of the deportees said they spent between ₹30 lakh and ₹50 lakh to send them to the US, where they reached illegally and hoped to apply for asylum.

“My grandson had gone to the US just 15 days ago. I was not in favour of the decision. I don't know how much money the family spent on sending him,” said the grandfather of one of the youths who landed in Amritsar.

A relative of another deported person from Amritsar said he reached the US just a month ago, adding: “He became a bus driver there after paying ₹30 lakh to reach the country.”

Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, the state's NRI Affairs Minister, said the state would support the men and women.

‘40 hrs of hell, dragged ourselves to toilet’

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 5

“FOR 40 hours, we were handcuffed, our feet tied with chains and were not allowed to move an inch from our seats. After repeated requests, we were allowed to drag ourselves to the washroom. The crew would open the door of the lavatory and shove us in,” said Harwinder Singh.

The 40-year-old from Tahl village in Punjab's Hoshiarpur is among the 104 ‘illegal’ immigrants whom the US deported in the first batch to India.

Recounting the travel as a “worse than hell,” experience, Harwinder said that they couldn't even eat properly for 40 hours. “They would force us to eat with handcuffs on. Our requests to the security personnel to remove the cuffs for a few minutes fell on deaf ears. The journey was not only physically painful, but also mentally exhausting...,” he said, adding that a “kind” crew member offered them fruits.

The US military aircraft — a C-17 Globemaster — that the Donald



An immigrant leaves the airport in a police vehicle. Reuters

Trump administration deployed made four pit stops for fuel refilling before landing at Amritsar Wednesday. Harwinder said he could not sleep as he kept thinking about the promise of a better life that he made to his wife before his “dunki” travel eight months ago.

In June 2024, Harwinder and his wife Kuljinder Kaur, took a decision. With two children — 12-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter — the couple, married for 13 years, was struggling to make ends meet by selling cattle milk. Out of nowhere, a dis-

tant relative offered to take Harwinder to the US in 15 days legally, not via a dunki route, in exchange of ₹42 lakh. To gather the amount, the family mortgaged their only acre of land and borrowed from private lenders at steep interest rates.

Life had not prepared Kuljinder for the adversities to come. “But for 8- months, my husband was shuffled between countries,” Kuljinder said. “He

was passed from one place to another like a pawn in a game. He never made it to the US.”

Harwinder endured life-threatening conditions but despite the hardships, he documented his ordeal and sent videos to Kuljinder. She last spoke to him on January 15.

Harwinder remained in contact with his family until mid-January. The news of his deportation came as a shock to Kuljinder, who learned of it only when villagers informed her that he was among the 104 deportees sent back from the US on Wednesday.

Kuljinder said they had already filed a complaint against the travel agent with the village panchayat after losing contact with Harwinder last month.

She is demanding strict action against the agent and a refund of the ₹42 lakh spent on the failed journey. “We have lost everything,” she said. “We only wanted a better future for our children and now we are left with debt and heartbreak.”

‘Don’t need to put them in a military plane... (or) handcuff them’

THE OPPOSITION Congress on Wednesday protested that Indians deported from the US were “handcuffed and humiliated”. In an interview, Congress leader SHASHI THAROOR, who is the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, spoke to *MANOJ CG* on the issue:

A US military plane carrying illegal Indian immigrants has landed in Amritsar. How do you see this development?

I have heard that they have sent them on a military plane. Well, that is the only thing that I am not happy about. I think the US is entirely entitled to deport those people who they deem to be illegally present in their country and whose nationality can be established beyond doubt. So these are Indians, and they are in another country without authorisation, then India has a legal obligation to take them back. But

I do believe it would have been better for the US to have sent these people on a regular commercial flight, or if necessary, on a civilian charter, than doing so on a military aircraft. That I think is what is a new contribution by Mr Trump's administration. That implies something else that I would not have been as happy to welcome. But having said that, on the question of Indian citizens being brought back to India, definitely that's where they belong. And if they wish to travel abroad, they should go through only through legal means.

But there is one view that the government should have exerted more pressure to maybe regularise some of these people.

Well, I don't agree with that, because the fact is that why should we require any country to take illegal immigrants when we ourselves don't think it is a



THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW
WITH
SHASHI THAROOR
CONGRESS LOK SABHA MP

good idea. International law entitles people who fear persecution in their home countries to seek asylum elsewhere. And I don't think that at this stage, anybody in India can legitimately

claim a fear of persecution on the grounds recognised by international law. So they are going essentially for economic benefit.

The BJP talks about illegal immigration from Bangladesh. So by the same logic, should India be identifying and sending back or deporting all the so-called Bangladeshi immigrants?

If they are indeed proven to be Bangladeshi. Yes, I think Bangladesh has the same obligation to take them as we have to take the illegal Indians in America. Part of the problem in many cases, in the political context in India, is that many people who claim to be Indian are being described by some as Bangladeshis, but they are not able to prove conclusively that these people have an address or a document that certifies them to be Bangladeshi. So the Bangladeshi government will

turn around and say, how can we accept these people? They might be West Bengali Muslims... If you can prove them Bangladeshi, then Bangladesh is obliged by international law to take them and I would support the government in sending them back.

There was a huge controversy when the government talked about the NRC. Even the Congress had taken a position on the NRC...

The thing is deporting an illegal immigrant whose identity is confirmed — that is the issue. Our objection to the NRC was that it could suddenly exclude from Indian citizenship people who are Indian but don't have documentary proof of it. For example, the argument that if you are born in India, you should be able to prove it is only relatively

recently easy to substantiate, because in the early days, right up to the 1990s, you had very many parts of India where birth certificates were not routinely issued. So if a government minister in India can't provide a birth certificate, then you can imagine the situation of, say, a Bengali Muslim born in West Bengal...

Some Congress leaders have said the Indians returning on the US military plane were handcuffed...

I have not heard it myself, but certainly I would expect our government to convey back to the US that you are deporting somebody for having violated your laws. You don't need to put them in a military plane. You don't need to handcuff them.

FULL REPORT ON
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Deportees handcuffed, humiliated, says Cong

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE CONGRESS Wednesday said the Indian nationals deported from the US were “handcuffed and humiliated”.

Congress's media and publicity department chairperson Pawan Khera said, “Looking at the pictures of Indians getting handcuffed and humiliated while being deported from the US saddens me as an Indian.”

“I remember in December of 2013, an Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade was handcuffed and strip searched in America. Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh registered a strong protest with US Ambassador Nancy Powell,” said Khera in a post on X.

“The UPA govt retaliated sharply. Leaders like Ms Meira Kumar, Sushil Kumar Shinde & Rahul Gandhi refused to meet the US Congressional delegation... that was visiting India at that time,” he said.

Congress deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi also protested against “the manner in which the United States government sent Indians back to our country”. “I cannot understand why Prime Minister Modi is silent...,” Gogoi said on X.



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FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-26

This is to inform that this hospital intends to register vendors for supply of medical stores. It is hereby informed that all Vendors/Stockiest interested in supplying Drugs/Vaccines, Narcotic Drugs, Surgical/OT Consumables, Ortho Consumables/Orthosis, Laboratory Kits & Reagents, Radiology Consumables, Ophthalmology Consumables, Dermatology Drugs, ENT Consumables/Hearing Aids, Medical Grade Gases & LMO, Medical Equipments Repair and Supply should contact Medical Stores, MH Agra. Registration forms shall be collected by the interested vendors from Medical Stores, MH Agra during all working days from 0830 Hr. to 1200 Hr. by 01 Mar 2025. Duly completed forms along with all required documents are to be placed in a sealed envelope marked as VENDOR REGN. APPLICATION FOR FY 2025-26 and dropped in a sealed box located in the Administrative Block of this hospital latest by 1200 Hr. on 12 Mar 2025. Registered post/courier/online submission will not be accepted. sd/-
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Sr.No.	Post	No. of Post	Reservation
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2	Assistant Professor (NG)	07	01 SC, 01 ST, 01 VJ -A, 01 NT-B, 01 EWS, 01 SEBC, 01 Open
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Qualifications and other conditions :-
1. Qualification are as per UGC, Savitribai Phule Pune University & Government of Maharashtra norms.
2. The Candidates from reserved categories should also forward one copy of application (without enclosing testimonials) to the Deputy Registrar (Reservation Cell), Savitribai Phule Pune University, Ganesh Khind, Pune-7.
3. Prescribed printed application forms are available in the Central Office of M.V.P. Samaj at the above address on payment of Rs. 500/- in cash During 11.00 am to 4.00 pm on all working days.
4. Incomplete applications and the applications received after the stipulated Period will not be taken into consideration.
5. Completed application form with all documents should reach the Central Office of MVP Samaj within 15 days from the date of publishing this advertisement.

Date : 06/02/2025
Place : Nashik

(Adv. Nitin Baburao Thakare)
Sarchitnis
Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj, Nashik-2



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Terms & Conditions:
• "Qualifications, pay scales and other requirement are as prescribed by the UGC notification dated. 18-July-2018 Government of Maharashtra Resolution No. Misc-2018/C.R.56/18/UNI-1, dated. 8-March-2019 and University circular No. TAAS/(CT)/CD/2018-19/1241, dated. 26-March-2019 and revised from time to time." The Government Resolution & Circular are available on the website mu.ac.in
• The above posts are open to all. However, candidates from any category can apply for the posts.
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• Reservation for women will be as per University Circular No. BCC/16/74/1998 dated. 10th March, 1998. 4% reservation shall be for the persons with disability as per University Circular No. Special Cell/CC/2019-20/05 dated 05th July, 2019.
• Master's degree with at least 55% marks or an equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed by a recognized university. Relaxation of 5% is applicable at the graduate and masters level for the scheduled caste / scheduled tribe / differently abled (physically and visually challenged) categories for the purpose of eligibility and for assessing academic record during direct recruitment to teaching positions. The eligibility of 55% marks (or an equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed) and the relaxation of 5% to the categories mentioned above are permissible, based on only the qualifying marks. Relaxation of 5% is applicable from 55% to 50% of the marks to the Ph.D degree holders, who have obtained their master's degree prior to 19th September 1991.
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• Candidates who had applied as per the previous advertisement released in January 2024 should submit fresh applications as mentioned above.
• No. T.A./D.A. will be payable to the candidates for attending interviews.
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• Incomplete applications, applications received after the last date and applications not submitted through proper channel are liable to be rejected.
Date: 06.02.2025
Sd/-
Secretary / Trustee
Modern Education Society, Pune

After docking, SpaDex satellites run into delay in undocking

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 5

THE ISRO delayed an undocking maneuver of the satellites as part of the Space Docking Experiment or SpaDex, which was earlier scheduled to take place soon after the first successful docking on January 16.

ISRO sources have indicated that “there are some issues with the docking experiments” and that the “undocking has not been possible yet”.

The space agency’s chairman V Narayanan had said in Sriharikota on January 29 — following the launch of the NVS-02 satellite, its landmark 100th mission — that ISRO is still conducting a review of the undocking process and that the move could take a while.

On January 16, ISRO had posted on its official social media handles: “SpaDeX Docking Update: Post docking, control of two satellites as a single object is successful. Undocking and power transfer checks to follow in coming days.”

“After successful docking and rigidization, electrical power transfer between the two satellites will be demonstrated before undocking and separation of the two satellites to start the operation of their respective payloads for the expected mission life of up to two years,” ISRO had said ahead of the mission launch.

Since January 16, however, neither the space agency nor any other independent observers has reported separation of two satellites — SDX01, the Chaser, and SDX02, the Target.

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Roorkee tense over firing at MLA office

AISWARYA RAJ
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 5

SIX COMPANIES of central police forces, state police, drone surveillance and checkpoints at three border points.

Authorities in Uttarakhand Wednesday turned Roorkee city into a fortress after the Gurjar community called a mahapan-chayat in support of BJP leader Kunwar Pranav Singh ‘Champion’, who was remanded in judicial custody for allegedly opening fire at the office of Khanpur MLA Umesh Kumar.

Tensions between Gurjar and Brahmin communities have been running high after both were arrested. Kumar, an Independent MLA, was granted bail while Singh, a former MLA from Khanpur, was held on charge of attempted murder.

Haridwar SP Pramendra Dobhal said officers have been deployed in Laksar area to ensure there is no gathering. “A mahapanchayat was announced and later called off by the community, but we have deployed officers. We have carved out seven zones and posted Deputy SPs and 12 inspectors along with six companies of CAPFs and PAC (Pradeshik Armed Constabulary). As per our inputs, no one has gathered for the event,” he said.

Kumar said Wednesday: “I apologised to the community and wanted the area to return to normalcy. But another mahapan-chayat was called and they asked me to go to Singh’s mahal (house) and apologise. I have never spoken against the community.”

When Gandhi met Tolstoy for 1st time, in Jaipur

AISHWARYA KHOSLA
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 5

ON THE sun-dappled tented grounds of the Jaipur Literature Festival, an extraordinary meeting took place — one that history had long yearned for but had never witnessed. The descendants of two of the most influential thinkers of modern history — Mahatma Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy — met for the very first time. Gopalkrishna Gandhi and Daniil Tolstoy took stage to explore their extraordinary legacy.

Moderator and Penguin editor-in-chief Manasi Subramaniam set the stage by recounting the serendipitous moment which ignited an intellectual partnership between Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy that helped shape the future of non-violent resistance. “In 1909, a young

India may not ramp up climate targets for 2035, set to miss submission deadline

India’s 2035 climate action plan to ‘reflect disappointment of COP29 outcome on climate finance’

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

INDIA WILL likely skip the February 10 deadline for submitting the next round of climate action plans required under the Paris Agreement and may not significantly upgrade its targets, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

These plans, called Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs, are supposed to provide details of the climate action countries intend to take up to 2035.

The Paris Agreement requires its member countries to refresh their NDCs in five-year cycles. The existing NDCs, submitted in 2020, pertain to the period up to 2030. The Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee, after a meeting last year, decided to ask countries to submit their 2035 NDCs by February 10, about nine months ahead of the year-ending annual climate conference.

India, however, is not ready with its 2035 action plan — and

EXPLAINED Eye on hosting COP33 in 2028

BESIDES THE climate finance issue, there is another reason why India is unlikely to stretch itself while making commitments for 2035 — it’s planning to host the COP33 climate conference in 2028. Host countries usually announce new climate initiatives ahead of the conference to demonstrate their leadership and create momentum for a more meaningful outcome. India would like to leave some room for enhancing its NDC commitments during that time. It had enhanced its 2030 NDCs mid-way through the five-year cycle, having met two of its three initial targets well ahead of the 2030 deadline.

in no hurry to meet the deadline.

In fact, the Indian NDC might be submitted only in the second half of the year, closer to the annual climate meeting being held in Brazil in November, official sources said.

There is no penalty for late submissions. Not many countries have submitted their 2035 NDCs, with many developed countries yet to do so.

The US, incidentally, is among

the countries that have submitted their NDCs. The Joe Biden administration had approved and submitted the 2035 submissions in December, well before Donald Trump assumed charge.

India has also skipped the December 31, 2024 deadline for the submission of the first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), the new format in which a country has to report its detailed inventory of emissions. This report, too, is ex-

pected to be submitted around the middle of the year.

The sources cited above also said that India’s NDC would likely “reflect the disappointment of the climate finance outcome at COP29 in Baku” last year. This is a hint that the 2035 NDC is unlikely to be a significant or ambitious upgrade of climate actions compared to the existing NDC for 2030.

India and other developing countries have expressed serious disappointment with the outcome of COP29, last year’s climate conference in Baku, which delivered an extremely weak agreement on climate finance.

Developing countries had been seeking a commitment of at least \$1 trillion every year from the developed world in climate finance. But developed countries agreed to mobilise no more than \$300 billion a year, and that too only from 2035.

India has maintained that the lack of adequate finance is a major setback to global climate action.

The Economic Survey pre-

sented last week also made a similar argument, and clearly hinted at a readjustment of climate targets by India.

“The funding shortfall may lead to a reworking of the climate targets. Considering that domestic resources will be the key to action, resources for meeting development challenges may be affected, undermining progress toward sustainable development objectives and compromising the integrity of international climate partnerships,” the Economic Survey said.

For the 2030 period, India has made three commitments. It has said it will reduce the emissions intensity of its economy (emissions per unit of GDP) by 45% from 2005 levels, and ensure that at least 50% of its installed electricity generation capacity comes from non-fossil fuel sources. It has also promised to increase its forest and tree cover so that they can absorb an additional 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide every year.

India is on course to achieve all three targets well ahead of 2030.

Uttarakhand interfaith couple alleges threats after marriage notice goes viral

AISWARYA RAJ
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 5

WHEN MOHAMMAD Shanu (22) and Akansha Kandari (23) submitted a notice on January 7 at the sub-district magistrate’s office in Uttarakhand’s Udham Singh Nagar stating their intention to marry, they thought they were merely following established procedure. Little did they imagine that their notice, complete with personal details, would go viral on social media.

“I got a message from my family five days later which included the photograph of the first page of their file with their personal details. It appeared on social media with the caption ‘love jihad’,” recalls Shanu, who owns a salon at Bazpur.

The incident occurred despite police protection given to them on Uttarakhand HC’s December 16 orders. In their plea, the couple said that they wanted to get married but couldn’t due to threats from Kandari’s mother and “other organisations”. They also alleged a “serious threat to their lives”.

In its ruling, the high court ordered police protection at Bazpur police station for six weeks, asking Bazpur Station House Officer to assess the threat perception and adopt suitable measures at the end of the period.

According to the couple, despite the orders, they continue to face opposition from right-wing groups: on January 30, outfits such as the Bajrang Dal, accompanied Kandari’s mother to the local SDM office to “object to the marriage”. In her letter to the SDM, Kandari’s mother Reena Devi sought her daughter’s “custody until the notice is examined”, saying Shanu had lured and misled her under love jihad.

Asha and her cubs among five cheetahs released into the wild

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, FEBRUARY 5

AFTER SPENDING a year in captivity, five more cheetahs were released into the wild at Kuno National Park which includes a mother and three cheetah cubs for the first time.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav informed that on Wednesday female cheetah Asha and her three cubs were released from the large enclosure into the open jungle at Kuno National Park. Another female cheetah, Dheera, was also released. This brings the total number of cheetahs released into the wild to seven; 19 more will be released in the coming weeks.

Cheetah Veera and her two newborn cubs will continue to remain in enclosures with her for at least a year, officials said.

“It is immensely gratifying to witness cheetahs, once extinct in Asia, are now not only sprinting across the sacred land of Madhya Pradesh but also expanding their family,” Yadav said.

Asha had delivered her three cubs on January 1, 2024. These

Sikkim BJP chief to meet minister over green nod for dam

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE BJP’S Sikkim unit will meet Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav later this month to raise the safety concerns over a new Teesta III hydel project dam that will come up in place of another dam that was washed away in 2023’s catastrophic glacial lake flooding.

Last month, an Environment Ministry panel cleared a proposal to build the new 118-metre high concrete gravity dam in the place of the original 60-metre high Teesta-III dam. This came without a fresh public hearing and even as the design aspects of the dam were yet to be approved.

The Sikkim BJP chief, D R Thapa, told *The Indian Express* that the party’s state unit would apprise the minister of the need for a fresh public hearing and comprehensive impact-assessment studies.

According to a recent study, a giant mass of glacial debris collapsed into the South Lhonak lake on the night of October 3, 2023, triggering a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) that went barrelling towards the Chungthang dam and destroyed it.

“Sikkim is still recovering from the October 2023 disaster, with tourism and road connectivity yet to fully normalise. About 40-50 people died and thousands were displaced. The people’s safety should be the top



Sikkim BJP chief D R Thapa

priority,” the Sikkim BJP president said.

On February 2, Thapa wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention on withholding the new dam’s clearance until safety concerns are addressed. The disaster underscored the urgent need for a scientific reassessment of all major hydropower projects in the region, he wrote to Modi.

Asked if the Sikkim BJP wants the project to be scrapped, Thapa told *The Indian Express*: “We do not want the project to be scrapped. There should be comprehensive safety assessments and fresh impact studies. The past assessments were clearly bad. Hence the older dam was washed away.”

On January 10, the environment ministry’s expert appraisal committee (EAC) on river valley and hydroelectric projects recommended clearance for the new concrete gravity dam for the 1,200 MW Teesta III hydel project.

In his letter, Thapa requested the PM to “withhold the EAC’s clearance for the Teesta III project until all necessary scientific reviews, including revised probable maximum flood study, are completed and independently validated”.

5 MORE APPLICATIONS BEING PROCESSED

Uttarakhand: First live-in relationship under UCC gets nod

AISWARYA RAJ
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 5

A WEEK after the Uniform Civil Code came into force, the Uttarakhand government has registered the first live-in relationship. As of Tuesday evening, the government had received five applications, of which one had been approved while the others were being examined, a senior officer told *The Indian Express*.

Home Secretary Shailesh Bagoli said the details of applicants are encrypted, and officials can only view the number of applications and registrations, while their details will remain only with the registrars concerned. “The system is secure, and we have taken precautions against any breach of private information of couples applying for registration,” he said.

Bajrang Dal leader Vikas Verma, however, claimed they are aware of the details and are checking for interfaith couples among the registrants. “We have come across a case in Haridwar where the couple are from different religions. We are constantly on the lookout for dangerous cases,” he claimed. Bagoli maintained it was impossible for any third party to get such details.

The Uttarakhand govern-

ment had on January 27 rolled out the UCC Rules for regulating live-in relationships. The registration requires the couple to fill a 16-page form and obtain a certificate from a religious leader showing they are eligible to marry if they so choose.

The Uttarakhand UCC makes it compulsory to register all live-in relationships. This applies to Uttarakhand residents living in the state and also those living elsewhere in India.

In the UCC rules, registration is only for the “purposes of record keeping” and requires the Registrar to forward these registrations to the local police stations where the couple reside.

Civil society members have flagged concerns regarding infringement of privacy. Mallika Virdi of Mahila Manch said there are apprehensions surrounding women’s safety due to mandates under UCC, which was brought into effect in the name of protection of women. “The Supreme Court has guaranteed that privacy is an inalienable right unless there is violence when the state can come in. The UCC gives power to anyone, including your neighbour, to complain. What is protection if a woman cannot exercise her agency while a section of the society decides what is public morality,” she said.



RUN, (TO THE) FOREST, RUN! Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav during the release of the cheetahs. @DrMohanYadav51

cubs will stay with their mother for the next few months and further hone their hunting skills before they strike out on their own.

Meanwhile, precautions have been taken to ensure their safety in the wild, with dedicated teams assigned to monitor Asha and her cubs round the clock. The monitoring teams will keep track of every movement, and the personnel on duty will rotate periodically to maintain vigilance.

Kuno park director Uttam

Kumar Sharma told *The Indian Express*: “Asha’s cubs are now 13 months old. They are able to hunt with their mother and they will be able to survive in the wild. We have teams that will track them”. The ambitious cheetah project hit a major roadblock in August 2023 after three adult cheetahs “died due to septicaemia after wounds beneath their dense winter coat on the back and neck regions became infested with maggots”.

Modi takes dip at Triveni Sangam: ‘A moment of divine connection’

MAULSHREE SETH
PRAYAGRAJ, FEBRUARY 5

WEARING A saffron-coloured jacket, blue track pants and a ‘rudraksha’ chain around his neck, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam on Wednesday and offered prayers to Goddess Ganga. PM Modi was among the nearly 55 lakh people who took a dip at the Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh’s Prayagraj by noon.

After arriving at the Prayagraj airport around 10 am, the PM reached Arail Ghat and from there he took a boat ride to Triveni Sangam — the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati — along with UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Later, Modi ventured into the water alone, took a dip at the Sangam and recited mantras, even as pilgrims continued bathing at the ghats and even waved at the Prime Minister, who waved back.

“Blessed to be at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. The Sana at the Sangam is a moment of divine connection, and like the crores of others, who have taken part in it, I was also filled with a spirit of devotion. May Maa Ganga bless all with peace, wisdom, good health and harmony,” Modi said in a post on X, soon after taking the dip.



PM Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath at the Maha Kumbh. PTI

Officials said that during his visit, PM Modi offered “Arghya” to the Sun God and offered prayers to the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers. After the dip in the Sangam, Modi performed a puja wearing a black kurta, a saffron stole and a Himachali cap.

Local priests said that PM Modi had taken the dip on the special occasion of “Bhishm Ashtami” during the ongoing “Gupta Navratri”, where along with prayers to Goddess Durga, offerings are made to ancestors as well. The Prime Minister offered “Akshat” (coloured rice), flowers, fruits and a red coloured

‘chunari’ to the river amidst chanting of vedic mantras. Later he also performed “arti” of the three rivers guided by the Priests present.

