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Days after NGT flagged high faecal coliform levels in rivers in Prayagraj, UP CM Yogi Adityanath asserts in Assembly that water at Sangam is fit for both 'snan' (bathing) and 'aachman' (ritual drinking). P 16

Tamil Nadu dy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin says 'states that accept Hindi lose their mother tongue' and that his state is ready for a 'language war'. P 16

Pope Francis is alert and still cracking jokes despite having double pneumonia, Italy's PM Giorgia Meloni says after visiting 88-year-old pontiff in hospital. P 18

Concern over a man who'd exhibited 'fixated behaviour' makes Emma Raducanu approach the chair umpire in tears and take an unscheduled break in her second-round match at the Dubai Championships, says Women's Tennis Association. P 20



EuRekha! BJP picks first-time MLA as Delhi's 4th woman CM

3-Time Councillor Gets LG's Invite To Form Govt

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New Delhi: Catching heavyweights and hopefuls in the party off-guard, BJP Wednesday chose a first-time MLA from Shalimar Bagh, Rekha Gupta, as Delhi chief minister.

The fourth woman to get the top job in Delhi after Sushma Swaraj (BJP), Sheila Dikshit (Congress), and Atishi (AAP), Gupta, 50, will steer BJP's govt in the city 27 years after the last one led by Swaraj.

After Gupta, a three-time councillor, was elected leader of the legislature party, she went to Raj Niwas and staked her claim to form the govt before LG V K Saxena. Her name had been proposed by MLAs Parvash Verma, Satish Upadhyay and Vijender Gupta—all probable candidates for the coveted job before the central brass announced its decision.

Saxena greeted her with a bouquet and gave BJP the green signal for the swearing-in ceremony to be held at Ramliya Maidan on Thursday noon.

FULL COVERAGE: P 2 & 3

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Saxena greeted her with a bouquet and gave BJP the green signal for the swearing-in ceremony to be held at Ramliya Maidan on Thursday noon.

► 'Moment of pride', P 2



Rekha Gupta with Parvash Verma, who was also seen as a contender for the CM's post

WHAT WORKED FOR HER?

► She is a woman, belongs to Bania community, which played a key role in BJP's win, and has risen from the grassroots

► This is a moment of pride for women across the country. I am fully committed... to take Delhi to new heights. Will work with honesty and integrity. All MLAs will work like Team Modi

► I have full faith you will work with dedication in the direction of the resolution taken by PM to make Delhi one of the top capitals of the world —Amit Shah | HOME MINISTER

► Her appointment is in keeping with recent trend of BJP going for relatively low-profile netas for CMs, as seen in other states too

► It is a matter of happiness Delhi will be led by a woman. You will get full support of AAP for the development of the city —Atishi | EX-CM

Ex-ABVP neta 1st Dusu office bearer to take city's hot seat

Rekha Gupta, born in Haranya's Jind district in 1974, joined ABVP, the student organisation of RSS, when she was a student of Daulat Ram College. In 1996, she was elected president of Delhi University Student Union (Dusu). In fact, she will be the first Dusu office bearer to be Delhi chief minister, reports Atul Mathur.

In the next few years, she worked as a ground-level BJP

► Always Kept Low Profile | ABVP Strikes Running | Neighbours' Pride, P 2

Traffic advisory out: Expect diversions near Ramliya Maidan

Traffic diversions are expected from 7am to 4pm at key roads around Ramliya Maidan for the swearing-in Thursday given VIP movements. Delhi Traffic Police has issued an advisory on its social media handles, citing expected diversions at Subhash Park T-Junction, Raj Ghat, Delhi Gate, ITO, Ajmeri Gate, Ranjit Singh flyover, Bhambhuti Marg-DDU Marg traffic light, and Jhandewalan roundabout. Train passengers have been advised to take the Paharganj side exit instead of Ajmeri Gate. P 2

Trapped in burning building, 4 of family jump off 2nd floor

A couple, their son and daughter were critically injured after they were trapped in a fire at their home in Nanjoli, west Delhi, Monday and jumped off their second-floor balcony. Two others were also injured. The daughter's twin ran to the terrace and was unhurt. P 6