Sources said the PM’s visit lasted nearly two hours. Officials claimed that pilgrims were allowed to take a dip at different temporary ghats as usual even when the PM was taking a dip at the Sangam.

While this is Modi’s first visit to the Maha Kumbh after the January 29 stampede, he had last visited the event venue on December 13 last year when he inaugurated 167 development projects worth Rs 5,500 crore for

Prayagraj.

“Despite the VVIP movement, there was no restriction on public participation and devotees continued to take dips alongside the Prime Minister. There was no disruption as the Prime Minister and lakhs of pilgrims shared the holy experience,” said an official.

While officials informed that around 39 crore have already taken bath at Kumbh till date, since January 13, which was the first bath of the Maha Kumbh Mela. The Maha Kumbh will continue till February 26—Maha Shivratri—with one more major snan on February 12.

ment’s rule in the state.

The data comes a month after Kerala Police registered as many as 30 cases and arrested 57 people in the alleged rape and sexual abuse of a Dalit girl over several years. According to the government data, Kerala reported 31,171 cases under the POCSO from June 2016 to December 2024. The 8.5 years have also seen 28,728 arrests.

The state also reported 271 POCSO cases and 175 arrests in the first 17 days of 2025. Only 2,614 cases have seen convictions despite POCSO cases being

tried at dedicated fast track courts, the data shows.

Cases pertaining to sexual assault on minors have increased considerably increased since 2022. While around 3,000 cases were reported every year between 2016 and 2021, it went up to 4,518 in 2022, 4,641 in 2023 and 4,594 in 2024.

Referring to the reported suicides among POCSO survivors, Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson K V Manoj Kumar said that “necessary directions had been given to all stakeholders to

ensure that the survivors are taken care of. One factor is suicide tendency has increased among minors”.

“After undergoing trauma, they will feel depressed. At this stage, they are being given psychological support. Various departments have reported to the commission that POCSO survivors are given all support. When the alleged accused are within the family, the victims would have to be sheltered in children’s homes. That may also create a depression among them,” he said.



Gopalkrishna Gandhi and Daniil Tolstoy at the Jaipur Literature Festival. X/@jaipurLitFest

Indian lawyer in Johannesburg happened upon a revolutionary manifesto, A Letter to a Hindu, written by a Russian count.”

As the audience leaned in, Gopalkrishna Gandhi, historian and professor, described the exact moment when his grandfather, M K Gandhi, first encoun-

tered Leo Tolstoy’s words. “In 1909, Gandhi had arrived in London on a deputation,” he recounted. “On the very day he landed, a dramatic assassination of a British official by an Indian nationalist rocked the city. Amid the turmoil, Gandhi stumbled upon a letter—a letter that urged

The conversation then turned to the famous correspondence between Gandhi and Tolstoy, a series of letters exchanged between 1909 and 1910. “Every letter is remark-

able,” said Subramaniam. “Tolstoy spent seven months, wrote 29 drafts, and filled 400 pages before finalising A Letter to a Hindu. That is an extraordinary amount of effort. Gandhi was deeply moved and immediately wrote back.”

Gopalkrishna Gandhi read an excerpt from his ancestor’s first letter, which began, “Count Tolstoy, I take the liberty of inviting your attention...”

“Gandhi was 40 when he wrote those words, while Tolstoy was 80. And yet, Gandhi leaned on Tolstoy’s words as if they were a pillar of strength. Much like I leaned on Daniil’s arm as I climbed the steps onto this stage today,” observed Gopalkrishna Gandhi. Laughter rippled through the audience at this candid admission before Daniil Tolstoy picked up the thread.

FULL REPORT ON:
www.indianexpress.com



38th Surajkund International Crafts Mela

7-23 February, 2025
Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana



“भारत के समृद्ध फ्यूचर में हम टूरिज्म का बहुत बड़ा पोटेंशियल देख रहे हैं। भारत में नेचर, कल्चर, एडवेंचर, कॉन्फ्रेंस, डेस्टिनेशन वेडिंग और हैरिटेज टूरिज्म सबके लिए असीम संभावनाएं हैं।”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

Theme States



International Organisation



Programmes

Experience the Soul of Sufi with
Dr. Satinder Sartaj
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Desert Symphony
by folk sensation
Mame Khan
08 FEB. SATURDAY

“Alfaaz Mere”
Interaction with award winning poet & lyricist
Dr. Irshad Kamil
09 FEB. SUNDAY

Jalwa-e-Haryana by Padma Shri awardee
Sh. Mahavir Guddu
09 FEB. SUNDAY

Star Performance by rapper & singer
Parmish Verma
10 FEB. MONDAY

North Eastern Beats
by Sunita Bhuyan & Band, Francis Hmuihmul & Maylula Band
11 FEB. TUESDAY

Go on a delightful Musical journey with
Papon & Band
12 FEB. WEDNESDAY

A Soul-Stirring Sufi Nite by
A.R. Rahman's KM Sufi Ensemble
14 FEB. FRIDAY

Swing to the Beats of Punjabi Music by
Gurtaj
15 FEB. SATURDAY

Mesmerizing musical evening by
Vipul Mehta
16 FEB. SUNDAY

Madhya Pradesh - Baiju Bawra (Natya) and Veerangana Rani Durgavati (Nritya-Natika)
Cultural Show by Theme State-Madhya Pradesh
17 FEB. MONDAY

Roll On The Floor with Laughter
Gaurav Gupta
18 FEB. TUESDAY

Ananya Odisha
Captivating Cultural Show by Theme State-Odisha
19 FEB. WEDNESDAY

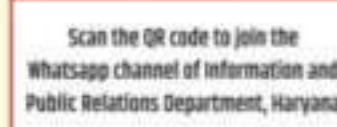
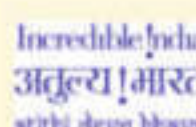
BIMSTEC Rhythms : One Beat, Many Cultures
20 FEB. THURSDAY

SAMAAGAM-A fusion of classical dance forms choreographed by
Priya Venkataraman
21 FEB. FRIDAY

Magnificent fashion show
Sarees of India by Sandesh Navlakha & Alesia Raut
22 FEB. SATURDAY

An extravagant Art & Culture Parade showcase.
You are cordially invited.

Cultural shows for Inaugural & Closing Ceremonies curated by
Sanjay Sharma





The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE IDEA OF DELHI

That's what the city has voted for — and it has
a national resonance far beyond the capital

DELHI HAS VOTED and much will depend on what the voters have said. Because even though it may be less than a full state, Delhi is not just another city. It is a mini-India that is home to diverse aspirations and teeming dreams. Many come to Delhi to be and to become, in search of a better work and life for themselves and education for their children, and to be part of a larger story. The outcome of the electoral contest in this city will, therefore, not just decide the fate of the three main players in the field. It will also strike sparks and echoes across the country. Of course, the stakes are high for the incumbent AAP, its main challenger BJP and a Congress that has for a long spell been out of the reckoning.

For Arvind Kejriwal's AAP, born from an anti-corruption movement that played out in full view of the nation under the Delhi arclights, its unusually rapid rise shaped by its high-visibility setting, a third term, or not, would be critical to its next steps as a party. Its first full tenure after the comprehensive win in 2015 framed the "Delhi model" of governance it sought to put an imprimatur on and carry beyond Delhi (it succeeded in Punjab, but not in Goa or Gujarat). It turned its attention to setting up mohalla clinics and renovating the government school, alongside bijli-paani subsidies. But the second term saw a visible stalling and slowdown amid growing hostilities with the Centre led by the BJP. From its top leadership being sent to jail in the alleged excise policy scam, to accusations that public money was misspent on refurbishing the CM's residence extravagantly, the AAP has had its back against the wall as it sought to guard the turf of an elected government from moves by the Centre's nominee, the I-G. On its success or failure in this election, then, will hinge its future trajectory as a party — and given that it is the only non-Congress party with governments in two states so far, the future contours of the national Opposition could also be rearranged by the AAP's tally. For the BJP, which returned to power at the Centre last year, but without a majority, a win in Delhi, where it has been out of power for 27 years, coming after its victory in Haryana and Maharashtra sweep, could rehabilitate its winning streak. That the Modi versus Kejriwal battle is a grudge match with larger consequences could also be gauged from the PM's reply to the motion of thanks on the President's address in Lok Sabha on Tuesday — he didn't take names but Kejriwal was clearly the target of pointed swipes in his speech.

But the outcome in this election will be important, most of all, for what it means for the idea of Delhi. The new government will face the challenge of easing the pressures and strains on it, and of making it more encompassing. India's capital city needs a plan that addresses and includes everyone who seeks to make it their own. A plan that makes the city more comfortable and hospitable, and at the same time, helps it move in step with the vaulting aspirations of those who live in it.

PROTECT THE CEASEFIRE

Donald Trump's proposal to 'take over'
Gaza threatens to derail the peace process entirely

ON THE EVE of US President Donald Trump's inauguration, Israel and Hamas reached a fragile ceasefire agreement after months of negotiations. Both the incoming president and his predecessor, Joe Biden, were eager to take credit. Now, as the first of three phases on the proposed path to peace unfolds — with the exchange of many hostages and prisoners still awaited — Trump's proposal to "take over" Gaza threatens to derail the process entirely. During a joint press briefing with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, Trump suggested that a US takeover would be a "long-term ownership position" that would bring "great stability" to the Middle East. It would also amount to the most radical upending of US policy. Trump has not ruled out deploying US troops in Gaza — an extraordinary stance for a president who has consistently criticised America's present involvement in Eastern Europe, and its invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Reminiscent of the 1948 Nakba, when 700,000 Palestinians were displaced during and after the first Arab-Israeli war, Trump has framed his proposal as a "humanitarian" effort, claiming he wants to spur economic development, create jobs, and provide housing for Gaza's 1.8 million residents — who, in the meantime, should move to Egypt or Jordan. Both countries, however, have categorically rejected this idea, saying they will not accept Palestinian refugees. Any attempt to forcibly displace Gaza's population after 15 months of war would only fuel resentment and rebellion, and in the long run, lead to more instability.

At this critical juncture, preserving the ceasefire should be the priority. Hamas, which de facto governs Gaza, has condemned Trump's plan, calling it an alignment with Israel's far-right agenda. A forced relocation of Palestinians could trigger military action that may spill over into Lebanon, as seen last year, and other parts of the Middle East. Renewed conflict could again bring in Hezbollah and reignite the Israel-Iran proxy war, jeopardising regional stability. None of this augurs well for a two-state solution. Saudi Arabia has rejected Trump's proposal saying that it would not establish diplomatic relations with Israel — Washington's long-term objective, as envisaged in the 2020 Abraham Accords — without the establishment of a Palestinian state. Other countries that were a part of the Accords (UAE and Bahrain) will likely reconsider their commitments as well. The only party that stands to benefit from Trump's plan is Netanyahu's government, propped up by its far-right allies who continue to demand that Israel abandon the ceasefire. This week, as Israel and Hamas negotiate the second phase of their talks, the process must be insulated from proposals that threaten to derail it.

WITH A SQUEAK

A study links growing rat populations in cities to rising
temperatures, stokes spectres of an impending Ratmageddon

AN ASTEROID WITH a 1.3 per cent chance of hitting Earth in 2032. Sci-fi fears of an AI apocalypse. But for the real menace of these times, check under the sofa. Rats — lots and lots of rats. Think *The Birds*, not *Armageddon*. A group of researchers have used public rat sighting and inspection data from 16 cities — mostly in the US, but also including Toronto, Amsterdam and Tokyo — over a period of between seven and 17 years to see how the numbers had changed. The result: 11 of those cities saw significant increases in the rat population.

Human population density and loss of vegetation correlated positively with multiplying rodents. More food waste and more holes to scurry into make for a happy and healthy rat population. But the strongest correlation was found with rising temperatures amid global warming, an issue that's exacerbated in cities due to the urban heat island effect. When it's warmer, rats have lower mortality, can stay above ground and forage for longer, and are more fertile. The collective noun for these pesky home invaders is a "mischief" of rats, and what mischief they can wreak, from carrying diseases to contaminating food and damaging infrastructure. That's not to mention, as the study says, the mental toll it takes on the people who have to put up with them.

But don't reach for the rat poison just yet. For one thing, the study found that trying to get rid of rats that are already there is much less effective than methods of making cities less hospitable to them. What is needed is modern waste management practices, building regulations, and more resources for public education and surveillance. There's a host of things that can and should be done at the municipal level, including in India; although there's no data from the country, the same conditions apply. In the meantime, hunker down, rodent-proof your houses and prepare for Ratmageddon. Not with a bang but with a squeak.



AMARTYA LAHIRI

THE UNITED STATES of America has now embarked upon a path of muscular nationalism with its opening salvo being the unleashing of a trade war. The interesting bit is that the US went after its two biggest trading partners — Canada and Mexico — by announcing 25 per cent tariffs on all imports from these countries with a 10 per cent lower rate on energy imports from Canada. The tariffs were initially to go into effect on February 4 but have now been postponed by 30 days.

The US action raises a number of questions, the key ones being — why is the US doing it? What may be the effects of the tariffs? How might this end?

On the question of why, it is instructive to start by noting that President Donald Trump, who campaigned extensively during the recent presidential election on issues surrounding the trade and security threat to the US from China, has imposed a relatively minor 10 per cent additional tariffs on China. He has singled out Canada and Mexico — two of the US's biggest trading partners, jointly accounting for over 28 per cent of total imports — for the harshest and swiftest tariff assault.

The ostensible reason given for this is that it is intended to push Canada and Mexico to reduce the flow of illegal drugs and immigrants across their borders into the US. This reasoning is hard to buy since Canada has been included in the tariff net despite a minuscule share of illegal drugs and immigrants entering the US from Canada as compared to the flows across the US-Mexico border. Indeed, Canadian officials who were negotiating with their US counterparts have expressed frustration at the lack of clarity from the US side regarding the actions or markers that the US requires to withdraw the tariffs. There is a general recognition on all sides that the border control issue is just a smoke screen for justifying the tariffs.

The more likely reasons for the tariffs are President Trump's long-expressed love of tariffs as a marker of economic power; and

White House may relent on Canada and Mexico,
but China trade war may be a longer affair

The revenue shortfall of the US federal government is where tariffs can play a role. Simple arithmetic reveals that at current levels of imports from these three countries — 25 per cent tariffs on Canadian and Mexican goods with a 10 per cent carveout for energy imports from Canada (which account for a quarter of Canada's exports to the USA) along with 10 per cent additional tariffs on imports from China — can raise upwards of \$320 billion annually. This is almost 70 per cent of the annual cost of extending the tax cuts.

the federal government's desperation for additional revenues. While the deep protectionist zeal underlying the first reason will never go away, the motive behind the second may be more malleable. Why is that?

Corporate and personal income tax rates had been reduced under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2018 during Trump's previous administration. These are popularly known as the Trump tax cuts and they are scheduled to expire in 2025. A key goal of President Trump is to extend or make those tax cuts permanent. However, extending them will be expensive with the Congressional Budget Office estimating that it would add \$4.6 trillion over 10 years to the federal budget deficit, or \$460 billion annually. This would require the US Congress to pass a bill to raise the federal borrowing limit as well as approve the budget. Given the presence of a number of deficit hawks among Republican members of Congress, the passage of such a bill is far from guaranteed, notwithstanding the President's current popularity.

The revenue shortfall of the US federal government is where tariffs can play a role. The United States imports around \$4 trillion of goods annually, of which 15.6 per cent come from Mexico, 12.6 per cent from Canada while China accounts for 13.5 per cent, a collective import share of almost 42 per cent. Simple arithmetic reveals that at current levels of imports from these three countries — 25 per cent tariffs on Canadian and Mexican goods with a 10 per cent carveout for energy imports from Canada (which account for a quarter of Canada's exports to the USA) along with 10 per cent additional tariffs on imports from China — can raise upwards of \$320 billion annually. This is almost 70 per cent of the annual cost of extending the tax cuts. Trump has also threatened to impose tariffs on the European Union. At the EU's current US import share of 16 per cent, a 25 per cent tariff on the EU would net an additional \$160 billion annually. This would take the tariff loot up to \$480 billion dollars,

potentially financing the entire annual cost of extending the Trump tax cuts.

Where could all of this go wrong? First, the accounting assumes that the volume and price of imports into the US remains unchanged in response to the tariffs. That depends on how much of the tariffs get passed on to the consumers. If importers pass on some or all of the tariffs to consumers, then demand will fall and with it the tariff revenues that the government can collect. This decline in volume will likely become more significant over time as importers and exporters try to find alternative sources and destinations for their goods.

Second, given the extensive supply chain links in North America between the three countries, some of these tariffs will inevitably pass through to consumers which will cause US prices to rise. That may have political costs since one of the key issues in the 2024 election was the cost of living. With midterm elections due in 2026 and wafer-thin Republican majorities in Congress, political opposition to the tariffs will likely emerge if they persist for a significant duration.

Third, countries subjected to tariffs typically retaliate with their own, as Canada has done and Mexico has threatened to do. This will end up being costly for US exporters since these two countries currently account for over 33 per cent of total US exports. This, too, will be politically difficult to sustain.

Given the above, the most likely scenario that may unfold is that Trump will keep the tariff threat alive during the next three to four months to project optimistic budget revenues that can "finance" the extension of the Trump tax cuts. Once Congress passes the budget bill, the administration will begin to look for off-ramps by pointing to symbolic concessions from Canada and Mexico. The China trade war though may be a longer affair.

The writer is Royal Bank Research Professor of Economics, University of British Columbia

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

India and Bangladesh have much to gain from a positive bilateral engagement



MD TOUHID HOSSAIN

RELATIONS BETWEEN BANGLADESH and India have reached a critical juncture following the ouster of the Awami League regime in a student-led mass uprising in July-August 2024. It seems to me that the Indian establishment failed to anticipate the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government. It is, nevertheless, necessary to remind ourselves of the common interests and collaborative possibilities between our two nations. Professor Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Adviser and head of the interim government, and I are willing to work with due seriousness to build on the positive aspects of the bilateral relationship and pragmatically address areas of tension and misunderstanding.

Our position has been clear from the outset: We want a good working relationship with India based on mutual respect. We hope and expect that our counterparts in India will reciprocate our desire. The December visit of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to Dhaka was a step in the right direction. The history of collaboration between our nations goes back to the birth of Bangladesh, and its continuation will be beneficial to the people of both countries.

Beginning with the last decade of the 20th century, India has achieved remarkable feats, be it its vibrant technology sector with global influence or its economy, which is now the fifth-largest in the world. Bangladesh, too, has its areas of noteworthy achievements. Our garments exports are second only to China. Our contribution to UN peacekeeping outnumbers any other

country, providing essential services in hotspots throughout the world. Microcredit models developed here by Professor Yunus, Nobel Laureate, have influenced the creation and growth of a global industry, and been adapted on a massive scale in India.

A lot of noise has been created in India about the treatment of Hindus in Bangladesh. During the vacuum that existed between the fall of the previous regime on August 5, 2024, and the appointment of the interim government, the law and order situation in the country was not under complete control, and untoward incidents did take place. These particularly impacted people closely connected to the previous regime, most of them Muslims, but also including Hindus. On assuming power, the interim government took stern steps against the perpetrators of such crimes. Citizens throughout the country also stepped forward to courageously and successfully protect Hindu families and temples. Unfortunately, the Indian media and cyberspace have continued to create negative hype by publishing and repeating grossly exaggerated and often completely false allegations.

The interim government of Bangladesh is committed to the protection of the rights of every citizen irrespective of their faith, and the Hindus in Bangladesh are equal citizens with equal rights. We were pleased when an independent survey conducted by Voice of America found that nearly two-thirds of our population believed that the treatment of minorities had improved under the interim

government. We seek to be a model for communal harmony for South Asia and beyond. We invite Indian journalists to come and report on what is going on without any restrictions. The Indian public can learn the truth from their unbiased investigations.

The interim government has made sincere attempts to revive SAARC, the regional association that has been defunct for more than a decade. The Indian response so far has not been positive. We don't believe India has anything to fear from this effort. We know it will take a long time to realise the full potential of cooperation among South Asian nations. But a thousand-mile journey begins with a single step. As a first step, can't our leaders simply pose for a photograph together at the next global gathering to signal our long-term commitment to regional collaboration?

Despite challenges, we have seen some hopeful green shoots in the bilateral relationship, such as the recent exchange of fishermen and the signing of a trilateral agreement that will allow Bangladesh to access a small amount of clean hydroelectric energy from Nepal. Let's build on these positive steps to craft a partnership that benefits both of our peoples, the region and the global community. A good start would be stopping the practice of killing unarmed civilians at the border. Our peoples have too much to gain from positive and pragmatic engagement for us not to seize this opportunity.

The writer is foreign adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh

FEBRUARY 6, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

OFFICIALS EXPELED

THE ESPIONAGE CASE has taken a dramatic turn with the expulsion of a Soviet national attached to the USSR embassy. This coincided with the expulsion of an official from the German Democratic Republic and another from the Polish embassy. Coommar Narain, the suspected kingpin, has reportedly named a Polish embassy attache, Jan Haberka, to whom he passed secret documents. It could not, however, be confirmed whether Haberka or some other member of the embassy was deported.

POLICE FIRING

FIVE PERSONS WERE killed and seven injured when the police fired on a 14,000-strong mob,

part of which turned violent, at Bhayander, about 55 km from Bombay. Trouble started when the Sangharsh Seva Samiti of Bhayander launched a rail roko in support of their demands. In several cases the police fired from close range and a majority of those receiving bullet injuries were hit in the head.

MLAS DROPPED

THE NAMES OF the chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh figure in the lists of candidates which were cleared by the Congress Parliamentary Board for the coming Assembly elections. While retaining the chief ministers, the CPB-I has dropped scores of sitting MLAs in these four states

including a large number of ministers and some dissidents.

TRIPURA ATTACK

ARMED TRIBAL NATIONAL Volunteers extremists launched a fresh offensive in two villages in Tripura's West District, shooting down two CPI(M) supporters and injuring one, besides kidnapping three persons, including two student leaders, according to the police. The targets of the extremists, led by "Captain" Kami Debbarma, were the legislator Rucchiram Debbarma, and Tribal Autonomous District Council member Budhari Debbarma. This was the second extremist attack on an MLA in Mandai, scene of the June 1980 disturbances.

Turning point, cutting edge

India is embracing the idea of shifting public money into private universities and firms which are nurturing innovation. This makes for greater bang for the taxpayer’s buck



R A MASHEKAR, SUSAN THOMAS AND AJAY SHAH

FROM THE OUTSET, the dreamers for India had placed a high value upon science, technology, and scientific temper. The first phase of this was centred around the Indian state. Previously private organisations, such as Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) or Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), were brought under the fold of the government. And, for some time, this delivered good results, such as the nuclear test of 1974.

Gradually, we have started seeing the problem of innovation policy (or S&T policy, as it was called in earlier decades) in a more comprehensive, all-of-society way. What we really require is intellectual capabilities in people, in firms, and not just in standalone government organisations. Intellectual power in Indian firms is a precondition for a high GDP. This is where comprehensive national power comes from. It is not enough to have engineers in ISRO who put a craft on the moon. Those engineers should be in universities and private organisations so that this level of imagination, ambition and knowledge is applied pervasively in society.

In France, defence research is funded by the government and happens in private defence firms. In the US, 80 per cent of NASA’s budget is contracted out to private firms and universities. NASA does not make spacecraft: Private vendors do. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) plays a critical role in NASA’s exploration of the solar system. It will come as a surprise to many to realise that JPL was created in a private university (Caltech) in 1936. From 1954 onwards, it has been the recipient of contracts and resources from NASA for its operational role in NASA’s space exploration. The recent accomplishment of Deepseek in China shows how innovative energy comes about in a country: The (private) team that created DeepSeek cut their teeth in computer science doing algorithmic trading. Indians feel a sense of pride when their money is used in ISRO to place a craft on the moon. There will be higher levels of societal gains when knowledge resides in private organisations, and feeds into society.

In December 2024, the three of us wrote a paper on the foundations of science policy in India (https://bit.ly/xkdr_MST_2024). We utilised knowledge from public economics to clarify the intellectual foundations of science policy. We suggested there were big gains in placing taxpayer resources into private firms and universities. And we utilised knowledge from public administration and law to sketch details of implementation, of how to do this contracting-out in the Indian context.

There is a natural connection between risk in research, and contracting out to private persons. Government can contract out the same research problem to multiple implementers who take different pathways. Some pathways would fare poorly, and the flow of money into them would be stopped. Such unfolding of risk is harder when laboratories and bureaucracies are built in government organisations.