Everest snow line rose 490ft in 1.5 mths

In just 1.5 months, the snow line in the glaciated landscape around Mt Everest rose from 20,000ft on Dec 11, 2024 to 19,510ft on Jan 28, due to sublimation, in which strong winds, low humidity and warm temperatures cause snow to evaporate directly. NASA scientists said. P 10

Celebratory firing death: Lawyer held

Gurgaon's Deepanshu, a lawyer, was arrested Wednesday after shots fired from a wedding procession in Noida last Sunday led to the death of a two-year-old boy. Gurgaon's Deepanshu, a lawyer, was arrested Wednesday after shots fired from a wedding procession in Noida last Sunday led to the death of a two-year-old boy. Gurgaon's Deepanshu, a lawyer, was arrested Wednesday after shots fired from a wedding procession in Noida last Sunday led to the death of a two-year-old boy. P 7

2 more GBS deaths; national toll at 23

Two young people being treated for Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) in different Pune hospitals died over the past 48 hours, taking casualties linked to the outbreak in Maharashtra to 19 and the nationwide toll to 23. Pune has accounted for 11 of the deaths. P 14

U'khand to ban outsiders from buying agri land

Dehradun: The Uttarakhand cabinet Wednesday approved a draft law banning people from other states from purchasing agricultural and horticultural land in 11 of its 13 districts, excluding Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar. The move aims to "protect the state's resources, cultural heritage and citizens' rights." The bill is expected to be tabled in the ongoing Budget session, reports Kantiya Singh. Under the proposed law, land within municipal limits can only be used as per designated land use. P 17

Bikaner powerlifter, 17, dies in gym accident

Jaipur: Powerlifting champion Yashika Acharya lost her life in a tragic gym accident in Rajasthan's Bikaner when a 270kg barbell slipped and crushed the 17-year-old athlete's neck during training on Tuesday night.

Acharya had clinched a gold medal at the National Equipped Bench Press Championship in Oct 2024 in Goa. Her sudden demise highlights the often-overlooked dangers of extreme weightlifting, even for seasoned athletes. Under the supervision of her trainer, she was attempting a lift as part of her routine practice. Witnesses said as she prepared to lift the heavy barbell, she lost balance, and the immense weight came crashing down. The trainer suffered minor injuries while trying to catch the barbell.

► Police probing case, P 17

Prevent abuse but don't punish young love: HC

New Delhi: Law should evolve to "acknowledge and respect" consensual relationships between adolescents and prioritise understanding over punishment in such cases, the Delhi high court said, upholding a trial court judgment acquitting a man of the alleged offence of penetrative sexual assault under the Pooja Act. "Societal and legal views on adolescent love should focus on the rights of young individuals to engage in consensual relationships that are free from exploitation and abuse," Justice Jasmeet Singh said in a recent order. The law should focus on preventing exploitation and abuse, rather than punishing love, he said. P 8

► Emotional connect, P 8

BANGLA TEST FOR TEAM INDIA TODAY

While odds are tilted in India's favour as they face B'desh in their opening ICC Champions Trophy match, Najmul Hossain Shanto's boys will look to upset the favourites with their band of spinners

INDIA

STRENGTHS: Strong batting line-up featuring Virat Kohli & Rohit Sharma, with Shubman Gill & Shreyas Iyer adding depth. Spinners Kuldeep & Jadeja are more than resources.

WEAKNESSES: Bumrah's absence leaves Mohd Shami to do the heavy lifting. Concerns about form of Rohit and Virat.

OPPORTUNITIES: With B'desh integrating new players, India can leverage their experience to unsettle and dominate the opposition.

THREATS: Key players like Shami and Kuldeep are returning from injuries.

BANGLADESH

STRENGTHS: Spinners adept at exploiting Dubai conditions. Veterans like Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah provide solidity.

WEAKNESSES: Inconsistency dogs the squad. Batting prone to collapses. Pace attack has struggled on flat tracks. Team lacks lower middle order punch.

OPPORTUNITIES: A strong performance can set positive tone for other games. Being underdogs works in their favour.

THREATS: Absence of Shakib Al Hasan weakens spin attack & batting. B'desh have lost recent ODIs against teams like Af and WI.