When a private firm is working in an



CR Sasikumar

area (for example, an automobile component firm that’s challenged to produce ball bearings of a superior spec), it will try to do the research well, because it also has a direct interest in the knowledge sought to be produced. Such a firm would bring knowledge from its normal operations into the contracted research; it would care deeply about the work and execute it well, and then the knowledge produced through the publicly funded research would spill over into its economic success.

Many in Indian science policy have, of course, been thinking on similar lines. The paradigm shift has been simmering for years. We are at a remarkable moment where the new paradigm is turning into action. An important new organisation, Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), will put out grants at about Rs 2,800 crore a year through new ways. It is likely to break new ground in getting public money to private organisations that will fund early stage research.

Paragraph 79 of the recent budget speech reads: “To implement private sector driven research, development and innovation initiative announced in the July budget, I am now allocating Rs 20,000 crore.” This is an important milestone in the history of Indian science policy.

An article in the *Financial Times* on February 2 says that ISRO will buy launch vehicles made by private persons. Taxpayer money will go to private firms who will do cutting-edge engineering, and the knowledge will feed into civilian applications and global competitiveness.

In recent years, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has worked on using public funding to get more GPUs into private hands, to deepen AI knowl-

When a private firm is working in an area (for example, an automobile component firm that’s challenged to produce ball bearings of a superior spec), it will try to do the research well, because it also has a direct interest in the knowledge sought to be produced. Such a firm would bring knowledge from its normal operations into the contracted research; it would care deeply about the work and execute it well, and then the knowledge produced through the publicly-funded research would spill over into its economic success.

edge in India. In the olden days, taxpayer money would have gone into a government organisation (for example an IIT), and the equipment would have been used by state functionaries. Instead, MEITY has aligned with the new paradigm. They have procured 18,693 GPUs, which will be in operation at multiple private IT infrastructure firms. MEITY will give the use of these GPUs to researchers in Indian private organisations at the price of \$1 per hour. This is the philosophy of buy, not make.

Putting these four developments together, we may cautiously say that 2025 will shape up as an important turning point for Indian science policy. The Indian state is rising out of the concept of using public money to hire researchers who are civil servants, to the concept of delivering public money into private universities and firms where cutting-edge knowledge is produced. This is greater bang for the taxpayer’s buck, as opposed to vertical government science organisations.

The broad idea of contracting out public resources for R&D to private persons is increasingly accepted. How would the implementation work? Research funding is not like ordinary purchasing of (say) pencils where contract performance can be readily tested and audited. As the old saying goes, “If there is no possibility of failure, it’s not research.” The puzzle now lies in developing these new ways. Our paper shows the elements of work required: Changes in legal texts; new versus existing organisations; strategic thinking in public finance; and project planning for the required reforms.

Mashekar is president, Pune International Centre, Thomas and Shah are co-founders at XKDR Forum

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“Pakistan should reaffirm its support for the people of Kashmir. It should also keep the door open for India in case it decides to resolve the Kashmir question through dialogue.” — DAWN, PAKISTAN

Let the money flow

Review of banking regulations is needed to boost liquidity in the economy



ADITYA PURI

INDIA’S GDP IS expected to grow from \$3.7 trillion in 2023-24 to \$7 trillion in 2030-31, which will be fuelled by building on the strong foundation that has already been laid through sound fiscal and monetary policies and world-class physical and digital infrastructure.

Financing India’s capex will require higher savings. The investment required for a \$7-trillion economy will be approximately \$2.5 trillion, which translates to an investment-to-GDP ratio of 34 per cent. Corporates and households are net savers with the government running deficits, limiting the amount of its investments.

The private sector has not been investing its surplus. The share of investment to operating cash flow for listed firms is down to 56 per cent in 2023-24 from a peak of 114 per cent in 2008-09. This could be consequent to a lack of confidence in future demand and the uncertainty caused by geopolitics.

With overseas flows muted, personal savings and investment, including overseas investments, will need to be incentivised. So, how can capital and financial intermediation efficiency be improved?

The large corporate sector is using its own surplus, equity markets, bond markets and bank credit, but MSMEs have not received their share of credit. In the last few years, banks have been incrementally getting 40 per cent or less of household savings as against 50 per cent a few years back, as consumers chase higher returns in pension fund schemes and MFs.

There are preemptions. In the last two years, banks have bought Rs 13 trillion of G-Secs against a deposit inflow of Rs 40 trillion, driven by the need to maintain liquidity coverage (LCR) and statutory liquidity ratios (SLR) as mandated by the RBI on a daily basis rather than weekly average. Banks maintain 115 per cent to avoid breach. Given the low supply of papers from manufacturing companies, which also qualify as assets for LCR, banks buy government bonds to meet LCR.

To maintain some cushion in LCR over the mandated levels, banks end up holding SLR securities of up to 26 per cent against the regulatory requirement of 18 per cent.

Banks are also required to maintain a cash reserve ratio (CRR) of 4 per cent of deposits. So, when one looks at the regulatory preemptions, they are close to 30 per cent of banks’ deposits — 26 per cent on account of LCR and 4 per cent for CRR — reducing the lendable resources for banks, leading to higher lending rates.

Under the proposed LCR guidelines for digital deposits, banks would have to invest even more in liquid assets to meet LCR, which is estimated to be about 2- 2.5 per cent of deposits.

But, do we need both LCR and SLR? Globally, only LCR exists. Most parts of the world include CRR, which earns no interest, as HQLA (High Quality Liquid Assets). The

volatility of deposits calculation and consequent investment of HQLA assets needs to be examined on a bank-specific basis. Basel only recommends, we need to examine.

More efficient cash management by the government has meant that the overall liquidity available to the banking system has decreased since its surplus is parked with the RBI. This is vital for liquidity management since variation in government surpluses leads to large swings in systemic liquidity.

Banks have a priority sector lending (PSL) requirement of 60 per cent plus (this is because on 40 per cent, we have “priority on priority”), a framework drafted ages back that needs to factor in changes in GDP composition and new priorities. We need to ensure PSL pricing reflects credit risk and not pressures to meet the target.

Also, we need to examine the move to cash-flow-based lending and risk-based pricing. Otherwise, large sections of the population will be outside organised finance. Having limits on clean lending or the rate of interest or higher risk weights will not solve the problem, but supervision with extensive use of tech, including AI, will. Also, strict action should be taken against outliers and not the system as a whole.

Credit growth lower than nominal GDP growth is a major concern, and an in-depth review covering markets, regulations, banks and priorities is needed. The review should cover the funding needs of market participants’ liquidity.

Defending the rupee when the reason for weakness is the dollar’s strength needs to be examined. This leads to the reduction of liquidity, an overvalued rupee and no effective shoring-up of the currency.

The credit-to-deposit ratio calculation and its purpose should be examined. Banks need to raise both debt and equity from investors to fund growth, so they need to generate returns. They must be allowed to price for risk and processing costs.

Also, the investments in technology are huge. Technology spending by global banks (9 per cent) has outpaced revenue growth (4 per cent). Indian banks, too, are spending on building tech capabilities, with large banks reporting around 5 per cent share of tech in annual spends. Indian banks also have social responsibility costs that need to be recovered. There are a few examples: Not charging for UPI transactions, which account for a major share of bank volumes, the recovery of network costs and other reasonable bank charges. Since we are looking at international practices, a look at their charges would be a good starter.

The government bond market in India is third in emerging markets and despite the inclusion in global indices, our share is at 3 per cent compared to Indonesia’s 14.5 per cent. This makes a case for easing regulations.

The cash market looks to have adequate liquidity across the yield curve in the secondary market, but not enough in the derivatives market. For further development of the market, we need lower preemption for government securities. A nudge from regulators (IRDAI/PFRDA/SEBI) to large investors for greater use of derivatives along with cash instruments would help.

The writer, former CEO and managing director of HDFC Bank, is senior advisor to Carlyle’s Asia private equity team



REKHA SHARMA

Against his oath

Justice Shekhar Yadav’s comments, refusal to step back, call for SC response

IT HAS BEEN almost two months since Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court made highly objectionable, communal and distasteful remarks against Muslims and in a tone and tenor not in keeping with the dignity of his office. He seems to have forgotten that judgeship is not a blank cheque. It comes with responsibility. A healthy judiciary interrogates itself and must realise that hate speech cannot be couched in nationalism. Justice Hrishikesh Roy, who has recently retired from the Supreme Court, said in an interview (IE, February 1) that whenever such incidents happen, there are few options available with the institution — talking to the individual, holding back work, the in-house inquiry procedure or impeachment. While we await an institutional response in terms of any of the above options, Justice Yadav is holding his ground and refusing to walk his statements back.

On December 8, 2024, speaking at an event in Prayagraj organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on the “Necessity of Uniform Civil Code”, Justice Yadav reportedly used a slur to refer to Muslims. He also reportedly said: “You have a misconception that if a law (UCC) is brought in, it will be against your Shariat, your Islam and your Quran,” Justice Yadav said. “But I want to say

one more thing... whether it is your personal law, our Hindu law, your Quran or whether it is our Gita, as I said we have addressed the ills (*buraaiyan*) in our practices... *kamiyan thi, durust kar liye hain* (the shortcomings have been addressed)... untouchability... sati, jauhar... female foeticide... We have addressed all those issues... Then why are you not doing away with this law... that while your first wife is there... you can have three wives... without her consent... That is not acceptable.”

Following his aforesaid statement, there was an uproar in Parliament that led to 55 Rajya Sabha MPs moving for the initiation of impeachment proceedings against him. His comments raised many an eyebrow in the judicial fraternity as well. On the institutional front, he was reportedly summoned by the Supreme Court collegium and was asked to tender a public apology for his remarks. The Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court also, at the instance of the Chief Justice of India, sought his comments on the speech. In response, Justice Yadav is reported to have maintained that he had not violated any principle of judicial conduct and that the judiciary, often unable to defend itself publicly, requires support from senior members of the fraternity.

It appears, then, that Justice Yadav is not

in the least remorseful over his statement and wants to brazen it out. One would have thought that after all the storm that his remarks had created he would have looked within. On the contrary, he wants the senior members of the judicial fraternity to come to his aid. In light of his stand, it is now up to the Supreme Court to take a call on his reported statement, every word of which was against the core values of the Constitution, founded on the principles of equality, justice, fraternity and secularism. When he says that this country will function as per the wishes of the majority community, Justice Yadav is turning the Constitution on its head. He is clearly and unequivocally adding his voice to all those who are clamouring to make India a Hindu Rashtra. And, when he talks in terms of “we” and “they”, “our Gita” and “their Quran”, he is clearly othering Muslims. What Justice Yadav reportedly said at the VHP event was not only against the Constitution, it was also in violation of the oath of office that he took before assuming charge as a high court judge: He solemnly affirmed that he would bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India and would perform the duties of his office to the best of his abilities without fear or favour, affection or ill will. Equality, liberty and fraternity are the

pillars of the Constitution — what was allegedly said was advocating the worst sort of tyranny.

For over a decade, we have been witnessing some right-wing politicians and so-called “gurus” giving clarion calls to make India a Hindu Rashtra. Unfortunately, this tendency seems to be spreading in the judiciary too — though, at present, at a minuscule level. Many believe that it was wholly inappropriate for Justice Yadav to have attended an event organised by VHP, which bears the tag of a Hindu organisation advocating a Hindu Rashtra. A judge is bound by his oath of office. He swears in the name of the Constitution of India and when he does so, thereafter, as a judge, ceases to be a Hindu or Muslim or of any caste or creed. The Constitution of India becomes his religion, his faith. He must remember what Baron de Montesquieu said: “There is no tyranny crueller than that which is perpetuated under the shield of law and in the name of justice.”

Justice Yadav’s defiance and his refusal to step back is tantamount to throwing a challenge to the Supreme Court collegium. It is up to the Supreme Court to respond.

The writer is a former judge of the Delhi High Court

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NOT ALL GOOD

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Learning with AI’ (IE, February 5). As the use of AI is on the rise, it is important to keep in mind its uses and limitations. Its application in lesson planning, performance evaluation, and interactive learning for students has advantages. However, there are concerns about the reliability and validity of AI-generated information. With AI, students could learn faster and better. But we must be careful not to expand its use to analysis and problem solving. Students should hone their creative skills independent of any technological intervention.

YG Chouksey, Pune

CURBING MENACE

THIS REFERS TO the report, “First under Trump 2.0: US deport 205 ‘illegal’ Indian migrants, flown back in military plane” (IE, February 5). The US President is walking the talk on the promises he made. The deportation is, hence, on expected lines. The Indian government ought to develop a roadmap to deal with the repatriates. Steps must be taken to weed out perpetrators who facilitate people’s journey to the States through the Dunki route. Further, generation of adequate job facilities, investment in healthcare and education are the need of the hour.

Aanya Singhal, Noida

THIS REFERS TO the report, “First under Trump 2.0: US deport 205 ‘illegal’ Indian migrants, flown back in military plane” (IE, February 5). The deportation of Indian migrants from the US, particularly through a US military aircraft, highlights India’s position in the global migration landscape and raises deeper concerns. It marks the uncomfortable truth that India, despite being one of the world’s largest economies, has become a significant source of illegal migrants to the US. While the government’s diplomatic approach to avoid confrontation with the US is pragmatic, a more comprehensive plan is needed. India must create an ecosystem that encourages and enables legal migration. It must also focus on addressing the drivers of illegal migration, such as rampant unemployment.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

NO EXCUSES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Seize the lull’ (IE, February 5). Manipur is engulfed in the chaos created by extremists. CM N Biren Singh has failed to control the situation. But the people of the state deserve to live in harmony, as in other states of the country. Efforts at reconciliation must be accelerated to bridge the differences between Meiteis and Kukis. The state has no dearth of resources to carry this out. There is no excuse.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

TTD Board transfers 18 employees over ‘non-Hindu’ activities

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 5

THE TIRUMALA Tirupati Devasthanam’ (TTD) Board, which manages Andhra Pradesh’s Sri Venkateswara temple has transferred 18 employees “practicing and participating in non-Hindu religious activities”, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Six employees are teachers at various TTD institutes, according to the board’s executive order released on February 1. The others include a deputy executive officer (welfare), an assistant executive officer, an assistant technical officer (electrical), a hostel worker, two electricians, and two nurses. Andhra Pradesh Minister for Endowments Anam Ramanarayana Reddy said employees “practicing non-Hindu religious activities” means either they are either Christians or Muslims. “This comes months after the board had decided to transfer non-Hindus and ban political speeches at a meeting held in November—the first held by the TTD since its incumbent chairman, B R Naidu, was sworn in that month.

“Their religious alignment or beliefs do not align with TTD’s Hindu practices, hence the transfers. All of them will be suitably posted to similar positions elsewhere,” the minister said.

Among those transferred is Dr K V Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, a pro-

fessor at the SV Ayurvedic College at Tirupati, K Sujatha and G Asuntha, lecturer and principal at the SPW Degree and PG College at Tirupati; K Prathap is a lecturer at SGS Arts College; K Manekshaw Dayan, a lecturer at S V Arts College; and Dr Renu Dixit, principal at SV Ayurvedic College at Tirupati. Also transferred are A Ananda Raju, deputy executive officer (welfare department, TTD), and A Rajashekar Babu, Assistant EO (Auctions).

In the order issued by TTD Executive Officer J Syamala Rao, the board says that the 18 employees have been transferred to other posts. It goes on to say that as “dedicated servants of the Lord Venkateshwara and the esteemed TTD, all the TTD employees are committed to maintain the sanctity of the temple by upholding the traditions and values that have been followed for centuries and to uphold the beliefs and sentiments of the devotees”.

The order states that the 18 employees have been identified as those practicing and participating in non-Hindu religious activities even though “they have taken the oath before Lord Venkateshwara that they will follow the Hindu dharma and traditions and also stating that they will not follow non-Hindu religious activities in compliance of Rule 9 (vi) issued in GO No 1060 of Revenue Department (Endowments) on October 24, 1989”.

Rahul: PM spoke for 1.5 hours in House, no word on caste census

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, FEBRUARY 5

THE CONGRESS wants “participation and control and not merely representation” of India’s oppressed classes, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi said Friday, as he accused PM Narendra Modi, the RSS, and the BJP of “not wanting a nationwide caste census because they had been afraid of telling the truth”.

“While speaking in Parliament on Tuesday, I talked about technology and also talked about participation of Dalits, backwards and tribals. I also reiterated the demand for caste census,” Gandhi said. He was speaking at an event in Patna on the 130th birth anniversary of freedom fighter, former minister and Dalit icon Jaglal Choudhary.

This was Gandhi’s second visit to the poll-bound state in less than a month. He went on to say that PM Modi spoke for 1.5 hours in his reply in Parliament during the Budget Session “but didn’t mention caste census even once”.

“This is only because Narendra Modi, BJP and RSS do not want caste census,” he further said. “They do not want to tell you the truth about the (representation and participation) of Dalits, backwards and tribals.”

The key, according to him, was “participation and control (over the system)—and not mere participation”. He also castigated the Bihar caste survey, released



LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in Patna on Wednesday. ANI

last year, instead pitching the Telangana caste survey, released by the state’s Congress government, as a possible model.

While the Bihar caste survey was released in 2023 – while the Congress was part of the ruling dispensation in the state – the one in Telangana was released by its A Revanth Reddy government earlier this week.

Gandhi took a dig at the RSS, claiming that while the outfit and its elders are now seen “folding their hands before BR Ambedkar but they would attack the values propounded and championed by Babasaheb”.

“They would so attack the Constitution indirectly. Scholarship for Dalits would be discontinued,” he said.

According to the LoP, the Constitution “reflects the thousands of years of pain and suffering of the Dalit, the backwards

and the tribals”.

“This book will tell you how you were suppressed and crushed. But this book will also guide you to your future. This alone can save you and give you participation. But BJP and RSS people want to do away with the Constitution,” he claimed.

The “only solution”, according to Gandhi, was a nationwide caste census “that would give absolute clarity, not just on numbers but also on caste and community-wise details on their participation in government and private sectors”.

India’s education system too makes very little mention of Dalits, he admitted.

“I studied in the Indian education system. I could barely come across two-three lines on Dalit. Will these two lines address your pain? Don’t Dalits have a history?” Gandhi asked.

Tripura now ‘land-linked’, peace restored under BJP rule: Shah

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, FEBRUARY 5

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah Wednesday said that under the BJP-led government, Tripura has been transformed into a “land-linked state” from a “land-locked” state, significant work was done to end corruption and the Centre signed pacts with outlawed groups to ensure peace.

Shah was virtually addressing from New Delhi an event for distribution of offers of appointment to candidates in different posts of allopathy, homeopathy and ayurvedic pharmacists, laboratory technicians and Multi Tasking Staff (MPW).

He said, “One might wonder how 2,800 youths getting jobs would change an epoch. Let us remember that some time back, when the Communist party ruled here, it was very important to join the Communist cadre force. Only then, one could get a job. On the contrary, Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha has given 2,806 youths government jobs without any partisan attitude, corruption, recommendation or any bias and has given them the opportunity to join the state’s development journey”.

“Once upon a time, Tripura was known as a land-locked state. Today, it is known as a land-linked state,” he said.

“For overall development, Tripura is now connected



Union Home Minister Amit Shah

through airways, land, rail and waterways. After the BJP came to power in Tripura, the government has worked to end corruption and unrest. PM Narendra Modi’s government, Modi himself, the Union and state governments are fully committed towards Tripura’s welfare,” the Union home minister said.

Terming the appointments a new beginning in the lives of the youths, the minister said, “As soon as they get the offer letters, they are part of Modi’s Viksit Tripura, Viksit Bharat”, and appreciated the Tripura Public Service Commission, Teachers Recruitment Board, Joint Recruitment Board of Tripura for conducting the recruitment with professionalism and success.

Shah pointed out that in the past 10 years, central ministers have made over 700 visits to the northeastern region.

“Northeast was known for terrorism, infiltration, blockade, drugs, armed trafficking, corruption and national disturbances. Today, it is known for development, connectivity, infrastructure, education, investment and agriculture development,” he said.

‘Take strong action on terror, infiltration in J&K’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday reviewed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir again and directed all security agencies “to take more stringent action on infiltration and acts of terror with a ruthless approach”, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

Chairing a high-level review meeting on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir at his residence, Shah appreciated the efforts of the security agencies in significantly improving all parameters of the security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah said the narcotics network is providing support to infiltrators and terrorists. “There is a need to take prompt action against terror funding from the narcotics trade with alacrity and rigour,” he said. Shah also asked all the agencies to step up the fight against terrorism by aiming for the ‘zero infiltration’ goal. “The government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to completely wipe out terrorism from J&K. It should be our goal to uproot the existence of terrorists,” he said, adding that the terrorism ecosystem in J&K has significantly weakened.

Majhi govt launches scheme similar to BJD’s initiative, months after criticising it

SUJIT BISOIYI
BHUBANESWAR, FEBRUARY 5

AFTER MONTHS of criticising the ‘Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha’ of the previous Naveen Patnaik government while in Opposition, the BJP appears to have launched a similar rural development scheme. On Wednesday, Chief Minister Mohan Majhi launched ‘Viksit Gaon, Viksit Odisha’ scheme – a scheme that promises to grade and strengthen rural infrastructure.

While launching the scheme Wednesday, Majhi said that it aims for upgrading basic rural infrastructure and strengthening rural connectivity in the

state.

“Under the scheme, emphasis would be given for accelerating development of tribal and inaccessible pockets. The government will spend ₹5,000 crore in five years under the scheme. Projects sanctioned by gram sabhas will only be taken into consideration to take up under the new scheme,” said Majhi.

The scheme appears to bear some resemblance to the one launched by Patnaik’s Biju Janata Dal government in 2023. Called ‘Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha’ (our Odisha, new Odisha), the scheme was a variation of the ‘Ama Gaon, Ama Vikash’ (our village, our development) and promised financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh to panchayats for protecting places of worship, upgrading sites of historical significance, and improving rural infrastructure and digital access.


Significantly, the ‘Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha’ rolled out by Patnaik ahead of last year’s assembly polls, built on the success of the ‘Ama Gaon, Ama Vikash’. The then government had hoped it would help it tide over the growing anti-incumbency in the state ahead of 2024 assembly polls, although it was unsuccessful.


According to government officials, the ‘Viksit Gaon, Viksit Odisha’ scheme will be “catalyst to fulfil the needs of the people in rural areas”. The scheme also has provisions for the development of smaller and lesser-known places with tourism potential, and upgrading education and sports infrastructure among other public welfare projects.

Plea to Andhra for resolution against uranium mining

Hyderabad: Three months after Andhra Pradesh’s N. Chandrababu Naidu government halted uranium exploration inside the Kappatralla reserve forest in Kumool district in Andhra Pradesh, the Human Rights Forum (HRF) in the state has urged the government to pass a resolution assuring that there would be no uranium exploration in the area. In a statement, the HRF in Andhra Pradesh, which visited the area on February 2, demanded that the state government adopt a resolution in the Assembly stating in unambiguous terms that no attempt will be made towards survey and exploration for uranium deposits in the Kappatralla reserve.

ENS

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Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society
State Rural Livelihoods Mission, Bihar
Rural Development Department,
Advertisement No. BRLPS07/2024-25
Walk-in-Interview
Join a team of committed and passionate Development Professionals.



Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), an autonomous society under Rural Development Department, Govt. of Bihar has been designated as State Rural Livelihoods Mission by Rural Development Department, Government of Bihar to scale up the **"JEEVIKA"** model in all 534 Blocks of 38 Districts in Bihar under National Rural Livelihood Mission.

So far JEEVIKA has been able to reach out to nearly **135 Lakh rural poor households** by organizing them into **10.63 Lakh women Self Help Groups** under **71000 Village Organizations** and **1600 Cluster Level Federations**. These institutions have generated nearly **Rs. 1350 Crore** as their own saving and have leveraged **more than Rs. 46000 Crore** from the Banks.

Bring smile to the faces of poor in Bihar

The project has many specific requirements where services of experienced professionals are must. Therefore, project needs to hire reputed and experienced Consultant as follows: -

Sl. No.	Position Name	No.
01.	MIS Consultant – GIS Expert	01
02.	Field Executive	04


Date of Walk in Interview	13 th February 2025
Reporting Time for Registration	10 AM to 12.00 Noon
Venue	Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), Annexe -II, Vidyut Bhawan (Near income tax round about), Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg (Bailey Road), Patna-800021

Notes:

- Official website <https://brlps.in> may be visited to know detailed eligibility criteria and other details.
- Candidates are requested to check the websites periodically for updates and other announcements.
- BRLPS reserves the right to cancel this recruitment process, fully or partially, at any stage at its discretion.
- The duration of the assignment will be for 11 months as per part time basis, starting from the date of signing the appointment letter.
- The interested candidates are requested to appear for the Walk-in-Interview on 13th February 2025 with their CV in three sets along with 3 recent passport size colour photographs and all the relevant original documents with self-attested photocopies of the same which includes educational qualification certificates, experience certificates etc. at the office of the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), Annexe-II, Vidyut Bhawan (Near income tax round about), Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg (Bailey Road), Patna-800021.

Disclaimers: Mere eligibility does not guarantee a job. BRLPS reserves the right to shortlist candidates based on qualification and relevant experience.

Canvassing in any form shall be a disqualification.
This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also
PR. No.018730 (B&C) 2024-25
सुरक्षित जीवन अपनाओ, अपनी नियमित एच.आई.वी. जाँच कराओ।
Chief Executive Officer-cum- Mission Director,
Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**
Department of Information and Public Relations: Vijayawada
CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER NOTICE
Amendment to this office Tender Notice No.008125/MR /2024, Dt.16.01.2025, Amendment No.1, Dt.05-02-2025
This Office invited sealed tenders from reputed News and Communication Agencies which can offer an extensive array of news services across all media formats i.e., Print Media, Electronic Media, Digital Media and Social Media. Due to administrative reasons certain Terms and Conditions are amended Tender forms (Revised RFP) will be issued from 06.02.2025.
Last date for issue of Tender forms 10.03.2025 upto 5.00 PM. Last date for submitting the sealed tenders 11.03.2025 upto 12.00 Noon. The bidders who have already purchased RFP shall obtain the Revised RFP from this office. Further details contact the Additional Director, Phone No.9121215269.
No: 15313/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22 Dt: 05/02/2025 **Sd/-DIRECTOR**

कार्यालय अति- मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, रमण-टॉक
अपनांक :- फैलिंग 24-25/डी-4079-4088 दिनांक:- 28.01.2025
श्रीमान निदेशक महोदय,
मुख्य एवं सार्वजनिक विभाग, राजधानी, जयपुर।
Email ID: adv.dipr@rajasthan.gov.in Mobile No.: 9414091963, 9462941228
विषय :- संशोधन निविदा सूचना संख्या: 12/2024-25 के लिए नोट प्रकाशन करने का।
इस कार्यालय द्वारा जारी निविदा सूचना संख्या 12/2024-25 परांक 3882-91 दिनांक 08.1.2024 के द्वारा जारी की गई है। विस्तृत क्रम संख्या 01 अर्थात् कार्य Construction of Soorval to Kustala Savai Madhopur Bye Pass को BOQ में जोटे सेट में पर पुनः BOQ अलग करके हेतु निर्माण की विधियों में निम्नानुसार संशोधन किया जाता है:- Old RO. No. DIPR/C/538/2025

विवरण	पूर्व में प्रकाशित विवरण	संशोधित विवरण
निविदा आवेदन डाउन लोड करने की तारीख (वेबसाइट पर) एवं निविदा प्रवेश जमा करने की तारीख (वेबसाइट पर)	दिनांक 15.01.2025 से 11.00 बजे से दिनांक 17.02.2025 को सायं 06.00 बजे तक	दिनांक 15.01.2025 से 11.00 बजे से दिनांक 27.02.2025 को सायं 06.00 बजे तक
फ्री बिड का आवेदन	प्रतिबिंदु निर्माण का आवेदन दिनांक 30.01.2025 एवं फेरित निविदा के दिनांक 29.01.2025 को रात तक 4.00 बजे तक	प्रतिबिंदु निर्माण का आवेदन दिनांक 07.02.2025 एवं फेरित निविदा के दिनांक 06.02.2025 को रात तक 4.00 बजे तक
ऑन लाइन तकनीकी निविदा खोलने की तारीख	दिनांक 18.02.2025 प्रातः 12.00 बजे	दिनांक 28.02.2025 प्रातः 12.00 बजे

ऑन लाइन तकनीकी निविदा खोलने की तारीख दिनांक को जे.आई.सी. चक्रा के।
संशोधन/संशोधन के लिए पुनः प्रकाशन के लिए, प्रकाशित करें।

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, GWALIOR (M.P.)
Narayankrishnan Shejwalkar Bhawan, Near Taran Pushkar, City Centre, Gwalior
Tel No. : 0751-2438300, 4080352, Fax No. : 0751-2434249
NIT No. 2025-UAD-398977-1/MPGMC/37/24X9/1/PHE/2025 Gwalior, Date : 28.01.2025
जलसापेक्ष RO इन्फ्रैस्ट्रक्चर **Notice Inviting Tender** दिनांक 04-02-2025
On behalf of Gwalior Municipal Corporation, M.P. online percentage rate bids for the following work are invited on portal <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> from registered Contractors and competent firms.

Description of works	Probable Amount (In Rs.)	Completion Period (In Days)
Survey and Design of laying of sewer network including Providing, Laying, Testing and Commissioning of sewer lines in uncovered and different Area of Ward No. 39, 42 & 43 in Dakshin Vidhansabha.	1,79,05,511.00	06 months Excluding rainy season

Interested bidders can view the NIT of portal <http://mptenders.gov.in>. The bid document can be purchased only on online from dated 28.01.2025 to 28.02.2025 and can be submitted 28.02.2025 up to 5.30 PM.
Executive Engineer,
Water Supply, Gwalior Municipal Corporation, Gwalior

PROVISION OF TRACK CIRCUITS AT ALIPURDUAR DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No. S&T/APD/23
Dated: 03-02-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **E-Tender No. AP-ST-23-2024-25.** Name of work: Alipurduar Division: Provision of Track circuits using MSDAC at critical locations, such as L/3 and L/4 at Binnaguri station. **Tender Value: ₹1,17,57,702/-.** Earnest Money: ₹2,08,800/- Date & Time of Closing of Tender: 15.00 hrs. of 28-02-2025 & opening at 28-02-2025 after closing E-Tender. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in **DRM (S&T), Alipurduar Division**
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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**Govt. of Bihar**
Urban Development & Housing Department
Office of the Executive Engineer, Urban Development Division , Kankarbagh,
SBD Based detailed Notice Inviting Tender (through e-procurement mode only-www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
(only e-tendering system through website : www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
Local/ National Competitive Bidding (Re-Tender) NIT No.:- 18/E/KAN/2024-25

1.	Designation and Address of the Advertiser	: Executive Engineer, Urban Development Division, Kankarbagh, PMC
2.	Date of issue of Notice Inviting E-Tender	: 04-02-2025
3.	Period for download of Tender Document	: 19-02-2025 (10.00AM) to 26-02-2025 (03:00PM)
4.	Date, Time & Place of Pre Bid meeting	: 22-02-2025
5.	Last Date of uploading tender documents by bidder.	: 27-02-2025 (03.00 PM)
6.	Date, time and place for submission of Original instrument of EMD (in the case of BG)	: 27-02-2025 (03:00PM)
7.	Opening of Technical Bid	: Kankarbagh Division 28-02-2025 (04.00PM)
8.	Details of work:-	

Bid No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost/ECV (In Rupees)	Amount of Earnest money (In Rupees) Online/Offline mode	Cost of BOQ in Rs. (Non Refundable payment only through online mode)	Bid processing fee in Rs. (Non Refundable payment only Online mode in favor of Beltron)	Time of Completion	EMD Payable at
1.	Road Restoration/Construction of Damaged Road in Different Ward Under Kankarbagh Anchal (package-1)	14,51,35,135	24,51,400	10000.00	5900.00	6 Months	EE, Kankarbagh Division, PMC
2.	Road Restoration/Construction of Damaged Road in Different Ward Under Kankarbagh Anchal (package-2)	11,13,59,677	21,13,600	10000.00	5900.00	6 Months	EE, Kankarbagh Division, PMC

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar
Executive Engineer,
Urban Development Division, Kankarbagh, Patna
PR. No.18801 (B & C) 2024-25
बिहार में शराब का व्यापार, बिक्री एवं सेवन अवैध है। इससे संबंधित शिकायत इस नंबर पर दर्ज करायें, आपकी जानकारी गुप्त रखी जाएगी।
टॉल फ्री नं- 15545 या 1800 345 6268

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State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) Bihar
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Recruitment for Steno-cum-PA
Join a team of committed and passionate Development Professionals.



Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), an autonomous society under Rural Development Department, Govt. of Bihar has been designated as State Rural Livelihoods Mission by Rural Development Department, Government of Bihar to scale up the **"JEEVIKA"** model in all 534 Blocks of 38 Districts in Bihar under National Rural Livelihood Mission.

So far JEEVIKA has been able to reach out to nearly **135 Lakh rural poor households** by organizing them into **10.63 Lakh women Self Help Groups** under **71000 Village Organizations** and **1600 Cluster Level Federations**. These institutions have generated nearly **Rs. 1350 Crore** as their own saving and have leveraged **more than Rs. 46000 Crore** from the Banks.

Bring smile to the faces of poor in Bihar

Applications are invited for the following positions under Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (Jeevika):

Sl.	Position Name	No.	Remuneration (Monthly CTS* - Excluding other benefits**)
01.	Steno-cum-Personal Assistant at State Level	03	₹26218/- to ₹ 37664/-

Last Date for Submission of Online Application **20.02.2025**

Notes:

- Official website <http://brlps.in/Career> may be visited to apply online and to know detailed eligibility criteria and other details including category of vacancies. All communication will be made through website only. The link for receiving of application will be activated from 05.02.2025. The Last date for receiving of application is 20.02.2025.
- SLP (C) has been filed by the State Government before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, New Delhi against the order passed on date - 20.06.24 by Hon'ble Patna High Court in CWJC No. 16760/2023 Gaurav Kumar and others vs. State of Bihar and others and all other related matters. Therefore, applicants should be aware that the reservation wise vacancy in the published vacancy will be affected by the outcome of the order passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, New Delhi in the SLP filed by the Government of Bihar.
- Candidates belonging to BC, EBC, EWS & Unreserved categories shall have to pay a non-refundable application fee of Rs. 500/- (Rs. Five Hundred Only). Candidates belonging to SC, ST and Divyang (PH) categories shall pay a non-refundable application fee of Rs. 200/- (Rs. Two Hundred Only). Reservation facility would be applicable only to the Bihar domicile candidates. Application fee has to be paid through online only while registering online. The application fee is exclusive of Bank charges, wherever applicable. Fees once paid is non-refundable and non-adjustable.

Disclaimers: Mere eligibility does not guarantee a job.

This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also
PR. No.018732 (B&C) 2024-25
सुरक्षित जीवन अपनाओ, अपनी नियमित एच.आई.वी. जाँच कराओ।
Chief Executive Officer-cum- Mission Director,
Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,Shyam Sunder Dhamija S/O, Gela Ram Dhamija R/o 2/261 First Floor, Subhash Nagar, New Delhi 110027 have changed my name to Shyam Dhamija for all purposes

I,hitherto have known as SAPNA W/o Vidyasagar Choudhary, R/o Flat No.-1505 Tower B15, Eco Vill-1, Plot No 8, Sec-1, Greater Noida West BG Nagar U.P. 201306 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sapna Choudhary.

I,Varun Bhargava,H.No.-509,1st Floor,Sector-22B,Molahera(65), Gurgaon(Haryana),have changed my Minor-Daughter name,from Ahana to Ahana Bhargava.

I,VIJAY GUPTA,S/O BHAGWAT PRASAD GUPTA,R/o B-2/306,UG-2, Ramprastha Colony, Ghaziabad(UP)have changed my name to VIJAY KUMAR GUPTA.

I,Suman Bala Mohin, D/o,Chunni Lal Khurana,R/o B-2/306,Mayur Apartment, Sector-9,Rohini, Delhi 110085,have changed my name to Suman Mohin.

I,Shweta Sayal,W/o-Rajiv Sayal R/o Flat no L-103,BPTP-Park Floors-1,Sector-77,Nimka(96), Faridabad,Haryana 121004,have changed my name,from Shweta Sayal to Shweta Roy,for all,future purpose.

I,Shivani Mittal W/o Sandeep Mangla,H.No-537/18,Civil Lines,Baraf Khana,Gurgaon(Haryana) - 122001,have changed my name to Shivani Mangla.

I,Sanyukta Gupta,W/O Nidhish Saxena,R/O C-901,Beverly Hills Society,Hinjewadi Phase-1,Dange Chowk Road,Hinjivadi, Pune,Maharashtra-411057,have changed my,name to Sanyukta Saxena.

I,Rameshwar Madheshia,S/o-Hari Sah Gupta,H.No-3942,Block-D1,Sanjay-colony Sector-23, Faridabad,Haryana-121005,have changed my name to Rameshwar Gupta.

I,Ramesh Chand,S/o-Asha Ram,R/o-H.No.799,Kundli Sonipat,Haryana-131028,that name of mine has been wrongly written as Ramesh in my 10th-class marksheet.The actual name of mine is Ramesh Chand respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

I,Sushma Kharb,W/o Manoj Kumar R/o,Quarter No.E-65A, Railway-Colony Railway Station, Rohtak(Haryana)-124001,have changed my name to Sushma Devi.

I,NEHARIKA GUPTA,W/o-Vikas Sharma,R/O-119/5,Sai-Nagar, Meethapur-Extension, Badarpur New-Delhi-110044,have changed my name NEHARIKA SHARMA.

I,Manoj Rawat,S/O Meharwan Singh Rawat,Flat.No.G1 HIG Plot no.267,Niti-Khand-I Indirapuram Ghaziabad-201014,UTTAR PRADESH,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO Manoj Singh Rawat,FOR ALL,FUTURE PURPOSE.

I,MAZAHIR KAREEM,S/O QAYAMUDDIN,R/O,H.No.C-14, THIRD-FLOOR,ABUL-FAZAL ENCLAVE-1,JAMIA-NAGAR, OKHLA,NEW-DELHI-110025.INFORM THAT GIVEN NAME- MAZAHIR KARIM,FOR ALL PURPOSE.

I,KANEZ RAZA,w/o-Ali Javed H.no.212 K,Mohalla Chhewra,Amroha,Amroha,Uttar Pradesh-244221,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TANZEEM FATMA.

I,Harshit Agarwal,S/o-Brij Kishore R/O N-404,Aditya-Mega City,Indirapuram,Ghaziabad.U P-201014,have changed my son name,form Sholk Agarwal to Shlok Agarwal,permanantly.

I,Rajina Begam, spouse of Akkas Ali, resident of at Village & PO - Rosulpur, PS-Nabagram, District-Murshidabad, State- West Bengal,Pin-742184, have changed my name from Rajina Begam to Rajina Begam vide Affidavit dated 03/02/2025 before Notary Public, District Court Srinagar, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

I,ABBASI SABIHA AKBAR ALI,W/O MAZAHIR KARIM,R/O H.NO.C-14, 3RD FLOOR, ABUL FAZAL ENCLAVE PART-1,JAMIA-NAGAR, OKHLA, NEW DELHI-110025. INFORM THAT GIVEN NAME SABIHA, FOR ALL PURPOSE.

I,Rajender S/o Shimbhu Dayal, Village Nangal Pipa PO Kamania Distt.Mahendergarh (Haryana) is Permanent resident of said Address and I have change my name Rajender to Rajender Kumar.

I,RAMESH MEHTA, S/O RADHEY SHYAM MEHTA resident of HOUSE NO-90, OLD GANDHI NAGAR GHAZIABAD UTTAR PRADESH-201001 have changed my name from RAMESH MEHTA to RAMESH CHANDRA MEHTA for all future purposes

I,MEDHAVI D/o Dheeraj Saxena, R/o B-39/2, Block-B, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MEDHAVI BHATNAGAR

I,Prince S/o Sh.Vijay Kumar Singh,R/o-H.No-8,Tigaon-Road,Near Law College, Shrimurti-Enclave, Jasana, Faridabad,HR-121101,I,inform that my father's name Vijay Singh is wrongly-mention in my School Certificate,but the correct name is Vijay Kumar Singh.

I,JYOTI DEVI W/o Prameshwar Singh, R/o C-20, Ashoka Enclave Part-2, Sector-37, Faridabad, Haryana-121003 have changed my name to JYOTI KUMARI for all purposes.

I,M PARVESH S/O BABU KHAN R/O 5165/1 PHATAK HAKIM MEHMOOD KHAN BALLIMARAN, DELHI-110006, have changed my name to MOHAMMAD PARVEZ Permanently

I,Harish Kumar s/o Dharambir R/o Gali no 1 Friends colony najafgarh road opposite sector 09 police post Bahadurgarh haryana 124507 have changed my name to Harsh saini for all future purposes

I,Asit Kumar, S/O Umesh Chandra Choudhury, resident of House No 127, Gali No 3, Pradhan Enclave, Block-D, Burari, North Delhi, Delhi-110084, have changed my daughter's name from Aashvi Kumari to Aradhyha Kumari. Henceforth my daughter will be known by the name of Aradhyha Kumari for all future purposes.

I,Akansha Gupta W/o Amit Gupta, R/o B-1, Royal Court CGHS, Plot No. 2, Sector 39, Gurgaon, Haryana 122001, have change my name to Akansha Jain Gupta

I, Anil Dixit S/o Raghubir Prasad Dixit R/o Victoria-B 901, Grand Omaxe, Sec-93B, Noida UP- 201301, Inform that My Builder Buyer Agreement Issued By Omaxe Ltd Against the Unit No. Victoria-B-901, Grand Omaxe Project is misplaced somewhere. Any person who finds it, please return it Omaxe Ltd. 7.L.S.C Kalkaji New Delhi-110019 Or Call No-011-41896680, 011-41629900

Here, I declare that myself Shailender S. Baliwal S/o Ram Sarup Singh R/o 47 Anand Lok, 5th Milestone Ruktee Road Modi Puram Meerut 250110, have lost my property allotment letter of Flat no. C6/1201, Supertech Eco Village-1, Greater Noida sector-1. Its use by anyone else anywhere will be illegal and unlawful.

I Reetika Madan W/O Late Mr. Pradeep Kumar Madan D/O Late Mr. Maharaj Kumar Kapur R/O C-3 Greater Kailash Endclave-1, 1st Floor New Delhi have lost original Registered papers of my house and Relinquishment deed from my daughters in favour of Reetika Madan during the whitewash of my house. If anybody found contact within 15 days. If anybody try to misuse the papers will face legal action.

I look at every side before taking a side. Inform your opinion with insightful perspectives.

indianexpress.com

The Indian EXPRESS JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that Mr Anil Jain & Mrs Neelu Jain are the lawful owners of property bearing Unit No. 1502, 15th Floor, Tower-76, Cohan Residences, Sector-90A, Gurgaon. They have entered into an agreement with Mrs Sonali Mishra & Mr Ankit Tannay to sell the Shiv Puram/Village Kishorpur, Post Office Chanderi-District-Palwal (Haryana), have changed my name to Amit Dagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the general public that an Original Possession Letter dated 19.04.2024 of Plot no. 131, Spring Valley, Sector- 35, Sohna, Gurugram, Haryana, executed between M/s Vibhor Home Developers Private Limited and Mr. Khaminder Bhardwaj S/o Rajesh Bhardwaj & Mrs. Kaushiki Bhardwaj W/o R/o A-114, Shastri Nagar Delhi -110052 is lost and if any person is found using the above-mentioned document shall be illegal and the person shall be held liable for the same.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concerned that Late Brigadier UC Chaturvedi & Late Mrs Moonishai Chaturvedi were the Joint owners of Flat No 132, Vijayant Enclave, Sector-29, Noida (Uttar Pradesh). The WILL of Late Brigadier UC Chaturvedi was executed on 25 November 2014 and was registered in the office of Sub Registrar (one) Noida vide Register Number 3 Volume Number 481 Page Numbers 369 to 380 Serial Number 2368. With the help of this Notice it is informed that said property is now to be transferred as per WILL of Late Brigadier UC Chaturvedi in favour of son Col Hemant Chaturvedi (65.91% share) R/O Flat No 404, 'A' Tower, Provius Laboni, Crossing Republic, Ghaziabad (UP), daughter Mrs Punam Parit (22.24% share) R/o Flat No 1519, Park View Colony, Sector-29, Noida and to Grandson Nishant Chaturvedi (11.85% share) R/o A-15, Hasmukhi Garden Estate, S.D. Road, Near IT Park, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. If anyone have/has any objection he/she may file his/her objection pertaining to this matter in the Group Housing Department of Noida Authority along with sufficient proofs within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

SITUATION VACANT

ACADEMIC

BALAJI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Affiliated to CRSU Jind & Approved by NRC, NCTE- New Delhi

Adarsh Nagar, Ballabgarh, Faridabad, Haryana - 121004

M.: 9650415839, 9310002234

Email : balajiedu244@gmail.com

TEACHING STAFF :

Principal - (01)

Assistant Professor (Pedagogy of Economics) - (01)

Assistant Professor (Pedagogy of Commerce) - (01)

Assistant Professor (Pedagogy of Mathematics) - (01)

Assistant Professor (Pedagogy of Sanskrit) - (01)

Assistant Professor (Pedagogy of Music) - (01)

Assistant Professor (Health & Physical Education) - (01)

Assistant Professor (Fine Arts) - (01)

Also Required following Non-Teaching Staff :

Office Manager - (01)

Office-cum-Account Assistant - (01)

Lab Assistant (BCA with 55% Marks) (01)

Office Assistant-cum-Computer Operator - (01)

Store Keeper - (01)

Technical Assistant - (01)

Lab Attendant - (01)

Helpers / Support Staff - (02)

Eligibility and Salary as per the norms of State Govt. and CRSU, Jind.

Note : Interested candidates please send one set of documents with application at the college address and one set of documents with application send to the Dean, Colleges & Development Council, Ch. Ranbir Singh University, Jind Haryana - 126102 within 21 days from the date of advertisement.

Jawaharlal Nehru Aluminium Research Development and Design Centre (An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Mines, Govt. of India)

Amravati Road, Wadi, Nagpur - 440 023.

www.jnarrddc.gov.in (07104-220701) e-mail: purchase@jnarrddcnagpur@gmail.com

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना / NOTICE INVITING TENDER - FEB 2025

Director, JNARRDDC, Nagpur, invites online bids from reputed firms for the following services/items.

निदेशक, निम्नलिखित निविदा की अपूर्ति के लिए प्रतिष्ठित कंपनियों से ऑनलाइन प्रस्ताव आमंत्रित किया है।

Tender/ GeM Bid No.	Description of Equipments/ Work	Refundable EMD (₹)	Last date of tender submission	Date of tender opening	Date of downloading tender
GEM/2025/B/ 5859705	Hiring of Security Manpower (Supervisor and Unarmed Security Guards)	1,00,000/-	13.02.2025 (18:00 Hrs.)	13.02.2025 (18:30 Hrs.)	Available at GeM portal
GEM/2025/B/ 5872210	Induction Melting Furnace 50 Kg Capacity	1,40,000/-	25.02.2025 (15:00 Hrs.)	25.02.2025 (15:30 Hrs.)	Available at GeM portal

The details are available in the tender document which will be available for download from our office website www.jnarrddc.gov.in or <https://imkp.gem.gov.in>

वरिष्ठ प्रशासनिक अधिकारी

Mahakumbh 2025

Department of Urban Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh through Prayagraj Mela Authority

Triveni Bhawan, Triveni Bandh, Daraganj, Prayagraj

+91 532 2500775 / +91 532 2504011, mahakumbh25@gmail.com

The Prayagraj Mela Authority Invites below mentioned bids :-

1. Empanelment of Agencies for Designing and Publication of Coffee Table Books on Mahakumbh 2025.

The Request for Proposal Documents shall be made available on the Uttar Pradesh E-Procurement website <https://etender.up.nic.in> from Sr. No. 1- 06th February 2025 onwards. Interested parties may download/ upload their proposal and details regarding the tender shall be made available on Uttar Pradesh E-Procurement website <https://etender.up.nic.in>.

Meladhikari,

प्र संख्या 9244/पदर-80कु0-2025 (2024-25) दिनांक 05 फरवरी, 2025 Kumbh Mela, Prayagraj

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer (Project) PHED, Churu

E-mail – ace.chu.phed@rajasthan.gov.in

No. Corrigendum NO. 03 For this office NIT NO. 04/2024-25

Corrigendum No. 03 for this office NIT No. 04/ 2024-25 (UBN is: PHE2425WLOE06217 & Tender ID: 2024_PHCJ_431632_1) may be visited on the procurement portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>.