4 women Maoists gunned down in MP's Balaghat

Four women Maoists were shot dead in an encounter with MP's Hawk Force in the rugged Supkhar forest range of Garhi, close to Chhattisgarh border, in Balaghat district Wednesday. The four were believed to be behind a series of violent attacks on security forces and civilians. An Insas rifle, an SLR and a 303 rifle along with ammo and survival gear were found on them. Police said several Maoist cadres were injured in the gunbattle but managed to escape or were dragged away by their comrades. A search operation, also involving CRPF, CoBRA commandos and district cops, is under way to hunt down the fleeing Maoists. P 2

'Why sell excess tickets?' HC to rlys on stampede

Hearing a PIL on the New Delhi station stampede that claimed 16 lives on Feb 15, Delhi HC on Wednesday asked railways why it sells tickets in excess of the number of passengers a coach can hold, reports Abhinav Garg. "If you could implement a simple thing... such situations can be avoided. By not fixing the strength... in a coach, this provision appears to have been neglected," HC said, referring to Section 57 of Railways Act that deals with overcrowding. SG Tushar Mehta, representing railways, said it was an "unprecedented" situation on Feb 15 and the issues in the PIL would be considered at the highest level. P 3

Chargesheet delayed in AQIS case, 3 get bail

Delhi court has granted default bail to three men allegedly part of a terror module linked to al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), observing that accused are entitled to bail if investigators fail to file a chargesheet within the mandated 180-day period from the date of arrest, reports Vineet Upadhyay. "There is no embargo on the powers of the investigating agency to investigate the matter further; however, after the lapse of statutory time, accused are entitled to statutory bail," said the court of Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur. P 14

You voted for progress.
Now, bless us with your presence
as we take the oath to deliver it.

Viksit Delhi Oath Ceremony



You are cordially invited

20th February 2025
11:00 AM



Ramlila Maidan,
Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party, Delhi



HC asks
Indian Rlys to
address sale
of excess
tickets | 3

TEMP ON WEDNESDAY
28.4° MAXIMUM
10.4° MINIMUM
 Cloudy sky. Max and min temperatures on Thursday would be around 25°C and 13°C
FORECAST 10:55AM (THURS)
MOONRISE 1:20AM (FRI)
SUNSET 6:15PM (THURS)
SUNRISE 6:54AM (FRI)



Helmetless bikers, parking chaos keep
'traffic praharis' on high alert | 5

Mercury
likely to fall
further over
the next
two days | 6



Neighbourhood celebrates as BJP puts Delhi in Rekha's hands

Meghna Dhillia
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New Delhi: Excitement hung heavy in the evening air outside the grey, four-floor building. A crowd gathered on the narrow lane, chanting "Jai Shri Ram!" and waving BJP flags. Sparklers lit up the night sky, their glow reflecting off the house windows. Manish Gupta, who lives on the third floor of this building in northwest Delhi's Shalimar Bagh, was swarmed by people offering hugs and congratulations. All he had to say was, "It's not just Rekha, today the entire public has become Delhi's CM."

Of course, only Rekha Gupta, Manish's wife, will be CM of Delhi, the public referred to only as political hyperbole. In addition to her husband, other family members gathered to cheer the selection of Gupta as BJP CM after 27 years of power. The 50-year-old politician's mother-in-law smiled proudly, playfully teased by relatives who remarked on her special saree drape for the occasion. Gupta's children, Harshita, an MBA graduate in her early twenties, and Nikunj, two years younger than his sister, could not join the celebration. Harshita works in Australia, while Nikunj is doing his engineering course in Vellore.

"We hadn't imagined she would become CM, but I felt she was destined for more when she defeated the sitting M.L.A. Bandana Kumari," beamed Meera Gupta, the mother-in-law. "People have replaced their trust in her because she has the ability to transform Delhi and make it better." Another relative, Meghna Gupta, revealed that Gupta always balanced her family and political life.

band, other family members gathered to cheer the selection of Gupta as BJP CM after 27 years of power. The 50-year-old politician's mother-in-law smiled proudly, playfully teased by relatives who remarked on her special saree drape for the occasion. Gupta's children, Harshita, an MBA graduate in her early twenties, and Nikunj, two years younger than his sister, could not join the celebration. Harshita works in Australia, while Nikunj is doing his engineering course in Vellore.