SAVE WATER – SAVE LIFE

(Ramrutti)

Add. Chief Engineer (P) PHED, Project Region Churu

DIPR/C/1014/2025

Mahatma Phule Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Technology Limited (Subsidiary of MPBDC, a Government of Maharashtra undertaking)

Re-Tender Notice of Request for Qualification (RFQ)

MAHAPREIT invites RFQ for "Empanelment of Agencies for Steam as a service (SaaS) provider in Maharashtra and other states". The interested bidder may submit their offer on or before the last date 20/02/2025 at 15.00 hrs. For details, please visit <https://mahapreit.in/> and <https://mahatenders.gov.in/>.

Executive Director (Operations)

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED

NOTICE INVITING e-BIDS

Online e-bids are invited for construction of following 132kV GSS along with associated Lines & Bays including supply of all Equipments (except Power Transformer under BN-9015002424 and except Power Transformer and ACSR conductor under BN-9015002422), materials, erection (including civil works), testing & commissioning as detailed below:-

SE (PROC-I)/NIB-08/2024-25/BN-9015002424 & UBN-VPN2425WLOB02820

2 Nos. 132 kV Grid Sub-Stations at Behrawanada Khurd (Distt. - Sawaimadhopur) & Shivad (Distt. - Sawaimadhopur) along with associated lines (1.5KM D/C for Behrawanada Khurd and 1KM D/C for Shivad Approx.)

SE (PROC-I)/NIB-08/2024-25 / BN-9015002422 & UBN- VPN2425WLOB02821

1 No. 132kV Grid Sub Stations at Khat Labana (Distt- Sriganaganar) along with associated Line (27KM S/Approx.) and 1 No. 132kV Bay at 132KV GSS Tatnagar

The detailed NIB and Bid document /specification are available for viewing/downloading on the website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>. Details of NIB are available on website energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpn. Any extension in bid submission/opening date (if any) will be floated/uploaded on <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>; energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpn & <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> only.

Superintending Engineer (Proc-I)

Raj.Samwad/C/24/11208 RRVPN/TR-6600/2025

Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs

Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property for India

First Floor, East Wing, Shivaji Stadium, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001

NOTICE FOR DISPOSAL OF ENEMY PROPERTIES THROUGH E-AUCTION

The Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property for India (CEPI) is a Statutory Authority under the provisions of the Enemy Property Act, 1968. The Head Office is at Delhi with Branch Offices at Mumbai, Kolkata and Lucknow.

(2/2025) E-AUCTION

The O/o CEPI is undertaking E-Auction of 40 Enemy Properties located in Ayodhya, Mudzaffarnagar, Amethi, Etah, Amroha, Pilibhit, Lucknow Districts of Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai (Sobhani Road), Chennai, Kolkata and Maharashtra (Ratnagin) are high value Enemy properties.

Details of properties and other conditions/details are available on- <https://enemyproperty.mha.gov.in> https://www.mstcindia.co.in/TenderEntry/Lot_Item_Details_AucID.aspx?ARI=D-482819

The details can be downloaded/viewed from above websites / by scanning QR Code. The E-Auction notice/inspection period is from 23.01.2025 to 12.02.2025. The E-Auction will take place on 13.02.2025 from 11.00 Hrs to 16.00 Hrs. All interested persons are advised to see Amendments/Changes in the Bid Document, if any, which will be uploaded on the website.

Date and Time of E-Auction 13.02.2025 11:00 Hrs. to 16:00 Hrs.

CBC 19148/11/0008/2425

NORTHERN RAILWAY (E-Auction Notice)

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites bids through e-Auction through IREPS (<https://ireps.gov.in/>) for the allotment of under mention contracts at following Railway stations/locations:

E-Catalogue No.	Date & Time of bidding	Railway Stations/Locations/Sites
Parking-02-2025	17.02.2025 at 11:00 Hrs	Panipat (Car) = Total 01 Site
Parking-03-2025	19.02.2025 at 11:00 Hrs	Rohtak (2 nd Entry) (TW), Delhi (PF-16) (B-T-T) = Total 02 Site

Website particulars where complete details of E-Auction can be seen <https://ireps.gov.in/>

All contractors who intend to participate in the e-auctions conducted through E-Auction Leasing module of IREPS should fulfil following mandatory requirements before they can submit their bids:

- Registration on IREPS for E-Auction Leasing module -Active IREPS User Account for E-Auction Leasing Module.
- Payment of One Time Registration Fee
- Current Account in State Bank of India
- Integration of SBI Bank Account with IREPS Account
- Lien Marking of Funds
- Updation of Turnover Details
- Contractors who do not have IREPS account for any module of IREPS can submit their online request for registration by clicking on New Vendors / Contractors (E-Tender /E-Auction Leasing) link on IREPS Home page.

Railway Authority to contact, in case of any query

Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial Branch, State Entry Road, New Delhi 110055. Email: pkg.delhidivision@gmail.com Tel: 011-23743084

No. 23AC/393/E-Auction/Pkg/2025 Dated: 04.02.2025 388/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Works Tender Notice No. 11-TM-C-WP-SM-2024-25 Dated 03.02.2025

On behalf of the President of India, Dy.CE/TMC, North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following Works Tender:

Manufacturing, providing and fixing of wear plate on BCM/FRM/BRM machines as per RDSO specification and drawing/sample (in MT) & Manufacturing, providing and fixing of strips, screen side rubbers & complete set of screen mesh on BCM, FRM machines as per requirement (in Set) for period of two years.

SI.No. 1:- Open tender No./due on 11-TM-C-WP-SM-2024-25 due on 07.03.2025. Description of works: Manufacturing, providing and fixing of wear plate on BCM/FRM/BRM machines as per RDSO specification and drawing/sample (in MT) & Manufacturing, providing and fixing of strips, screen side rubbers & complete set of screen mesh on BCM, FRM machines as per requirement (in Set) for period of two years, as per attached Scheduled and Special Term & Condition of contract and Annexure. Quantity Required: As per attached Schedule, Place of work: At working site of BCM/FRM/BRM machine in N.E.Railway. Work Completion Period: 24 Months. Estimated Tender Value (Rs.): 1,82,75,613.84, Earnest Money (Rs.): 2,41,400/-

Note:- 1. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Procurement Tender is available in website on <http://ireps.gov.in> up to 15.00 hrs. on the due date of tender opening. 2. Bids other than in the form

of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III Digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered. 4.Documents being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. 5.Earnest Money should be deposited through online. 6. Tenderers quoting financial conditions deviating from tender condition stipulated in tender document are required to quantify its implications in financial term duly enclosing the calculation sheet supporting with authentic document, so that the impact of such financial condition on the offer may be worked out to decide inter-se-position of offers. In case tenderer quotes such financial condition without quantifying its financial implications, such tenders/offers shall be summarily rejected, for which Railway Administration shall not entertain any correspondence. 7.Tenderers are requested to read complete tender document carefully. 8.In case of any digital helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 1.Dy. Chief Engineer/TMC-9794840218 2.SSE(TMC)/HQ-9794840293. Asst. Executive Engineer/TMC CPROW-392 Gorakhpur

Never travel on roof and foot boards.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, GWALIOR (M.P.)Narayankrishan Shejwalkar Bhawan, Near Taran Pushkar, City Centre, Gwalior
Tel No. : 0751-2438300, 4080352, Fax No. : 0751-2434249

NIT No. 2025-UAD-399642-1/MPGMC/5/24X3/2/PHE/2025 Gwalior, Date : 30.01.2025

जलमयर्स रो अंका ९९ **Notice Inviting Tender** दिनांक 04-02-2025On behalf of Gwalior Municipal Corporation, M.P. online percentage rate bids for the following work are invited on portal <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> from registered Contractors and competent firms.

Description of works	Probable Amount [In Rs.]	Completion Period [In Days]
Survey and Design of Distribution network for Providing, Laying, Testing and Commissioning of 750 mm dia D.I. pipelines to be laid under this contract in different DMAs (District Metering Areas) at Rakas Tank to Vranchuri Meter meter	2,08,04,101	06 months Excluding rainy season

Interested bidders can view the NIT of portal <http://mptenders.gov.in>. The bid document can be purchased only on online from dated 30.01.2025 to 03.03.2025 and can be submitted 03.03.2025 up to 5.30 PM.Executive Engineer,
Water Supply, Gwalior Municipal Corporation, Gwalior**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, AMARAVATI**

Short Tenders are invited through e-procurement platform for supply of Uniform Cloth under "Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Vidyarthi Mitra" (SRKVM-1) vide Short Tender Notice NIT No. 29 to 36/2024-25, dt.04-02-2025 in Samagra Shiksha, Amaravati at Patamata, Vijayawada for 08 works in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Tenders Downloading Starts from : 07.02.2025 after 10.30 AM

Last date for receipt of Tenders : 15.02.2025 up to 05.00 PM

Note: Further details can be viewed at <https://tenders.approcurement.gov.in> or contact 0866 2428599.Sd/-B. SRINIVASA RAO, I.A.S.,
STATE PROJECT DIRECTOR APSS, AMARAVATI.

No: 3509PP/CL/ADV/T/1/1/2021-22 Dt: 05/02/2025

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
OF POLICE RAJ JAIPUR**

M-7(42)PS/MG/2024/941 DATED-23/01/2025

NOTICE INVITING BIDS
NIB NO.Bids for TRAFFIC ROAD SAFETY ITEMS of estimated value INR 5,00,00,000/- are invited from interested bidders up to 13.02.2025 at 11.00 am. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<https://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in>) (<https://sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in/>) of the state, and <https://www.police.rajjasthan.gov.in>

UBN NO. 1 POI.2425 GLOB00103

Supdt. of Police
Central Stores, PHQ Raj, Jaipur
Tel-0141-2744289

DIPR/C/1089/24-25 Mail ID-sp.store.pmw@rajpolice.gov.in

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
Regd. Office: PSPCL Head Office, The Mall, Patiala
(Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813)
Website: www.pspcl.in, Contact No. 96461-17651

Tender Enquiry No. 163/Dy.CE/Th. Op./CD-28/Vol-XIII/O&M/GHTP/2025

Dated: 04/02/2025

Dy. Chief Engineer / Operation Circle, GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat invites E-Tender for the work: To provide assistance to staff working under Chemical Department, GHTP

Lehra Mohabbat, for operation of Water Treatment plant and Coal & Environment Laboratory for a period of one year.

For detailed NIT & tender specifications, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

E-Tender Enquiry No. 2025_POWER_134035_1 from 04-02-2025 from 17:00 Hrs. onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

No. 41412/PB GHTP-12/25

CONSTRUCTION OF ETP WASTE WATER RECYCLING PLANTE-Tender Notice No. KYQ-CDO-ETP-02-REV-24-25 Dated: 31-01-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Name of work:** Construction of ETP waste water recycling plant for reuse of discharge water of mechanized laundry/Kamakhya at Coach Maintenance Depot Kamakhya. **Tender Value:** ₹3,54,96,032.77/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,27,500/- **Date & Time of Closing of Tender:** 12.00 hrs. of 21-02-2025. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Coaching Depot Officer/Guwahati

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Serving Customers With A Smile

"IMPORTANT"

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बिहार सरकार**बिहार तकनीकी सेवा आयोग,**
19, हार्डिंग रोड, पटना-800001**आवश्यक सूचना**

विज्ञापन सं०-01/2025, कीट संग्रहकर्ता

स्वास्थ्य विभाग, बिहार, पटना के अन्तर्गत कीट संग्रहकर्ता के

कुल-53 रिक्त पदों पर नियुक्ति हेतु दिनांक-05.02.2025 से 05.03.2025

तक Online आवेदन करने की तिथि निर्धारित की गयी है।

उक्त से संबंधित विस्तृत विज्ञापन आयोग के Website-

www.btsb.bihar.gov.in पर दिनांक-05.02.2025 से देखा जा सकता है।

प्रभारी सचिव,

बिहार तकनीकी सेवा आयोग, पटना।

PR- 18816 (B & C) 2024-25

नशामुक्त हो जाए बिहार, सुरक्षित रहे घर परिवार।

बिहार सरकार**बिहार पुलिस रेडियो, मुख्यालय, नेहरू मार्ग, पटना****निविदा सूचना संख्या- 05/2024-25/पी0पी0ओ0**

1. विभाग का नाम:- पुलिस महानिदेशक का कार्यालय, बिहार, पटना।

2. विज्ञापनदाता का पदनाम एवं पता:- पुलिस अधीक्षक (विन्तु), बिहार, पटना।

बिहार पुलिस रेडियो, मुख्यालय, सरदार पटेल भवन ई ब्लॉक, छठी मंजिल, कमरा नम्बर-612, नेहरू मार्ग, पटना।

3. निविदा समर्पित करने की तिथि एवं समय:- निविदा प्रकाशित होने की तिथि से किसी कार्य दिवस में दिनांक-27.02.2025 के 15:00 बजे तक।

4. निविदा के तकनीकी भाग को खोलने की तिथि:- दिनांक-27.02.2025 को 16:00 बजे।

5. निविदा समर्पित करने का स्थान:- बिहार पुलिस रेडियो, मुख्यालय, सरदार पटेल भवन ई ब्लॉक, छठी मंजिल, कमरा नम्बर-612, नेहरू मार्ग, पटना।

6. मद का नाम:- 892 अदद

Battery Cable for 25 Watt Digital Motorola VHF Set Compatible with Model-XIRM 8668I

वांछित Specification PPO शाखा, बिगुपुर्गे, D/603, सरदार पटेल भवन, बेली रोड, पटना से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

(7) निविदा के तकनीकी भाग निर्धारित तिथि 27.02.2025 एवं समय 16:00 बजे को बिहार पुलिस रेडियो, मुख्यालय, सरदार पटेल भवन, पटना में समिति द्वारा खोला जायेगा। उक्त अवसर पर निविदादाता या उनके प्रतिनिधि उपस्थित रह सकते हैं।

(8) इस विज्ञापन सूचना को बिहार पुलिस विभाग के वेबसाइट <https://police.bihar.gov.in/en/Tender> पर देखा जा सकता है।

अपर पुलिस महानिदेशक, तकनीकी सेवाएं एवं विन्तु, बिहार, पटना को यह अधिकार सुरक्षित है कि बिना कारण बताये एवं बिना किसी सूचना के किसी भी समय निविदा को रद्द कर दें अथवा निर्धारित मदों में आवश्यकतानुसार वर्णित संख्या को घटा दे या बढ़ा दें।

विस्तृत जानकारी state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

PR-18769 (Police) 2024-25

नरो की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

पुलिस अधीक्षक (विन्तु), बिहार, पटना।

बिहार सरकार**जल संसाधन विभाग**
कार्यालय अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल, पूर्णिया

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या - 09 SBD/2024-25

(राष्ट्रीय/राजकीय स्पर्दा)

(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. कार्य का विवरण :-

गुप्त सं० कार्य का नाम प्राकृतिक राशि (लाख ₹ में)

अग्रगण्य की राशि (₹ में) (ऑन लाइन अथवा फिजिकल/यैनुअल मोड में मुगतेय)

परिमाण विषय (अग्रगण्यीय केवल ऑन लाइन मोड में मुगतेय) (₹ में)

बेल्डॉन को देय बीड प्रोसेसिंग फी (अग्रगण्यीय केवल ऑन लाइन मोड में मुगतेय) (₹ में)

कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि

गुप्त सं० 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1- रमजान नदी का डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन, वैनेलाइजेशन एवं सौंदर्यीकरण का कार्य (उत्प्रेषण संख्या-224/11/2025)

987.01 19.75 10000 5900 31.01.2026

2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निम्नित करने की तिथि :- दिनांक 31.01.2025

3. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की अवधि :- दिनांक 19.02.2025 से 25.02.2025 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

4. प्री-बीड मीटिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि :- दिनांक 21.02.2025 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न में, मुख्य अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण, जल संसाधन विभाग, कटिहार (बिहार पूर्णिया) के कार्यालय में।

5. निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक 25.02.2025 को समय 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।

6. तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक 27.02.2025 को समय 3:30 बजे अपराह्न।

7. वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर

8. निविदा खोलने का स्थान :- सहाय पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में घोषित की जायेगी।

9. निविदा की वैधता अवधि :- (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर10. विज्ञापनदाता का पदनाम एवं पता :- वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर11. ई-निविदा मात्र वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर डाउनलोड/अपलोड किया जा सकता है।विस्तृत जानकारी www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल, पूर्णिया

PR. No.18812 (WRD) 2024-25

नरो की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

जल संसाधन विभाग
कार्यालय अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण, प्रमंडल, किरानगंज

राष्ट्रीय स्पर्दा निविदा आमंत्रण

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या- 02/SBD/2024-25

(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

1. कार्य का विवरण :-

गुप्त सं० कार्य का नाम प्राकृतिक राशि (लाख ₹ में)

अग्रगण्य की राशि (लाख ₹ में)

परिमाण-विषय का मूल्य (अग्रगण्यीय) (केवल ऑनलाइन मोड में मुगतेय) (₹ में)

बेल्डॉन को देय "बीड प्रोसेसिंग फी" (अग्रगण्यीय) (केवल ऑनलाइन मोड में मुगतेय) (₹ में)

कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि

गुप्त सं० 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1- रमजान नदी का डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन, वैनेलाइजेशन एवं सौंदर्यीकरण का कार्य (उत्प्रेषण संख्या-224/11/2025)

987.01 19.75 10000 5900 31.01.2026

2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत करने की तिथि :- दिनांक :-31.01.2025

3. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की अवधि :- दिनांक 19.02.2025 से 25.02.2025, 3.30 PM अपराह्न तक (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)।

4. प्री-बीड मीटिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान :- दिनांक 21.02.2025, 3.00 PM बजे अपराह्न में मुख्य अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण, जल संसाधन विभाग, कटिहार कैम्प पूर्णिया के कार्यालय कक्ष में।

5. निविदा अपलोड करने की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक 26.02.2025 के अपराह्न 3.30 बजे। केवल वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर।6. तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- सक्षम पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर घोषित की जायेगी।7. वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- केवल वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर।

8. निविदा खोलने का स्थान :- 120 दिन।

9. निविदा वैधता की अवधि :- कार्यपालक अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल किरानगंज।

10. विज्ञापनदाता का नाम एवं पदनाम :- कार्यपालक अभियंता

उक्त सूचना state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर भी देखी जा सकती है। बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल, किरानगंज, फोन-7463889229

PR- 018744 (WRD) 2024-25

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

JEEViKA
Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society
State Rural Livelihoods Mission, Bihar
Rural Development Department,
Advertisement No. BRLPS06/2024-25
Add a mission to your career
Join a team of committed and passionate Development Professionals.

Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), an autonomous society under Rural Development Department, Govt. of Bihar has been designated as State Rural Livelihoods Mission by Rural Development Department, Government of Bihar to scale up the "JEEVIKA" model in all 534 Blocks of 38 Districts in Bihar under National Rural Livelihood Mission.

So far JEEViKA has been able to reach out to nearly 135 Lakh rural poor households by organizing them into 10.63 Lakh women Self Help Groups under 71000 Village Organizations and 1600 Cluster Level Federations. These institutions have generated nearly Rs. 1350 Crore as their own saving and have leveraged more than Rs. 46000 Crore from the Banks.

Bring smile to the faces of poor in Bihar

Walk-In-Interview for the following position of consultants

Sl. Theme No. of Vacancy Remuneration Department

1. Consultant- E- Commerce (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Non-Farm

2. Consultant- Art & Craft & Stitching (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Non-Farm

3. Consultant- Beekeeping (State & District Level) 7 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Non-Farm

4. EPOS Consultant- Grameen Bazar (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Non-Farm

5. Regional Consultant- Grameen Bazar (District Level) 6 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Non-Farm

6. Consultant- Financial Inclusion (State & District Level) 45 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Fin.Inclusion

7. Consultant- Livestock (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Livestock

8. Consultant- Fisheries (District Level) 8 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Livestock

9. Consultant- Goat Intervention (District Level) 6 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Livestock

10. MIS Consultant (State & District Level) 15 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- MIS

11. MIS Consultant (Dot Net Framework, SQL Server) (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- MIS

12. Mobile App Consultant (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- MIS

13. Consultant- Regional Coordinator SJY (District Level) 10 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- SJY

14. Consultant- Production Expert (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- H&N

15. Consultant- Production & Marketing (State & District Level) 11 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- H&N

16. Consultant- Nursery Development & Convergence (State & District Level) 6 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- SD

17. Consultant- Gender (State & District Level) 6 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- SD

18. Consultant - Mulberry (State & District Level) 3 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- SD

19. Consultant - Renewable Energy and Business Partnership (State & District Level) 4 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- SD

20. Consultant- Internal Audit & Statutory Matters (State Level) 1 ₹ 30000/- to ₹ 75000/- Finance

21. Consultant URBAN SM - ID 2 ₹ 45000/- IB & CB

Note: Official website <http://brlps.in> may be visited and click on "Career" to apply online and to know detailed eligibility criteria and other details including category of vacancies. All communication will be made through website only.

Applications will be accepted only through online mode.

Last Date for Submission of Online Application: 20.02.2025

Disclaimers: Mere eligibility does not guarantee a job. BRLPS reserves the right to shortlist candidates based on qualification and relevant experience.

Canvassing in any form shall be a disqualification.

This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also

PR. No.018731 (B&C) 2024-25

सुरक्षित जीवन अपनाओ, अपनी नियमित एच.आई.वी. जाँच कराओ।

Chief Executive Officer-cum- Mission Director,
Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
ENGINEER PWD DIVISION BEAWAR**

NIB NO. : PWD2425A3891-PWD2425A3893

Notice Inviting Bid No. 35/2024-25

Bids for 03 No. Works are invited from interested bidders upto 12.00 PM 10 Feb. 2025. Other particular of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in/>) of the State, and DIPR departmental website. The approximate value of the procurement is ₹ 603.72 Lacs.

S No. NIB NO UBIN NO Amount (Lac)

1 PWD2425A3891 PWD2425WSOB14035 224.60

2 PWD2425A3892 PWD2425WSOB14036 363.96

3 PWD2425A3893 PWD2425WSOB14037 15.16

(V.S. Shekhawat)
Executive Engineer
PWD, Division Beawar.

DIPRC/1202/2025

राजकीय मेडिकल कॉलेज हल्द्वानी, जिला: नैनीताल (उत्तराखण्ड)
दूरभाष संख्या: (05946) 255255, 255926, Ext. 4216, 4365,
ई-मेल : principal.gmchld.uk@gov.in

ई-निविदा सूचना

राजकीय मेडिकल कॉलेज हल्द्वानी एवं सम्बद्ध चिकित्सालय हेतु दो बिड सिस्टम के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित सामग्री/वस्तुओं की आपूर्ति हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा सूचना, बिड डॉक्यूमेंट एवं विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट uktenders.gov.in पर निम्नानुसार उपलब्ध है

निविदा क्र० सं० उपकरण/सामग्री का नाम बिड डाउनलोड करने की तिथि एवं समय बिड अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय

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विज्ञापन सं०- 357/GMC/Purchase/February/ 2024-25 प्राचार्य

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHARATPUR

BEGINS GROUNDWORK TO REVAMP 2016 MODEL BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY

Amid US-China trade war, India signals better investment protection for partners

RAVIDUTTA MISHRA & AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

AMID AN anticipated trade and investment shift away from China following the latest US-China trade war, India has signalled that better protection for foreign investors could be on offer for its trade partners as it begins the groundwork to revamp the 2016 model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), which took a conservative stance and favoured the state over investors in investor-state disputes.

A revamp of the 2016 model BIT was flagged in the Union Budget after multiple Western trade partners cited burdensome norms during ongoing treaty negotiations. India is currently in talks with the UK and the European Union for an investment treaty and is also expected to negotiate a BIT with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) region, which has committed to investing \$100 billion in India over a 15-year period.

Ajay Seth, Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), told *The Indian Express* that groundwork for the BIT revamp has already begun and that the treaty with the UAE, which offers protection for foreign portfolio investors and includes entity-based protection, reflects the new approach towards more investor-

‘UAE TREATY REFLECTS THE NEW APPROACH’



AJAY SETH, Ajay Seth, DEA Secretary, told *The Indian Express* that groundwork for the BIT revamp has already begun and that the treaty with the UAE, which offers protection for foreign portfolio investors and includes entity-based protection, reflects the new approach towards more investor-friendly investment norms

friendly investment norms.

“The UAE BIT is already in the public domain. For instance, the model BIT talks about entity-based protection. An entity has to be registered in India. Whereas in the UAE, we have moved over to an asset-based definition. Investment coming through the foreign portfolio investment (FPI) route will also get BIT protection. This is just one example. It could move in that direction, and a review has to be undertaken. Groundwork or homework has started,” Seth said.

Nestle case & regulatory risks

Prabhash Ranjan, Professor and Vice Dean at the Jindal Global Law School, said that additional protection for investors is needed to attract investment, as investors

face high regulatory risks while operating in India, the latest instance being the Nestlé case. In December, Switzerland suspended the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clause in the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) originally signed between India and Switzerland in 1994.

This decision followed a ruling by the Indian Supreme Court last year, which determined that the DTAA cannot be enforced unless it is notified under the Income Tax Act. As a result, Swiss companies such as Nestlé face higher taxes on dividends.

Ranjan said that most disputes brought against India were due to poor regulations. “If you change tax laws retroactively, as happened with Vodafone, or cancel licences without following due process, as happened with Devas,

EXPLAINED
BIT revamp flagged in Budget

A REVAMP of the 2016 model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) was flagged in the Union Budget after multiple Western trade partners cited burdensome norms during ongoing treaty negotiations.

and your judiciary takes forever to decide on arbitration awards, what option does the investor have?” Ranjan said.

Notably, the government had annulled BITs based on older model texts framed in 1993 after receiving adverse judgments in multibillion-dollar disputes in international courts. To prevent this, the model BIT included the clause “exhaustion of local remedies,” emphasising state rights over investor rights.

Contention: Emphasis on local remedy

One of the key elements in the UAE BIT was that UAE investors in India must exhaust domestic remedies for at least three years before commencing international arbitration, as per the treaty text. This contrasts with the model BIT, which required investors to at-

tempt to resolve disputes through India’s legal system for at least five years before seeking international arbitration. However, experts believe that several countries, particularly in the West, may not even be willing to accept the three-year clause and would prefer easier norms. And much of the negotiations with the EU and UK are held up for years. India has been involved in trade negotiations with the UK for over two years and is yet to reach even close to signing a deal with the EU. In contrast, EU has signed a deal with India’s competitors such as Vietnam giving it an advantage over India.

“In my opinion, India should do away with this waiting period requirement completely. What India should introduce is what is known as a fork-in-the-road clause. This essentially means that if an investor has a dispute with the state, they choose whether to submit the dispute to domestic courts or pursue international arbitration. Once that choice is made, it is final and irrevocable,” Ranjan said.

Ranjan added that with this approach, India can argue that the state is neither stopping investors nor forcing them to go through domestic courts. “Now, it is quite possible that some investors may still opt for domestic courts because they do not want to antagonise the state by pursuing international arbitration. That would serve India’s objective as well,” he added.

NOTING THAT India is still at a nascent stage as far as electric mobility is concerned, **SWAPNESH MARU**, Deputy Managing Director — Corporate Planning, Green Field Project — at Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said that the country may have prioritised a few technologies in its push towards sustainability. In an interaction with AGGAM WALIA and SOUMYARENDRA BARIK, Maru emphasised that there should be a focus on eliminating cost disparities between petrol/diesel cars and hybrid cars. He also spoke about China’s dominance in EVs, growing trade protectionism, and Toyota’s partnership with Maruti Suzuki. Edited excerpts:

How is the partnership with Maruti Suzuki playing out, and how do you see it evolve going forward?

If you look at both companies, and I’m talking specifically about India, there is a strong belief that we have a huge contribution to make to solving one of the biggest problems, which is about fossil fuels. In that sense, given the strengths that Toyota has in terms of the technologies and the excellence that Maruti has demonstrated sequentially in terms of bringing in small to medium cars at cost price points and technologies which are liked by the customers, I think these strengths have combined very well for the Indian consumer and for the companies. We believe this will only accelerate. This partnership will have a lot more to contribute.

Emissions is a big area of focus for the government. There are ongoing discussions on the CAFE 3 norms. How do you see compliance burden when sustainability is such a big area of concern?

We are witnessing one of the most landmark shifts, that is the massive energy transition every country is tackling. India has taken a lot of proactive steps, not just now, but for quite some time now in terms of leapfrogging from Bharat Stage 4 to 6. And in that trajectory, I think the CAFE norms are just a normal extension.

What these norms have already done with CAFE 2, and now with the planned CAFE 3, will be to align us closer towards meeting our national objectives of sustainability. The auto industry is extremely proactive in ensuring that these norms are digested. Of course, there are matters of detail and how we work out the compliances. Those things are still a work in progress. But overall, I believe these norms are extremely important for a country like India from a sustainability perspective and for integration into the global marketplace.

Many manufacturers are now exporting cars that are made in India. But China is also exporting a lot. There, the technology, especially for EVs, is understood to be among the best in the world currently. How can India-made products compete with Chinese exports globally?

The consumer of any particu-



lar market will choose a product which best fits their preferences, their recognition of the brands and the countries those come from. We must credit China for the excellence that they’ve had, not just now, but for many, many decades in terms of this. But I believe that given the geopolitical condition, the way in which a lot of balancing happens, globally, there is a lot of accommodation to look at opportunities along with China.

So it’s not about one country replacing another, but how countries other than China can also vie for a consumer’s attention, and then through their manufacturing and quality assurances maybe gain some of the traction. In that sense, we need to work hard. We need to ensure that it’s not just simply about matching China, beating China, but we must imbibe their core capabilities for a sustainable, competitive advantage not just on cost but also on quality and reliability.

How do you see protectionism in this industry going forward?

We were living in a world where globalisation was a trend for more than a decade. Now, it’s more about individual countries. Businesses have to evolve and tailor to these realities. So for that matter, Make in India is also about a very powerful narrative about the growing consumption capability of India internally.

And that may be true for many other countries, which is where India is excellently poised, given the depth of relationships that we have managed in a world which is widely conflicted. On one hand we continue to work with Russia, we continue to work with Europe, we continue to work with the USA and everybody recognises that India is being extremely deft at managing these relations. These are realities which we cannot change. How we work around them to ensure that we can offer our best is something that we should do more of, and I think

India is doing it right.

The clear theme of this year’s Auto Expo (January 2025) was EVs. Almost everyone has showcased their EV technology. But, globally, there is a slowdown in EV demand. Do you think that is a temporary blip, or a cause of larger concern?

The world is amidst a mega trend, which is about the shift from a fossil fuel to a sustainable energy mix.

Every country is making its choices based on the energy mix, the infrastructure and of course the consumer preferences. And these are the trifecta which are manifesting — with a hybrid getting popular in a particular region or a BEV being more popular in European regions where sustainable energy consumption is a little more. These are trends which are kind of rooted in each country’s conviction about their energy mix.

So, we should not look at it as a technology preference, but rather as a policy preference. Finally, we should not forget that it is the consumer who has to make the final choice.

But overall, we believe that given the magnitude of what we are trying to solve globally and locally, there is no one single technology that can solve this problem. It’s a mega trend and which is why an approach of multi pathway, a bouquet of technologies should contribute to reaching this outcome at speed and at scale.

In India, we are seeing a regional divergence. Some states are incentivising hybrids, while others are offering benefits for EVs. Do you think there is a need for a more unified approach?

We must again recognise that the problem that we are trying to solve is humongous. No one technology can solve it at speed and scale. Our belief is that any technology, taking a very agnostic approach, which helps in reducing our fossil fuel imprint at speed at scale must get some kind of a recognition. I would just like to point out that the consumer should not get burdened and therefore alter his choices simply because a greener technology is slightly costlier than a fossil fuel driven vehicle.

As long as these parities can be maintained, I think the movement towards sustainability will be very strong.

In that context, and we must recognise that we are still a very early player on the electrified technology platform. States are making their policies, inadvertently, without really intending to, we might have ended up supporting one or two technologies, but not get the clear focus on other technologies which could have had an equal importance. So just to ensure that there is a level playing field for the consumer, we believe there is a cause to just remove this cost inefficiency for the customer on hybrid vis-a-vis ICE (internal combustion engines). We believe that every electrified technology must get recognised and supported.

India is second-biggest market for OpenAI, says Sam Altman

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

INDIA IS the second-biggest market for ChatGPT creator OpenAI, where it has tripled its user base in the last year, the firm’s founder and CEO Sam Altman said Wednesday.

Altman is on a whirlwind world tour and landed in India late Tuesday night. On Wednesday, he met IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, along with a number of the country’s start-ups and venture capital funds. He is also expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“India is an incredibly important market for AI in general and OpenAI in particular. It is our second-biggest market, we tripled our users here in the last year,” Altman said during a discussion hosted by OpenAI. Vaishnaw was also present at the talk, and spoke about India’s three-pronged approach to AI, where the country is focusing on designing chips, building foundational models, and AI applications.

“But mostly seeing what people in India are building, the stack, chips, models, all the incredible applications — India should be doing everything. India should be among the leaders of the AI revolution. It’s really quite amazing to see what the country has done...” Altman said.

Altman’s Asia tour also coin-



Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman in Delhi.

cided with the meteoric rise in popularity of DeepSeek, a foundational model created by a Chinese AI lab at a fraction of cost of OpenAI’s which is said to match the firm’s models on many fronts.

DeepSeek’s model has shown to the world that cutting edge foundational models could be built at cheaper costs, unlike the huge investments that have gone into making OpenAI’s models.

Altman was in India last in June 2023, and his latest world tour is being seen by many as a rush to counter the impact of DeepSeek’s achievement.

“We are now in a world where we have made incredible progress with distillation. We have learned to do small models and these reasoning models in particular... It’s not cheap, it’s still expensive to

train them, but that is going to lead to an explosion of really great creativity. India should be a leader there, of course,” Altman said, addressing a question on the lowering costs of building AI models.

“There are two different ways to look at the cost of the models: to stay at the frontier, we believe, those costs will continue to rise on this exponential curve. But also the returns to increase the intelligence are exponential...” he said.

“On the other side of it, the cost of a given unit of intelligence one year later seems to fall by 10x... but I don’t think the world is going to need any less AI hardware,” Altman said.

During the discussion, Vaishnaw emphasised India’s ability to develop cost-effective AI models, drawing comparisons to

the country’s low-cost space missions. “Our country sent a mission to the Moon at a fraction of the cost... why can’t we do a model which will be a fraction of the cost... So yes, innovation will bring that cost down within applications in healthcare and education, agriculture, weather forecasting, disaster management...,” he said.

Following the discussion, Vaishnaw said in a post on X, “Had a super cool discussion with @sama (Altman) on our strategy of creating the entire AI stack — GPUs, model, and apps. Willing to collaborate with India on all three”.

During his earlier visit to India, Altman had quoted controversy when he said that companies around the world, including in India, may find it difficult to build a product like ChatGPT.

“It’s totally impossible to rival us in training these core models, and we’ll advise you not to even attempt it. But it’s your responsibility to try anyway. I genuinely believe in both those aspects. I reckon it’s quite a futile pursuit,” he had said at an event.

Following a backlash, Altman had later clarified that his comments had been taken out of context. “... this is really taken out of context! the question was about competing with us with \$10 million, which I really do think is not going to work. But I still said try! however, I think it’s the wrong question,” he had said in a tweet.

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY FEARS

FinMin directs employees to not use AI tools like ChatGPT, DeepSeek

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

AMID RAPIDLY growing popularity of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots, the Finance Ministry has directed its employees to “strictly” avoid use of such tools “like ChatGPT and DeepSeek” in office computers and devices over concerns pertaining to confidentiality of government documents and data. The directive was issued by the Finance Ministry’s Department of Expenditure on January 29, it is learnt.

“It has been determined that AI tools and AI apps (such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek etc) in the office computers and devices pose risks for confidentiality of Govt data and documents,” the directive is learnt to have said. “It is, therefore, advised that

It has been determined that AI tools and AI apps (such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek etc) in the office computers and devices pose risks for confidentiality of Govt data and documents” — DIRECTIVE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE

use of AI tools/AI apps in office devices may be strictly avoided. This may be brought to the notice of all employees,” the directive is understood to have said.

A few other countries have already acted to protect their official systems from AI tools, particularly Chinese foundational model DeepSeek, over privacy

and data security concerns.

On Wednesday, Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, which developed the popular AI chatbot ChatGPT, said that India is now the second-biggest market for OpenAI, and the company’s user base in the country has trebled in the last year. Altman is on an India visit for meetings with top government officials, start-ups and venture capital funds.

Altman’s visit coincides with the meteoric rise in popularity of DeepSeek, a foundational model created by a Chinese AI lab at a fraction of cost of OpenAI’s which is said to match the firm’s models on many fronts. DeepSeek’s model has shown to the world that cutting edge foundational models could be built at cheaper costs, unlike the huge investments that have gone into making OpenAI’s models.

BRIEFLY

Rupee drops to all-time low of 87.43/USD

New Delhi: Rupee plunged 36 paise to close at an all-time low of 87.43 against the US dollar on Wednesday, as global trade war concerns fuelled risk aversion among investors. Forex traders said the rupee is trading with a negative bias over trade war as participants mulled the impact of tariffs being imposed by the US and China. **PTI**

RBI starts deliberations on interest rates

New Delhi: The RBI has started deliberations on the monetary policy amid expectations of a rate cut. **PTI**

LIC gets GST demand notice of ₹105 crore

New Delhi: Life Insurance Corporation of India has said it has received a demand notice of about Rs 105.42 crore for short payment of GST for seven financial years. Meanwhile, authorities have imposed penalties totalling Rs 115.86 crore on Indigo, the airline said in a regulatory filing. **PTI**

Jio building world’s best AI infra in India: Ambani

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 5

IN THE midst of a global competition for artificial intelligence (AI) leadership, Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani stated on Wednesday that RIL’s digital arm Jio is working on building the world’s best AI infrastructure in India. “AI is indispensable for India’s transformation into a Deep-Tech Nation with advanced manufacturing capabilities,” he said.

“Jio is currently building the world’s best AI infrastructure in India,” he said. Data centres are at the heart of AI infrastructure. “It gives me great pleasure to announce today that we have modified our data centre in Kolkata to a state-of-the-art AI-ready data centre, and that will be ready in the next 9 months,” he said while addressing the Bengal Global Business Summit. “In 2016, when



Mukesh Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Industries.

I first attended this Summit, Reliance’s investments stood below Rs 2,000 crore. Today, in less than a decade, our investments in Bengal have increased 20 times, and we are invested over Rs 50,000 crore,” Ambani said.

He said RIL will double this investment in Bengal by the end of this decade. Ambani said Reliance’s new energy Initiative will begin its operations in the end of 2025. “It is our endeavour to make India the world’s biggest manufacturing hub for clean and green energy,” he said.



Makoto Uchida (left), director, representative executive officer, president and CEO of Nissan Motor Corporation and Toshihiro Mibe, director, president and representative executive officer of Honda, in Tokyo on December 23, 2024.

Reuters File

as a merger of equals, one of the people said. Honda, whose market value of about 7.92 trillion yen (\$51.90 billion) is more than five times bigger than Nissan’s at 1.44 trillion yen, was increasingly worried about its smaller rival’s progress on the turnaround plan, another source said. A *Nikkei* business daily report that the automaker would pull out of talks.

Nissan and Honda said in separate statements that the *Nikkei* report was not based on information announced by the companies and that they aimed to finalise a future direction by mid-February.

Nissan’s long-term alliance partner, French carmaker Renault would “vigorously” defend the interests of the group and its stakeholders, a spokesperson said.

TOPOF THE WORLD



Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte. File

THE PHILIPPINES
V-P impeached by House, faces senate trial

Manila: Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte was impeached by the House of Representatives Wednesday after more than the required number of legislators, many of them allies of the president with whom she has had a bitter political feud, signed a petition to remove her. House of Representatives Secretary General Reginald Velasco told a plenary meeting of the lower chamber of Congress that at least 215 lawmakers have signed a petition to impeach Duterte. The impeachment complaint was ordered transmitted to the Senate, which will serve as an impeachment tribunal that would try the vice president, daughter of ex-President Rodrigo Duterte. **AP**

SINGAPORE
'Promoting ill will': India-born rapper jailed

Singapore: Indian-origin rapper Subhas Nair on Wednesday began his six-week jail term for attempting to promote ill will among racial and religious groups through online posts in multi-ethnic Singapore. The 32-year-old Singaporean, whose full name is Subhas Govin Prabhakar Nair, appealed against his conviction and sentence before Justice Hoo Sheau Peng over two days starting last year. The High Court had dismissed his appeals, the Channel News Asia reported. **PTI**

NEPAL
Govt stops solo expeditions to Mount Everest

Kathmandul: The Nepal government has formally ended solo expeditions on Mt Everest and other mountain peaks above 8,000 metres by making one mountain guide mandatory for two climbers, according to revised mountaineering regulations. The sixth amendment to the Mountaineering Regulation came into force on Tuesday after it was published in the Nepal Gazette, the government's official publication. **PTI**

ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES TERM TRUMP PROPOSAL UNACCEPTABLE

Gaza plan draws global flak, Saudi says no Israel ties without Palestine

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, PARIS, FEB 5

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump's plan for the US to take over war-torn Gaza and create a "Riviera of the Middle East" after resettling Palestinians elsewhere has shattered US policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and sparked widespread criticism. The shock move from Trump, a former New York property developer, was swiftly condemned by international powers, with regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia, which Trump hopes will establish ties with Israel, rejecting the plan outright.

Turkey called the proposal "unacceptable" and France said it risked destabilising West Asia. Russia, China, Germany, Spain, Ireland and the UK, meanwhile, said they continued to support the two-state solution.

Over 15 months of Israeli bombardment have devastated the tiny coastal enclave and killed more than 47,000 people, by Palestinian tallies.

Welcoming Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House on Tuesday, Trump said he would support an effort to permanently resettle Palestinians from Gaza to places where they can live without fear of violence, and he and his team had been discussing this possibility with Jordan, Egypt and other regional countries.

In a news conference, Trump said Jordan's King Abdullah and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi would come around to the idea despite their rejections. Netanyahu would not be drawn into discussing the proposal, other than to praise Trump for trying a new approach.

The casual proposal sent diplomatic shockwaves across West Asia and the globe. China said it opposed the forced trans-

Not going anywhere, say Gaza residents

Cairo, Gaza: Gazans criticised US President Donald Trump's plan to take over the Gaza Strip and resettle Palestinians elsewhere, vowing to never leave the ruins of their homes. "Trump can go to hell, with his ideas, with his money, and with his beliefs. We are going nowhere. We are not some of his assets," said Samir Abu Basel in Gaza City. "We are the owners of the land." **REUTERS**

fer of Palestinians. "China has always believed that Palestinians governing Palestine is the basic principle of post-conflict governance," China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said, backing a two-state solution.

Some of the toughest criticism came from France, which said the forced displacement of Gazans would be a serious violation of international law, an attack on the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians and destabilise the region.

Palestinian militant group Hamas said Trump's statement was "ridiculous and absurd".

Saudi Arabia said it would not establish ties with Israel without the creation of a Palestinian state, contradicting Trump's claim that Riyadh was not demanding a Palestinian homeland when he said the US wants to take over the Gaza Strip.

Saudi Arabia rejects any attempts to displace the Palestinians from their land, it stated on Wednesday, adding that its stance towards the Palestinians is not negotiable.



Aid trucks in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Wednesday. Reuters

Why plan faces serious hurdles

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, FEBRUARY 5

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump's stunning proposal to forcibly transfer hundreds of thousands of Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip and develop it as a tourist destination faces major obstacles.

Palestinians don't want to leave

Palestinians view Gaza as an integral part of their national homeland and aspire to an independent state in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem, territories Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

Most of Gaza's population are descendants of refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were driven out of what is now Israel. They were not allowed to

return because they would have outnumbered the new state's Jewish population.

Arab countries will not accept Palestinians

Egypt and Jordan, which made peace with Israel decades ago, have repeatedly rejected previous proposals to resettle Palestinians within their borders.

They too fear that Israel would never allow the Palestinians to return, and that a mass influx of Palestinian refugees would once again destabilize the region, as it did in the decades after 1948, when it was a key factor in Lebanon's civil war and Israel's two invasions of that country. Both countries also have struggling economies that would have a hard time absorbing large numbers of refugees.

Trump suggested that wealthy Gulf countries could pay

to resettle the Palestinians, but that appears unlikely.

Trump has leverage, but so does West Asia

Trump seems to relish using tariffs, sanctions and aid cutoffs to pressure allies and adversaries alike, and could apply economic pressure on countries like Egypt and Jordan, which have long relied on American aid.

But those countries have levers of their own in the face of what they see as a major threat to their national security.

wealthy Gulf countries, which have also historically provided aid to Egypt and Jordan, could help cushion any economic blow.

The idea of mass transfer has historically been confined to the far-right in Israel, but mainstream leaders said Trump's plan was worth considering.



Sweden shooting: Death toll reaches 11, eyewitnesses describe panic, bloodshed

REUTERS
OREBRO, FEBRUARY 5

STUDENTS AND teachers recalled trying to save the lives of their comrades before fleeing the scene of a mass shooting in Sweden described by the prime minister on Wednesday as a 'dark day' in the country's history.

Police said there was no evidence the suspect, described by media as a 35-year-old unemployed recluse, had "ideological motives", adding that the attacker appeared to have acted



Mourners in Orebro on Wednesday. AP

alone and shot himself dead at the scene.

At least 11 people died and

France govt survives no-confidence vote

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS, FEBRUARY 5

FRANCE'S GOVERNMENT survived a no-confidence vote Wednesday in parliament, and the state budget for 2025 was finally adopted.

Prime Minister François Bayrou had used special constitutional powers to get the budget bill approved without a vote by lawmakers, which trig-



PM François Bayrou. AP/File

gered the no-confidence motion.

Only 128 lawmakers approved the motion, far from the

many people were wounded in the attack at the Risbergska adult education centre in Orebro, central Sweden, on Tuesday. Five of the six victims who were treated in hospital - four women and two men - had required surgery for gunshot wounds and remained in a serious condition.

Some students were in class while others were having lunch when the gunman began firing.

"A guy next to me was shot in the shoulder. He was bleeding a lot. When I looked behind me I saw three people on the floor bleeding. Everyone was shocked.

They said: "Go out! Get out!," a school student, Marwa, told broadcaster TV4. "I took my friend's shawl and tied it tightly around his shoulder so that he wouldn't bleed so much."

Maria Pegado, 54, a teacher at the school, said someone threw open the door to her classroom just after the lunch break and shouted to everyone to get out. She and her students then started running out of the school. "I think of my students," said Pegado. "Many of them have fled from countries where things like this happen and now they experience it here."

289 votes — or half the National Assembly's seats — needed for it to pass. Both the Socialists and far-right National Rally lawmakers had said they wouldn't support the motion, giving it no chance to succeed.

Bayrou, a veteran centrist, was appointed in December amid a chaotic political crisis prompted by budget disputes that led to the collapse of his predecessor's government.

French politics have been in

disarray since President Emmanuel Macron called snap elections last year that left no party with a majority in parliament. Under France's Constitution, the motion's failure automatically turns the 2025 budget into law.

The budget is meant to reduce France's deficit to 5.4% of GDP this year, including through spending cuts and tax increases worth a total of 50 billion euros, the Bayrou government said.

Protesters torch home of Mujibur during Hasina's online speech



Protesters vandalise the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Wednesday. AP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

A LARGE group of protesters on Wednesday vandalised and set on fire Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's residence in Dhaka during a live online address by his daughter, deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Witnesses said several thousand people rallied in front of the house at the capital's Dhanmondi area, which was earlier turned into a memorial museum, since evening following a social media call for "Bulldozer Procession" as Hasina was supposed to make her address at 9 pm (BST).

Hasina delivered her address organised by the Awami League's now disbanded student wing Chhatra League and called upon the countrymen to organise a resistance against the current regime. "They are yet to have the strength to destroy the national flag, the constitution and the independence that we earned at the cost of lives of millions of martyrs with a bulldozer," Hasina said in an apparent reference to Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus's incumbent regime, installed by the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement.

She said: "They can demolish a building, but not the history... but they must also remember that the history takes its revenge."

The student movement had vowed to scrap Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution as they promised to bury the "Mujibist constitution". Some far-right groups also suggested change of the national anthem adopted by the

Sheikh Mujib-led post-independence government.

The house was an iconic symbol in Bangladesh history. Sheikh Mujib largely led the pre-independence autonomy movement for decades from the house. During the successive Awami League governments it was turned into a museum. Foreign heads of state or dignitaries used to visit in line with state protocol.

The 32 Dhanmondi residence was set on fire August 5 last year, too, when Hasina's nearly 16-year Awami League regime was toppled and she secretly left the country for India.