The mood is joyous outside CM-designate Rekha Gupta's residence in Shalimar Bagh; (right) her husband is greeted by neighbours



Photos: Anindya Chattopadhyay

Megha Bharadwaj. Amid the sea of faces, an elderly man from the neighbourhood called out loudly. "She's worked so hard. Now everything will be good for the locality!"

A member of the Aas Foundation said, "For decades, Rekha Gupta has been involved in various initiatives taken by our foundation and through it she is connected with many women of the area. For example, every Navratri, she worships along with hundreds of girls. Apart from that, she distributes bags and blankets every now and then."

AP Block residents, Bhumi, 19, and Navya, 20, watched the celebrations from a corner. "My father knows the Gupta family so I came with him to see Rekhaji," said Navya. "During Aam Aadmi Party's tenure, there was no real development in Delhi. All the subsidies went to waste. That will change now." Bhumi, looking with confidence at the new CM, felt certain that her priority would be the safety of women in Delhi.

Not only local residents, but also people from nearby jugs gathered around the new CM's house. "My shack was recently demolished. I hope she makes things better for us," said one hopeful slum dweller.

Assured of support of her loved ones and the public, Gupta's role as chief minister, the fourth woman in that post in the city, may mark the beginning of what many hope will be a transformative chapter for the capital. As the chants and dance moves got louder, the optimism in the air, signalling a new era in Delhi's politics.

A moment of pride for women of country, says CM-designate

► Continued from P1

Gupta was accompanied to Raj Niwas by Delhi BJP president Vinod Kumar Sachdeva and central observers for conducting the legislative party meet, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Om Prakash Dhanraj.

"I want to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi, our party's top leadership and people of Delhi for giving me the responsibility to preside over a new era that is starting in Delhi after 27 years. This is a moment of pride for women across the country," said Gupta. "To fulfill each and every commitment of BJP made to people of Delhi is the goal of my life," she said. "All MLAs will work like Team Modi to fulfill these commitments," she added.

ies and claimants to the top job, besides media personnel, had gathered in large numbers long before the meeting began. The supporters were shouting slogans in favour of their preferred choice, particularly Rekha Gupta and Parvash Verma, in a show of strength.

Party sources said Delhi BJP Chief Vinod Kumar Sachdeva had a private discussion with Verma, Vijender Gupta and Upadhyay. Parvash defeated AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal. Upadhyay has previously served as the party's state chief, and Vijender Gupta had managed to buck the trend by winning in the assembly polls in 2015 and 2020 in the face of an AAP wave.

ing stressed on the party's decision to appoint a woman CM, highlighting its dedication to women empowerment. Party functionaries said she fulfilled three crucial criteria: that of being a woman, belonging to the Bania community and maintaining a low-key public profile. This is in keeping with the recent trend of the party going for relatively low-profile leaders for the chief minister's role as evident in other states.

BJP MP from South Delhi Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, who had drafted the party's manifesto, said after the meeting: "She will prove to be the best chief minister of Delhi. The party has always been a pioneer in women empowerment, and this is another example of that. Delhi will now become the developed and prosperous capital of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's dreams."

A Surprise Pick Who Has Always Kept Low Profile

Rekha Gupta Has Held Many Key Positions In 3-Decade Journey

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New Delhi: From a student leader to the post of CM, Rekha Gupta has held several important positions during her nearly three-decade-long political journey but always maintained a low profile. This time too, she wasn't among the front-runners for the coveted CM's post after BJP upstaged AAP to win its first assembly election in 27 years. The 50-year-old's election as leader of the legislative party came as a surprise even to many in her own party. She will take oath as the fourth woman CM of Delhi on Thursday at Ram Lila Maidan on Thursday.

Gupta was born in 1974 in Nandargh village of Haryana's Jind district. Her family moved to Delhi in 1976 where her father took up a job in the State Bank of India. As a student of Daulat Ram College, she joined Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. She was elected president of Delhi University Students' Union in 1996. She is, therefore, the first DUSU office bearer to become CM of Delhi.