Sheikh Mujib was fondly called "Bangabandhu" or "Friend of Bengal" since the late 1960s when his movement for autonomy from Pakistan turned into a mass upheaval in 1969. He was killed along with most of his family members in a coup on August 15, 1975, when Hasina and her sister Rehana were in Germany.

The deposed premier in a slight emotion-choked voice said that the Pakistani troops also looted the house during the 1971 Liberation War but did not demolish or set it on fire.

"Today, this house is being demolished. What crime it had committed? Why they were so afraid of the house... I seek justice from the people of the country. Didn't I do anything for you?" she said.

Witnesses said a group of army troops emerged at the scene to persuade the protestors but were greeted with boos. The protestors damaged a mural of the assassinated leader on the building's boundary wall.

After US, Argentina withdraws from WHO

REUTERS
BUENOS AIRES, FEBRUARY 5

ARGENTINA'S PRESIDENT has ordered the country's withdrawal from the World Health Organisation due to "profound differences" with the UN agency, a presidential spokesperson said Wednesday.

President Javier Milei's decision echoes that of his ally, U.S. President Donald Trump, who began the process of pulling the United States out of WHO with an executive order on his first day back in office on January 21.

The loss of another member country will further fracture co-

operation in global health, though Argentina was expected to provide only about \$8 million to WHO for the agency's estimated \$6.9 billion 2024-2025 budget.

Argentina's decision is based on "profound differences in health management, especially during the (COVID-19) pandemic," spokesperson Manuel Adorni said.

He said WHO guidelines at the time led to the largest shutdown "in the history of mankind." "Argentina will not allow an international organization to intervene in its sovereignty" and much less in our health," he added.

POURED BILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO BUILDING HOMES, HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS FOR THE POOREST

The Aga Khan, spiritual leader who left his mark on developing world, dies at 88

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS, FEBRUARY 5

THE AGA Khan, who became the spiritual leader of the world's millions of Ismaili Muslims at age 20 as a Harvard undergraduate and poured a material empire built on billions of dollars in tithes into building homes, hospitals and schools in developing countries, died Tuesday. He was 88.

His Aga Khan Development Network and the Ismaili religious community announced that His Highness Prince Karim Al-Hussaini, the Aga Khan IV and

49th hereditary imam of the Shiite Ismaili Muslims, died in Portugal surrounded by his family.

On Wednesday, his son Rahim was named the Aga Khan V, the 50th hereditary imam of the Shiite Ismaili Muslims, in accordance with his father's will.

The Ismaili community's website said the late Aga Khan's burial will be held in the coming days, followed by an homage ceremony.

Considered by his followers to be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and treated as a head of state, he was a student when his grandfather

named him as successor to lead the diaspora of Ismaili Muslims, passing over his playboy father.

Over decades, the Aga Khan evolved into a business magnate and a philanthropist, moving between the spiritual and the worldly with ease.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres called him "a symbol of peace, tolerance and compassion in our troubled world." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called him a very good friend and "an extraordinarily compassionate global leader." Condolences poured in online from charity groups he



The Aga Khan became the spiritual head of the Ismaili Muslim community at age 20

supported, as well as the equestrian world, where he was a well-known figure.

The Aga Khan was given the title of "His Highness" by Queen Elizabeth in July 1957, two weeks after his grandfather the Aga Khan III made him heir to the family's 1,300-year dynasty as leader of the Ismaili Muslim sect.

He became the Aga Khan IV on July 11, 1957, in Geneva, Switzerland and later that year had an installation ceremony in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on the spot where his grandfather once had his weight equaled in diamonds in gifts from his followers.

He had left Harvard to be at his ailing grandfather's side, and returned to school 18 months later with an entourage and a deep sense of responsibility.

A defender of Islamic culture and values, he was widely regarded as a builder of bridges between Muslim societies and the West despite — or perhaps because of — his reticence to become involved in politics.

The Aga Khan Development Network, his main philanthropic organization, deals mainly with issues of health care, housing, education and rural economic development. It says it works in over

30 countries and has an annual budget of about \$1 billion for non-profit development activities.

A network of hospitals bearing his name are scattered in places where health care had lacked for the poorest, including Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, where he spent tens of millions of dollars for development of local economies.

The extent of the Aga Khan's financial empire is hard to measure. Some estimated his personal wealth to be in the billions.

Ismailis lived for many generations in Iran, Syria and South Asia before also settling in east Africa,

Central Asia and the Middle East, as well as Europe, North America and Australia. They consider it a duty to tithe up to 12.5% of income to the Aga Khan as steward.

The Aga Khan lived at length in France and had been based in Portugal for several years. He is survived by three sons, a daughter and several grandchildren.

"We have no notion of the accumulation of wealth being evil," he told *Vanity Fair* in 2012. "The Islamic ethic is that if God has given you the capacity or good fortune to be a privileged individual in society, you have a moral responsibility to society."



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What does Rajasthan’s Bill against ‘unlawful’ religious conversions say

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 5

RAJASTHAN HEALTH Minister Gajendra Singh Khinvsar on Tuesday tabled a Bill in the state Legislative Assembly to stop “unlawful” religious conversions. Known as the Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, it is expected to be passed during the ongoing Budget session after a debate.

The Bill, which states that marriages for the “sole purpose of unlawful conversion or vice-versa” will be declared void, is in line with similar legislation introduced in other states such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

What does the Bill say?
In the Bill, unlawful conversion mainly refers to religious conversion through coercion, force, allurement or fraud, with allure-

ment including cash, material benefits, employment, free education, etc.

The burden of proof — that a religious conversion did not take place through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or marriage — lies on the person who has “caused” the conversion, according to the Bill. This is a reversal of the principle of assumption of innocence, which normally applies to the accused person in a criminal case.

The Bill empowers blood relatives to lodge an FIR in a suspected case. It says, “Any aggrieved person, his/her parents, brother, sister, or any other person who is related to him/her by blood, marriage or adoption may lodge a FIR”.

It further states that those involved in unlawful conversion can be punished with one to five years in jail with a minimum fine of Rs 15,000. In case of an unlawful conversion targeting a minor, a woman or a person belong-

ing to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST), the punishment can be between two and 10 years with a fine of Rs 25,000.

For an unlawful mass conversion, the imprisonment would be three to 10 years with a minimum fine of Rs 50,000. Repeat offenders would face a punishment not exceeding double what is provided under the law for each subsequent offence.

All offences under the Bill are cognizable (where the police can make an arrest without a warrant) and non-bailable (where bail is not a matter of right and a magistrate determines if the accused is fit to be released on bail).

What about those wanting to convert voluntarily?

Those converting voluntarily would undergo a seemingly exhaustive process. A prescribed declaration form should be filled

and submitted to the District Magistrate (DM) or the relevant authority 60 days in advance. Violations would invite up to three years imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 10,000.

Then, the “convertor” or the person performing the ceremony would give a month’s advance notice to the DM through a prescribed form. Violating this would invite up to five years imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 25,000.

Subsequently, an officer not below the rank of Additional DM will “get an enquiry conducted through police with regard to real intention, purpose and cause of the proposed religious conversion.”

The converted person will then have to send a declaration in a prescribed form within 60 days of conversion to the DM. A copy of the declaration has to be displayed on the notice board of the DM’s office till the

date of confirmation. Said declaration will include the convert’s date of birth, permanent/present address, father’s/husband’s name, the religion before and after conversion, the date and place of conversion etc. The convert then has to appear before the DM within 21 days from the date of filing the declaration, to establish their identity and confirm the contents of the declaration.

Why has the Bill been introduced?

The Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma-led government has cited the conversion of “gullible persons” as a key reason behind the Bill.

According to the Bill’s “Statement of Objects and Reasons”, “The Constitution confers on each individual the fundamental right to profess, practise and propagate his religion. However, the individual right to freedom of conscience and religion cannot be extended to construe a collective right to

proselytize; the right to religious freedom belongs equally to the person converting and the individual sought to be converted.”

In an interview with *The Indian Express* last year, Rajasthan Law Minister Jogaram Patel said the Bill was being introduced to prevent forcible conversions, especially those of vulnerable communities such as tribal people, and to check what the BJP calls “love jihad”, among other things.

This is not the first time that such a Bill has been introduced in the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly. In 2006, during then Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje’s first term, an anti-conversion Bill was brought in. However, after opposition from the Congress Party and others, the Bill was returned by then President Pratibha Patil.

During her second term (2013-2018), Raje pushed for an amended version of the Bill but the Centre returned it in 2017, claiming the Bill “deviated from national policy”.

EXPLAINED CLIMATE

Why temperatures at North Pole reached 20° Celsius above average

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

TEMPERATURES AT the North Pole increased to more than 20 degrees Celsius above average on February 2, crossing the threshold to melt ice, during the depths of the polar winter (which is from November to February).

“This was a very extreme winter warming event... Probably not the most extreme ever observed, but still at the upper edge of what can happen in the Arctic,” Mika Rantanen, a scientist at the Finnish Meteorological Institute, told *The Guardian*.

Since 1979, the Arctic has warmed four times faster than the global average. This is a problem since the region acts as a refrigerator for the rest of the planet, keeping things cool. Severe consequences can take place if temperatures continue to soar at this rate, from a rise in sea levels to the disruption of global weather patterns.

Why did the North Pole experience such high temperatures?

The unusually high temperatures at the North Pole were the product of a deep low-pressure system — a region where the atmospheric pressure is lower than that of surrounding locations — over Iceland. The system opened gates for the arrival of warmer air from lower latitudes, effectively bringing heat to the region.

Another factor was really hot sea surface temperatures in the north-east Atlantic, which further intensified the wind-driven warming. Absolute temperatures at the North Pole reached more than negative one degree celsius on February 2.

Why has the Arctic warmed faster than the global average?

The global temperatures have increased by around 1.3 degrees Celsius compared to the 1850-1900 baseline. The



Arctic has warmed four times faster than global average. Wikimedia Commons

Arctic, however, has warmed 3.8 times faster than the global average since the late 1970s, according to a 2022 study published in the journal *Communications Earth and Environment*.

There are multiple reasons for this. One of the most prominent factors is the albedo effect or how much sunlight a surface reflects. Sea ice keeps temperatures down in the polar regions, with its bright, white surface reflecting more sunlight to space than liquid water. But as the Arctic’s ice cover is melting, more land or water is getting exposed to the Sun, and as a result, more heat is getting absorbed. This causes warming.

The lack of convection in the higher latitudes is another reason for the Arctic warming faster than other parts of the world. Convection occurs when air close to the ground is heated by the warm surface of the Earth. In the tropics, where more sunlight can reach the surface compared to the Arctic, strong convection takes place, causing warm air to rise. This vertical mixing distributes heat throughout the atmosphere.

That is not the case in the Arctic. Due to weak convection in the region, the extra warming from the greenhouse gases is not able to mix vertically and the heat remains concentrated near the surface.

EXPERT EXPLAINS BASHIR ALI ABBAS

ON TUESDAY, ahead of and during an extraordinary press conference that he addressed with Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, United States President Donald Trump made some major policy announcements on the Middle East.

First, he said that Palestinians should leave Gaza — and that Jordan and Egypt should take them in: “They (Jordanians and Egyptians) say they’re not going to accept, I say they will.” Any number of “alternate” sites could be identified for displaced Gazans; “why would they want to return [to Gaza]? The place has been hell,” Trump said.

Second, he said that the US will “take over Gaza and... do a job with it too”. America will “own” Gaza, and turn it into the “Riviera of the Middle East”, he said. Last year, Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner had spoken about Gaza’s “very valuable” “waterfront property”.

Third, he signed an executive order to bring back “maximum pressure” on Iran that his administration employed during his first term (2017-21), and re-designated the Yemeni Houthis a terrorist organisation.

What are the takeaways from President Trump’s proposals?

■ The new proposal for Gaza (and Palestine) risks violating long-standing resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly supporting Palestinians’ right of self-determination (which India has proactively backed), and several peremptory norms of international law (*jus cogens*) including those that prohibit ethnic cleansing.

■ Trump’s claim that Gazans do not want to return contradicts visible evidence on the ground — following the ceasefire, thousands have returned to North Gaza, even though Israeli bombardment has reduced the homes of many to rubble.

■ The proposal to identify “1, 2, 3, 4, or 8 or 12” alternative sites for Palestinians to live in peace while Gaza is turned into the “Riviera” amounts to the biggest displacement and scattering of the Palestinian population since the 1948 Nakba — and recalls the fate of European Jews before the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

■ The radical shift in Trump’s vision for Palestine contrasts his own “Peace to Prosperity” plan of 2020, which presented a



US President Donald Trump with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office of the White House on Tuesday. The New York Times

comprehensive pathway to a Palestinian state, albeit with severely limited sovereignty and unprecedented concessions to Israel by legitimising its illegal settlements in occupied territory and the annexation of more Palestinian land.

■ This new approach is more clearly transactional than before. Trump clarified that by “taking over” Gaza, he meant “a long term ownership position”. This language is distinct from framings of sovereignty or occupation, and sounds closer to a real estate deal.

■ Trump expressly refused to clarify if the US had stopped supporting the two-state solution, saying it would be clear in the coming weeks.

■ Politically for Netanyahu, the new Trump plan is ideal — his ruling coalition is dependent on support from Bezalel Smotrich’s Religious Zionism party, a vociferous advocate for settlement expansion.

■ Trump’s statements, and Netanyahu’s assertion that Israel still seeks the complete elimination of Hamas from Gaza complicates the post-ceasefire scenario infinitely. With negotiations over stage 2 of the ceasefire officially underway since February 4, statements by Trump and Netanyahu have created uncertainty over the sustenance of the Israel-Hamas agreement after the hostages are released.

Why won’t Egypt and Jordan accept Palestinians?

Both countries had pushed back fiercely the last two times Trump fleetingly voiced the idea.

JORDAN: Jordanian officials have now reiterated their Foreign Ministry’s September 2024 statement that any Israeli attempt to displace Palestinians to Jordan would be consid-

ered “a declaration of war” and a breach of their 1994 peace treaty. Both countries have already amassed more troops at their border — and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have even created a new eastern division.

Jordan’s resistance is driven less by ideological or moral stakes in the Palestinian question and more by existential factors — both demographic and political.

It is the world’s third poorest state in terms of water resources, and it already hosts about 2.4 million registered Palestinian refugees.

This large Palestinian population has long been a political powder keg, which has often grown restive over Jordan’s perceived deep security ties with Israel and the US. The Hashemite monarchy has kept a close watch on them, especially since the events of Black September in 1970, when an armed rebellion by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) threatened the rule of King Hussein, until it was put down through brute force.

In the decades since, Amman has used a mix of political, social, and cultural instruments to combat and contain both Islamist and Palestinian nationalist currents within Jordan. Trump’s plan risks reigniting these currents especially as the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Islamic Action Front won their largest ever seat share (31 seats) in the September 2024 Parliamentary elections after expressing strong support for Hamas during the Gaza war.

EGYPT: The political concern for Cairo is largely similar, apart from the fact that accepting Trump’s ideas and actively participating in scuttling the Palestinian question will have unpredictable political consequences, both domestically and internationally.

For President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, whose politics was founded on fighting against the

Muslim Brotherhood since the 2013 coup, these consequences might include fresh political fuel for a movement that he has fought hard to remove from Egypt.

How will maximum pressure on Iran play out in the region?

Trump’s actions and statements thus far have flowed against the political tide in the Middle East.

Arab leaders have long rejected the idea of Palestinian resettlement. The Foreign Ministers of Jordan, UAE, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar jointly reiterated this four days ago. On Wednesday, the Saudis issued a swift rejection of Trump’s claim that the kingdom does not insist on a Palestinian state to normalise ties with Israel.

Even as he revived his “maximum pressure” policy, Trump said he would “love to be able to make a great deal” with Iran. But regardless of the position he takes, the relationship between the Gulf Arab states and Iran have been on a positive trajectory. Consider:

■ Saudi-Iran bilateral trade resumed in April 2023, and the Iran-UAE Joint Economic Committee for multi-sectoral cooperation held its first session in Abu Dhabi in May 2024.

■ In November 2024, Fayyadh al-Ruwaili, Chief of General Staff of the Saudi military, visited Tehran in an unprecedented defence contact between the two countries.

■ Four Iranian naval vessels are currently docked at Port Khalid in Sharjah, a remarkable first in the history of the UAE and the Islamic Republic. These include the newest warships of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and pictures have shown IRGC officers being welcomed by Emirati government and military officials.

IRGC attacks on commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz had strained the UAE-Iran relationship for a decade, and the first Trump administration designated the IRGC “as a whole” as a foreign terrorist organisation in 2019.

Tehran on its part has long criticised Abu Dhabi for having normalised ties with Israel.

Collectively, these developments raise questions over the implications of fresh US sanctions on Iranian entities, and on the new economic and military bridges that Gulf Arab states are building with Iran. Also, Iran last week expressed willingness for talks on its nuclear program if the “West” is serious, and Iranian state media has lauded Trump’s decision to end the foreign aid that Tehran believes helped Iranian dissidents and foreign-based-opposition.

Bashir Ali Abbas is a Senior Research Associate at the Council for Strategic and Defense Research, New Delhi

Story of NavIC: crucial indigenous SatNav system, hurdles in development path

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 5

INDIA’S SPACE agency on Sunday reported the partial failure of its NVS-02 navigation satellite due to the non-firing of its engines in space. This was the latest in a series of setbacks suffered by the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), operationally referred to as the Navigation with India Constellation (NavIC) system.

The IRNSS was conceived in 1999 following the war in Kargil, during which India’s military could not use the American Global Positioning System (GPS) in the conflict zone. (India and the US now cooperate in many fields, and Washington has approved the system.)

An indigenous seven-satellite constellation serving both defence and civilian needs was proposed to be put in place by 2016, and the first satellite, IRNSS 1A, was launched on July 1, 2013.

Eleven years later, however, only five of the 11 satellites launched in the Rs 2,250 crore NavIC program — including replace-

ments for failed satellites — are fully operational, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has said.

After IRNSS-1A in 2013, the IRNSS-1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H, 1I, 1J, and 1K were launched between April 4, 2014 and January 29, 2025. After the launch of IRNSS-1G, the seventh in the series on April 28, 2016, ISRO had said “the successful launch... [of the satellite] signifies the completion of the IRNSS constellation”.

What went wrong with the satellites?

Mid-2016 onward, there were reports of failures of the rubidium atomic clocks used in several navigation satellites, including ISRO’s IRNSS and the European Space Agency’s (ESA’s) Galileo Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). There are three atomic clocks on each IRNSS satellite.

Then ISRO chairman A S Kiran Kumar announced in July 2016 that all the atomic clocks on IRNSS 1A had “stopped working”, even though the “overall performance of our navigation system” had not been affected, and the “rest of the satellite components [were] functioning perfectly”. A replacement satellite, IRNSS 1H, with

modified clocks, would be launched in 2017, the space agency said.

An ISRO satellite navigation program official had said at the time that “six of the seven IRNSS satellites that were launched [until April 2016] are still working”, but there were “inherent hardware related problems on the rubidium atomic clocks in some of these satellites”. The clocks used in the Galileo system had developed similar problems, the official had said.

The atomic clocks on four other IRNSS satellites — 1C, 1D, 1E, and 1G — also developed problems subsequently. The engine failure on the IRNSS-1K (or NVS-02) launched last month, which has left it in a sub-optimal orbit around Earth, means that six of the 11 IRNSS satellites launched so far have been partial failures.

Also, the IRNSS-1H, launched on August 31, 2017 to replace the IRNSS-1A, did not reach the desired orbit after a heat shield protecting the satellite on board the PSLV-C39 rocket did not detach during the launch.

EXPLAINED SCIENCE

So how many satellites in the NavIC system are operational currently?

It is estimated that only four IRNSS satellites are fully operational currently — 1B, 1F, 1I (the replacement for 1A after the launch of 1H, the original replacement, failed), and 1J (the replacement for the partially failed 1G).

ISRO’s 2023-24 annual report says that following the launch of NVS-01 on May 28, 2023, five NavIC satellites are operational — IRNSS-1B, 1C, 1F, and 1I, and NVS-01 (IRNSS-1J). However, according to some estimates, 1C is only partially operational due to the presence of the old series of atomic clocks that were reported to be malfunctioning.

First-generation IRNSS satellites launched after July 2016 — that is, 1H and 1I — carried modified versions of the original clocks provided by a European supplier under a €4 million deal for an estimated 45 clocks.

1J, which is operational, and 1K, which reported an engine failure last month, belong to the next generation of IRNSS satellites, and are, on that account, called NVS-01 and NVS-02 respectively. These satellites

are equipped with a mix of indigenous and foreign clocks instead of the defective clocks used in the first generation satellites.

Why is the IRNSS/NavIC system important for India?

The NavIC satellites provide two types of services — Standard Positioning Service which is for general and commercial use, and Restricted Service which is meant for the defence forces — over the Indian land-mass and neighbouring regions.

According to A S Ganeshan, a former director of ISRO’s Satellite Navigation Program, the indigenous system provides positioning data “at all times with position accuracy better than 20 metres during all weather conditions, anywhere within India and a region extending about 1,500 km around India on dual frequencies in L5 and S band”. (Benefits of an Indian Navigation System’, *Science and Culture*, 2017)

A primary reason to develop an indigenous satellite navigation system like the IRNSS despite the existence of global systems such as the GPS (US) and GLONASS (Russia), is the reliability that it offers in defence use.

“Since the first Global NSS systems (GPS and GLONASS) were primarily developed for military purposes, the military applications are one of the drivers for these systems... GPS offers encrypted Precise Positioning Service which is available only to the US military and its allies. GNSS is used for different types of military applications such as military navigation and target acquisition,” Ganeshan wrote.

For NavIC to become ubiquitous in the Indian subcontinent, ISRO will have to sell its capabilities to general positioning service providers such as mobile phone and vehicle manufacturers, etc.

In December 2023, a few months after the successful launch and deployment of the NVS-01 (IRNSS-1J) satellite on May 29, 2023, the American mobile communications chipmaker Qualcomm reported an agreement to incorporate NavIC support in some of its chipsets.

The partial failure of NVS-02 (1K) notwithstanding, ISRO plans to launch three more second-generation NavIC satellites — NVS-03, 04, and 05 — “to augment NavIC base layer constellation with enhanced features for ensuring continuity of services”.

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Wanted: Support act to perform lead roles

In Bumrah's absence, India would hope his associates and accomplices emerge from his shadow and deliver

PRATYUSH RAJ
NAGPUR, FEBRUARY 5

JASPRIT BUMRAH, like Sachin Tendulkar once, carries the mood of a nation. With a single, devastating spell, he could bring joy, as he has provided numerous times in his career. A bad day on the field, those rare days when nothing quite works for him, he plunges the millions watching him into despair. Now, they anxiously wait for his fitness updates for the Champions Trophy.

A chain of questions arises. At what stage of the tournament would he be fit enough to feature in the tournament? How fit would he be? Would he not feature at all? What would India do? Who would replace him? It's just like Tendulkar's injury-ridden late 90s. Whenever India have performed well, there has been the stamp of Bumrah's sleight-of-hand mastery. Be it the 2024 World T20 final, the 2023 ODI World Cup—it's little coincidence that India's lone defeat in the tournament arrived on his rare off-day, which cruelly came in the final against Australia—or the Test wins in England, Australia and South Africa.

Put it simply, India would miss Bumrah. Not just the skills, wickets and moments, but the fear he instills in batsmen, and his ability to inspire his team. Virat Kohli would say at the felicitation function of the triumphant T20 team at Wankhede. "What I want everyone to do is applaud a guy who brought us back into the tournament again and again and again," he would say.

But with just a fortnight for the start of Champions Trophy, India can't brood on his absence or sweat over his return date. Rather, they have to discover the perfect bowling combo—for finding a like-for-like replacement—to compensate for his absence. In this regard, the return of Mohammed Shami spells relief. There is the fast improving Arshdeep Singh and the promising Harshit Rana too, who though would have just three ODIs against England, kickstarting in Nagpur from Wednesday, to find their ODI gears.

But there are caveats too. Shami, who on his day could be as lethal as Bumrah, is returning from a lengthy injury-induced lay-off. His last ODI was the World Cup final in Ahmedabad, 15 months ago. He did squeeze in a couple of games in the T20-leg against England. But how his body holds up to the rigours of bowling 10 overs, and whether he could sustain his intensity throughout the match, are uncertain. Even the most seasoned bowlers take time to regain their optimal rhythm.

Then there is Arshdeep, one of India's heroes in the T20 World Cup. The joint wicket-taker with 17 scalps, he, like Shami in the 50-over World Cup, benefitted from Bumrah's tight spells at the other end. In ODIs, though, his sample size is not big enough to draw conclusions about his long-term promise. In eight games, he has picked up 12 wickets including a five-for against South Africa. But he reinforced his 50-overs values with a haul of 20 wickets, the highest, in the 50-over Vijay Hazare Trophy. With his ability to swing and seam the ball both ways, apart from the variations at his disposal, he holds promise to reproduce his T20 heroics in ODIs too. England's batsmen would offer a stiff examination of his virtues.

The third seamer in the squad, Harshit, has not yet made his debut in this format, despite encouraging starts in other forms. He is not a vastly experienced List A hand either—having featured in only 14 games, though the numbers of 22 wickets at an average of 23.45 stand impressively.

It's important that at least two of the three frontline seamers along with Hardik Pandya, click collectively. One man alone cannot move the mountain, as the Test series in Australia demonstrated.



Virat Kohli, Arshdeep Singh, Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma during a training session ahead of the first ODI against England in Nagpur.

PTI

The concerns, then, are not limited to the seam department. Like Shami, lead spinner Kuldeep Yadav is also returning from a surgery, even though it did not keep him on the sidelines for a lengthy period. He played India's last ODI series in Sri Lanka as well as the last round of the Ranji Trophy group games recently, wherein he logged 31 overs. Still, there would be a few anxious eyes following his bowling.

The identity of his partner has sparked considerable interest and speculation. The late addition of leg-spinner Varun Chakaravarthy, who troubled England in the T20s, adds a layer of intrigue. Like Harshit, Varun is an ODI fresher, but he has bowled spectacularly in this format as well (average of 14.13, economy rate of 4.28 in 23 outings). He was also the leading wicket-taker among spinners in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, snapping up 18 wickets with a best of 5/9 and an average of 12.16.

Whether a heap of wickets would seal him a late spot in the Champions Trophy is uncertain but India captain Rohit Sharma has hinted that Varun is in contention for the Champions Trophy. "He has certainly shown something different. I understand that it is a T20 format but he has clearly got something different about him. So we just wanted to have an option and see what we can do with him," he said.

"Clearly during the series it presents us an opportunity to play him at some stage and see what he is capable of. If things plan out really well for us and he does what is required then definitely there is something that we need to think about," he added.

Thus, the absence of Bumrah has breathed an extra skin of context and importance to the three-match series. But every answer brings us back to the same set of Bumrah-centric questions. He is irreplaceable, but with collective brilliance, India could make his absence less pronounced. The series will throw vital clues on India's ability to cope without Bumrah against quality sides.

Combative Rohit loses cool on questions about form and future

PRATYUSH RAJ
NAGPUR, FEBRUARY 5

ROHIT SHARMA didn't seem too pleased with questions on his current form and his future after the ICC Champions Trophy in the press conference on the eve of the first ODI against England in Nagpur on Wednesday. When asked about his lack of runs over the last several months and the return to his favourite format, the Indian captain lost his composure.

"What kind of a question is that? This is a different format, a different time. As usual, as cricketers, we know there will be ups and downs and I have faced a lot in my career, so this is nothing new to me. We know every day is a fresh day, every series is a fresh series," Rohit shot back.

"I am looking forward to the challenge, not looking at what has happened in the past. Clearly you don't, so obviously for me also there is no reason to look back too much. A lot of good things have happened as well. It's important that I focus on what is coming up and what lies ahead for me. It is as simple as that. Look to try and start the series on a high."

It was unlike any Rohit press conference one has seen over the years. Even after India were bowled out for 46 against New Zealand last year, the India captain had come for the presser and answered all questions coolly. But at Nagpur on Wednesday, he got angry and aggressive, like his predecessor Virat Kohli.



Rohit Sharma was in fighting form on the eve of the first ODI . PTI

When coaxed about his future, the captain termed the question irrelevant.

"How is it relevant that I talk about my future plans sitting here when there are three ODIs and a Champions Trophy coming up. Reports have been going around for a number of years, but I am not here to clarify those reports. For me, these three games and the Champions Trophy are very important, so my focus is on these games. We will see what happens afterwards."

Captain on edge

Rohit also lost his cool when asked about any Plan B if all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who has had a chequered fitness history,

gets injured like he did during the ODI World Cup.

"Why are we thinking about the negatives? That he will get injured, this will happen, that will happen. In the minds of the selectors, there are things. I can't say that here. We played the World Cup when they got injured. He got injured in the third or fourth match. After that, we played the whole tournament. Although we lost the final, we played good cricket till the final. So now, I won't think about what will happen if we get injured.

You are playing good cricket now. So we will hope that you keep playing good cricket and nothing happens," he said.

Mohammed Shami has been included in the squad despite ordinary domestic returns, but Rohit wasn't reading too much into it, asking people to keep a player's performances over a long time in mind.

"He has not played cricket for a year and a half. Don't be quick to judge players. The boy has been playing cricket for the last 10-12 years and performed for the team. He bowled so well in the (ODI) World Cup. If he doesn't get the results in some domestic matches as expected, it doesn't make him a bad bowler," he argued.

"He has bowled so much, taken so many wickets and won many games, so think about it. We just see what has happened now, but don't see what has happened in the past. We have a short-term memory. He single-handedly won us matches in the World Cup, and took a lot of five-wicket hauls."

Root holds key in line-up full of firecrackers

PRATYUSH RAJ
NAGPUR, FEBRUARY 5

THERE'S SOMETHING classy and stylish about the way Joe Root goes about his job. The sense of assurance he brings to the table is evident in the way he batted in the Nagpur nets on Wednesday. He looked at ease against the local spin bowlers. Instead of trying to hit every ball out of the park, he looked to use his feet and play it down the ground. He also showed his range of shots, including the conventional sweep and the 'reverse' version.

The "cheeky smile," as mentioned by his captain Jos Buttler, never leaves his face, and he is probably the batsman the England team management will be banking on to combat their spin threat from India.

"He'll be at number three," Buttler revealed Root's batting position on the eve of the match.

"He's one of the great players of the game and obviously a vital part of ODI cricket for England for a long time.

"I'm excited to see him in this phase of his career, when he's not had the captaincy. He is back with that cheeky smile on his face and really enjoying his cricket. I expect him to do exactly the same in this environment. He's



England's attacking batsmen will hope to be anchored by the composed Joe Root. AP

obviously got loads of experience in ODI cricket, which would be great for some of the guys who haven't played as much in our group."

Brendon McCullum, who was head coach of the England Test team, has been charged with turning around the white-ball team's fortunes as well. But his first series did not go well, as they were bamboozled by spin during a 4-1 series defeat in India. England lost 29 wickets to spin over the five games.

All the England batsmen seemed to have the same mindset: attack the first ball of the over. Citing Harry Brook as an example, former England captain Michael Vaughan said the current generation of England cricketers disrespects spin while trying to whack every ball out of the park.

"I'd love him (Brook) to watch Joe Root, who is a master of going back, hitting into the legside, nabbing a two, getting off strike," Vaughan wrote in a column for *The Telegraph*. "Sweeps and reverse sweeps to manoeuvre the field and create gaps. Do not just think boundary, boundary, boundary all the time. If Brook marries his own game with a bit of Root, he will be much better for it."

After the group-stage exit at the 2015 ODI World Cup, Eoin Morgan changed the template England were playing with over the years. They became the first team to smash 350 in ODIs on a regular basis. And Root's pragmatic approach, manoeuvring the ball into the gaps, allowed everyone else to be firecrackers.

In the current England set-up, all the batsmen love to whack the ball out of the park. But to do well in this ODI series and the Champions Trophy, they need a fulcrum.

Root will have to remind England's swashbucklers that the ODI game lasts more than double the time a T20 does.

'Want to be aggressive'

Buttler admitted their inability to execute their plans has hurt England in ODIs recently. "I'll just say this in terms of execution. Whether you want to be aggressive, you want to be conservative, you want to be measured, you've still got to go out there and execute it and play it well," he said. "If I look back at that World Cup, the two teams in the final were playing a really positive and aggressive brand of cricket. You may think of the way Travis Head took that final with the bat. It can be successful. This can be a great part of the world to play that fashion of cricket."

However, Buttler maintained that his team will stick to its ultra-aggressive style, despite current results not going their way.

"We want to play in exactly the same way. We want to find ways to put pressure on the opposition with the bat.

"We played well in phases in the T20s, never quite long enough to run away with games and end up getting the results.

ODI cricket 'has been pushed to the margins,' says Buttler

PRATYUSH RAJ
NAGPUR, FEBRUARY 5

OVER THE past few years, there is a growing consensus that ODIs are nearing the end and England captain **Jos Buttler** agrees with it.

Buttler, an ODI World Cup winner himself feels the format has been pushed to its margin and he is unsure about its relevance and future.

"I'm unsure, to be honest," he told reporters on the eve of the first ODI against India in Nagpur. "I think I've actually really enjoyed 50 over cricket, it's always been one of my favourite formats actually, but it's certainly been pushed a little bit towards the margins, in the recent years," he said.

As it stands, the men's Cricket World Cup is likely to live on, with broadcast rights sold in India until the 2027 edition being hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, and 2031 is to be staged by India and Bangladesh. But the question is for how long will it survive? At a time when attention spans appear to be diminishing and T20 cricket continues on its inexorable domination of the sport's calendar, the future of ODI is under the hammer.

Buttler also blames the packed schedule



"The way scheduling is, and obviously the rise of T20 and franchise cricket," he said.

Buttler says for him winning the 50-over World Cup is still ahead than winning the World T20. "I still believe if you talk to guys about winning a World Cup, they'd probably say a 50 over World Cup ahead of a T20 World Cup at the moment," he said.

"Whether that continues to be the case moving forward I don't know, but the schedules are always the thing. If you can get the best players on the park, playing against each other in whatever the format, I think people are always going to be excited to watch it," he said.

Freestyle chess organisers drop ‘world champion’ from regulations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
FEBRUARY 5

THERE WAS a temporary truce in the world of chess after FIDE announced that organisers of Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour had removed the phrase ‘world championship’ from their regulations. This means that the winner of the Freestyle Chess Tour will not be officially called a Freestyle World Champion, as the organisers had initially intended.

“Today, the organisers of the ‘Freestyle Chess Tour’ fully deleted from its regulations the reference to the ‘World Championship’ title. Following this change in the regulations, players wishing to participate in the 2025 ‘Freestyle Chess Tour’ are no longer required to sign the waiver note,” FIDE posted on their social media handles. The intent of Freestyle Tour’s organisers to crown the winner of their event as a ‘world champion’ had been the sticking point between the global governing body of chess and organisers. The first event of the Freestyle Tour will be held in Weissenhaus later this week, with events also planned for New York, Paris, New Delhi and Cape Town.

“As the regulations of ‘freestyle tour’ have been changed and do not contain “world chess champion[ship]” notion anymore, no further signatures from players are required,” FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich announced on social media. The waiver note that Dvorkovich referred to had been sent to players in an email by the FIDE Legal Director. FIDE had made it mandatory for players to sign the waiver note by Tuesday. Dvorkovich had told The Indian Express that about 10 players — about half of the players who had been emailed the waiver notes by FIDE — had signed them before the deadline on Tuesday. FIDE said the waiver notes gave the players exemption to compete in the Freestyle event despite them having existing contracts that prohibited them from playing in any rival “world championships” not regulated by FIDE.

FIDE and Freestyle Tour had been involved in a bitter battle over the past two months, which had seen plenty of name-calling on social media, accusations thrown at each other from both sides and even private text messages being leaked. Both parties had started amicably, before talks had collapsed at the end of last year. The man behind the Freestyle Tour, Jan Henric Buettner, had declared that they were ready for war with FIDE.

Then, Dvorkovich and Buettner had resumed conversation to try and find a middle ground before talks collapsed again. This time, FIDE Council had raised objections and had also stated that there was very little faith in organisers of Freestyle Chess.

Gukesh to play

The ugly fight had led to five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand, who is a FIDE Deputy President, to pull out of the first series, which will be held in Weissenhaus.

However, the event will see two world champions competing: five-time champion Magnus Carlsen and Gukesh. Besides, Carlsen and Gukesh, the event will also see World No 2 Fabiano Caruana, World No 3 Hikaru Nakamura, World No 6 Nodirbek Abdusattorov and World No 7 Alireza Firouzja in action at a luxury resort. Uzbek prodigy Javokhir Sindarov will replace Anand.

The intent of Freestyle Tour’s organisers to crown the winner of their event as a ‘world champion’ had been the sticking point between the global governing body of chess and organisers

The Hundred, the Millions & the Billionaires

Behind the \$144 mn ‘strategic’ investment in the Lord’s-based franchise: nostalgia, love for the game and a potential to own Kohli

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

GROWING UP in Hyderabad, the bedroom wall at Microsoft chief executive officer Satya Nadella’s home had three posters that probably would have never been pasted together. Alongside philosopher Karl Marx and Goddess of wealth Lakshmi was good-looking batsman ML Jaisimha, a long-time favourite cricketer among the game’s connoisseurs. In an old interview, Nadella has also spoken about missing the heady days of Sachin Tendulkar’s debut as he moved to the United States in 1988.

Another desi corporate czar in the US, Nikesh Arora of cyber-security company Palo Alto Networks, recently said how he and his other Silicon Valley friends, most Fortune 1000 regulars with Indian roots, get up at 4 am to watch the Indian Premier League. They would tune in for Tests too. At the height of the anti-trust law debate in 2021, Google CEO Sundar Pichai would find time to follow Rishabh Pant’s daredevilry in Brisbane. “One of the greatest Test series wins ever.” – he would tweet.

It isn’t just cricket but also the longing to reconnect with their childhood passion in the land of baseball that brings most Indians together – even business rivals. Last week, 11 Indian-American cricket romantics got the right to be called part-owners of the Home of cricket – the iconic Lord’s cricket ground in London. The privilege to be the first-ever private partners at Lord’s in more than 200 years came at a price – 144 million pounds. Converted into rupees, the amount makes Indian eyes water – Rs 1,500 crore.

The opportunity arose when the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) decided to auction 49 percent of the eight teams playing ‘The Hundred’ – the contest for supremacy in cricket’s latest variation, the four-year-old barely breathing format in need of a cylindrical of fiscal oxygen. This opened the door to some exclusive cricket clubs. Silicon Valley cricket enthusiasts wouldn’t have missed this chance. It was just a minority stake of ownership for one tournament with no rights or say in anything else. It was still worth it, it seems.

This rare chance saw the coming together



The Oval Invincibles, representing the county of Surrey in The Hundred, will now have Mumbai Indians as co-owners. Reuters

LORD’S @ 49%: RS 1500 CR, LEEDS @ 100%: RS 1100 CR

■ A Silicon Valley consortium of mostly investors with Indian roots, headed by Nikesh Arora of Palo Alto Networks, now has 49 percent stake in Lord’s-based The Hundred franchise London Spirit. They paid about Rs 1,500 crore.

■ Others part of the Cricket Investor Holdings Limited are CEOs Sundar Pichai (Alphabet), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), Adobe (Shantanu Narayen), and Silver Lake Management (Egon Durban), Satyan Gajwani, vice-chairman of Times Internet, too is part of the consortium.

■ In a steal, Mumbai Indians paid

about Rs 650 crore to be the stakeholders of the other London franchise — Oval Invincibles.

■ Sanjeev Goenka of Lucknow SuperGiants became the majority owner of Manchester Originals. He paid Rs 885 crore. Welsh Fire, the Cardiff franchise, too has an Indian investor in IT magnet Sanjay Govil for about Rs 437 crore.

■ Yorkshire, based at Headingley in Leeds, sold its entire stake in the Northern Superchargers franchise to the Sun Group, which owns Sunrisers Hyderabad, for about Rs 1,093 crore.

of a consortium that can pass off a corporate Dream Team. Called Cricket Investor Holdings Limited, this group, headed by Palo Alto’s Arora, has Pichai and Nadella along with CEOs of Adobe and Silver Lake Management – Shantanu Narayen and Egon Durban. Also part of the consortium is Satyan Gajwani, vice-chairman of Times Internet.

Mind you, these are individual investments of high-profile cricket enthusiasts with no involvement of the institutions they work in. The names of other investors in the consortium haven’t yet been made public.

Along with these American NRIs, there will be several other Indians enjoying ownership status at iconic English grounds this The

Proposed new scoring system could change badminton’s landscape

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

A NEW scoring system could be in place for badminton, as the Badminton World Federation has said this week that its chief decision-making body (BWF Council) has endorsed the 3x15 scoring system to replace the current 3x21 system. The decision was taken at the BWF Council’s meeting on 9 November 2024 in Kuala Lumpur. What does this mean for badminton? Here are some answers:

What is the 3x15 system?

The 3x15 is already defined as part of the ‘Alternative Laws of Badminton’ – in simple terms, a match will consist of the best of

three games. The game shall be won by the side that first scores 15 points (instead of the current 21). What happens at 14-14? We will continue to play on till one side gains a two-point lead first. In the current scoring system, 29-29 becomes the decisive point in a game, which will now change to 20-all. So the side scoring the 21st point will win the game.

Will this rule change be immediate?

There is some time yet. The BWF Council has only approved a plan where the 3x15 will be tested at selected Continental Championships, Grade 3 tournaments, national and international leagues, and national tournaments. The testing period is set to be approximately April to September/October 2025. Towards the end of the testing period, BWF said it will survey key stakeholders at each tournament as well as an overall survey of all Members, Athletes’ Commissions (players), technical officials, and commercial partners. “BWF Council will make a final decision whether to propose this new system to

the BWF Annual General Meeting 2026,” the governing body said.

What are the reasons for this proposed change?

The BWF has listed three main factors. a) more exciting points and a higher probability that each point is more exciting; b) Getting to more exciting points sooner; c) the shorter matches will lead to better scheduling and help sustain fan interest while also helping with player health and longevity.

Wasn’t 15 points the OG system?

Yes, historically, badminton was a 15-point sport, but this proposed change is not a return to the older days. Originally, all disciplines were played to 15, while women’s singles was till 11. But the key aspect in that erstwhile system was that only the serving side could win a point. Every time a side lost serve, there was no change to the scoreboard. So, a game could be decided 15-2, for instance, but that was no guaran-

tee of it being a short game if the serve kept changing hands.

What was the last big experiment?

There was the whirlwind 7x5 period in 2001 and 2002, when each match was played as the best of five games and a game was won by the first side to score seven points. It was used at the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, but that’s where it stopped. According to BBC, the decision to abort the experiment was taken after a six-hour debate at an International Badminton Federation (IBF) was the predecessor to BWF) council meeting where it “was apparent the majority of the members still favoured the old scoring system,” according to the president Korn Dabbaransi.

How long has the current system been in place?

When the 21x3 (setting to 30) system was introduced, it was a significant departure from the older scoring system. Under

the “rally point” system, as it is known, each rally accounted for a point, and not just the player or team holding serve. It was introduced at the start of the 2006 season and has been in use since then internationally, but attempts have been made to change this.

So there was a recent attempt to change?

Indeed. As recently as 2021, there was a big push from BWF to change the scoring system to 11 x 5 (best of 5, with 11 points to win a game). That proposal had been put forward by the Indonesian Badminton Association. It turned out to be an incredibly close vote at the 82nd BWF AGM. The 11x5 proposal received 66.31% votes for and 33.69% against, but it was marginally short of the two-thirds majority needed (>66.67%). BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer had said then: “...proposed scoring system change has been part of my vision to make badminton more exciting and to increase the entertainment value for stakeholders.” A total of 282 votes were cast in that AGM.

Meet Suruchi Phogat, the former wrestler who now wields a pistol

NIHAL KOSHIE
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 5

WRESTLER VIRENDER Singh, better known as goonga pehelwan and India’s Deaflympics hero, inspired Inder Singh Phogat. So much so that when Inder’s daughter Suruchi was born a year after Virender won a gold medal at the 2005 Melbourne Deaflympics, he set his mind on making her a wrestler. The champion lived down the road. Inder and Virender’s homes were less than a kilometre apart in Sasroli village, Jhajjar.

By 11, Suruchi joined a local wrestling academy, spurred on by Virender’s second medal. But tragedy struck a year later when Suruchi broke her shoulder bone. The fracture took nearly a year to heal fully. And wrestling’s loss became shooting’s gain. At the MPSC Shooting range on Wednesday at the National Games, 18-year-old Suruchi lived up to her rating as one to watch out for by winning the 10m air pistol gold medal. It was a Haryana 1-2 on the podium with 2022 Asian Games gold medalist Palak Gulia winning the silver – Suruchi with a final score of 245.7 and Palak 243.6. Punjab’s Simranpreet Kaur Brar (218.8) won the bronze, while Paris Olympic Rhythm Sangwan was off the podium.

Being in the limelight in double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker’s pet event

is both a challenge and an opportunity, Suruchi said. There’s anticipation of Manu and Suruchi in the same field at the domestic trials that begin later this week in New Delhi, if the Olympic bronze medallist makes an appearance.

Suruchi’s progress captured the imagination when she won a hat-trick of individual medals at the National shooting championship in New Delhi in December. Gold medals in the women, junior and youth categories. “The medals at the National championships were a boost of confidence. I am pleased to continue with my good form,” Suruchi said. “I didn’t think twice when switching from wrestling to shooting. All I wanted was to be a sportsperson and win medals.”

A grand welcome, organised by the village elders when she returned to Sasroli after December’s nationals gave Suruchi her brush with mini-stardom. In her second-choice sport, she’s starting to come of age.

When Suruchi broke her shoulder, Inder, because of the severity of the injury, felt returning to the mat would be a high-risk move. “There was a chance of the shoulder getting injured again. She wanted to play a sport. Shooting seemed the sensible choice. Today my son, Nishant, 15, is also a shooter. When Suruchi was born, I was fascinated by Virender pehelwan’s achievements so wanted her to become a wrestler. Shooting



Suruchi Phogat with her father Inder Singh Phogat (L) and coach Suresh Singh after winning the gold at the National Games in Dehradun on Wednesday. Nihal Koshie

has been rewarding,” Inder said.

By 14, Suruchi had enrolled at the Guru Dronacharya Shooting Academy in Bhiwani, 60 km from her home. The up-and-down train journey took three hours. First, a 2 km walk to Jharli station, then by train, followed by an e-rickshaw ride. It’s a journey the father and daughter undertake even today, seven days a week.

“I retired when she took up shooting and travelling with my daughter is my full-time job,” Inder said. When in the army, Inder was posted in J&K and was part of anti-militant operations but his heart rate goes up when his daughter is competing. “That was a different life. This is different. There I was giving my all for the country, now it is for my children.”

To fund her shooting dreams, Inder had used his army pension money and also took the help of well-wishers. Since September, the Olympic Gold Quest has signed up Suruchi. “They take care of weapon-related expenses, pellets, and travel,” Inder said.

There is another army connection and a Manu Bhaker link. Suresh Singh, a retired army coach, runs the Guru Dronacharya Shooting Academy, Suruchi’s training base. “Manu Bhaker trained at my academy for two years in her early days. Initially, I had a manual system (paper target), now it is all electronic. There has been a renewed interest in shooting since the Paris Olympics,” Suresh said. After the medal ceremony, Suruchi got her father and coach, pillars of her shooting career, to pose beside her with the medal.

Coach Suresh thinks an Olympic medalist and a high-quality domestic field of shooters makes the women’s 10m air pistol event one of the most competitive. “Suruchi has started off well. Bigger tests are awaited. She will be ready for it. The competition will keep her motivated,” Suresh said.

Suruchi has set Los Angeles 2028 as her big target. She has an Olympic pin in her possession, given to her by a foreign competitor at a junior world cup. With dreams of an Olympic medal, Suruchi is proving she’s inching her way to the big league, one shot at a time.

CWG Lawn Bowls champions shine

Dehradun: India’s historic gold-winning team members of 2022 Commonwealth Games — Lovely Choubey and Rupa Tirkey — shone on lawn bowls field while Balraj Panwar strengthened his status as a top rower as star performers from minor sports grabbed the spotlight at the National Games here Wednesday.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands cyclist David Beckham Elkatochoongo, whose middle name saved him from being denied entry in the United Kingdom for the 2022 CWG, claimed his second gold of the Games, winning the men’s time trial 1km event to add to his top podium finish in sprint on Tuesday.

As the Games entered its halfway stage, Karnataka led the medal tally with 28 gold, 11 silver and 15 bronze for a total haul of 54. Services, who added six gold to their kitty on Wednesday, bridged the gap with 27 gold, 10 silver and 9 bronze for a total of 46.

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