After college, she worked as a ground-level worker before the first big opportunity came her way in 2007. Gupta was nominated to contest the municipal election from the Uttara Pitampura ward. She won a comfortable victory. MCD was trifurcated ahead of the 2012 municipal polls, but that didn't affect her political fortunes, winning a second time in a row as councillor in the North Delhi Municipal Corporation. According to her colleagues in the BJP, the party rewarded her for the feat by

making her chairperson of the education committee. She did not disappoint, bringing about a few reforms in the system of the municipal schools. For one, Gupta made MCD students look as sharp as the friends studying in private schools in new uniforms. She also initiated the construction of pura buildings for a few schools that were being run from tents.

In the 2015 assembly polls, Gupta was fielded against AAP's Bandana Kumari in Shalimar Bagh constituency. She lost those polls and when BJP decided not to renominate sitting councillors in the 2017 municipal polls, Gupta found herself out of electoral politics for a few years.

In 2022, she was again elected as a municipal councillor in the re-united MCD from Shalimar Bagh (B) ward. She was pitted against AAP's Shelly Oberoi in the mayoral poll in 2023 but the numbers were stacked against her, resulting in her defeat.

Used to end her political exile in Delhi, BJP banked her again, fielding her in the assembly polls. This time Gupta didn't disappoint the party. She avenged her 2015 loss and defeated AAP's sitting MLA and her old rival, Kumari, by a huge margin of over 20,000 votes.

Photo: Piyali Bhattacharjee

NINTH CHIEF MINISTER OF DELHI

REKHA GUPTA | 50
QUALIFICATION
 Bachelor of Law from Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut
POLITICAL JOURNEY
 Defeated AAP's Bandana Kumari from Shalimar Bagh constituency by 29,595 votes

First-Time MLA
 ► Was elected MCD councillor in 2007, 2012 and 2022
 ► Was chairperson of education committee in North Delhi Municipal Corporation in 2013
 ► Elected Delhi University Students' Union president in 1996



CM-to-be Rekha Gupta is greeted by BJP leaders on Wednesday

Total movable and immovable assets
₹5.3 CRORE
Ran 'Suredha Yojana', a non-govt initiative to help economically weaker female students pursue higher education

FIRST REACTION

"I am fully committed to this important opportunity to take Delhi to new heights. I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the top leadership for trusting me and entrusting me with the responsibility of the post of chief minister. This trust and support of yours has given me new energy and inspiration"

—REKHA GUPTA



WOMAN POWER: BJP supporters celebrate outside the party office in New Delhi on Wednesday

BJP pulls out all stops to make it a grand affair

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New Delhi: The stage at Ram Lila Maidan was erected on Wednesday for the swearing-in ceremony of Delhi's next chief minister Rekha Gupta and her new cabinet on Feb 20. Lieutenant governor VK Saxena will administer the oath of office to the chief minister-designate and the cabinet around 12.30pm. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, other Union ministers and NDA chief ministers and deputy chief ministers will be present.

said that invitations have been sent to people from various sections of society, including singers, authors, Bollywood actors, cricketers, businesspersons, farmer leaders, distinguished academicians and civil servants. BJP functionary Tarun Chugh, who has been given the role of ensuring that preparations are

on track, said: "A historic event will take place in Delhi. This is the end of misrule and the start of a new era under the vision of PM Modi." There will be substantial participation from slum-dwellers and women, who stand to benefit from BJP's Mahila Samridhi Yojna, a party functionary said.

He added that Union ministers present in Delhi will come for the event. "We are getting down from many to attend the function, so we kept it in Ram Lila as it has a large space," he said. The party expects about 50,000 people to attend the event. Chugh and former mayor Jai Prakash spent several hours on Wednesday taking

stock of the preparation at Ram Lila Maidan and reviewing the arrangements. A party functionary said that senior members of parties in the NDA alliance will attend the ceremony too. The BJP has returned to power in Delhi after almost 27 years, defeating AAP in the Feb 5 Assembly polls.

Diversions and curbs in place for oath-taking

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Traffic Police has issued an advisory to motorists to avoid diversions and restrictions for the swearing-in of Delhi's new chief minister at Ram Lila Maidan on Thursday at 12.30pm.

Expected diversions points include Subhash Park T-Point, Raj Ghat, Delhi Gate, ITO, Ajmeri Gate, Ranjitsingh Flyover, Bhaybhuti Marg, DDU Marg red light, and the roundabout of Jhandewalan.

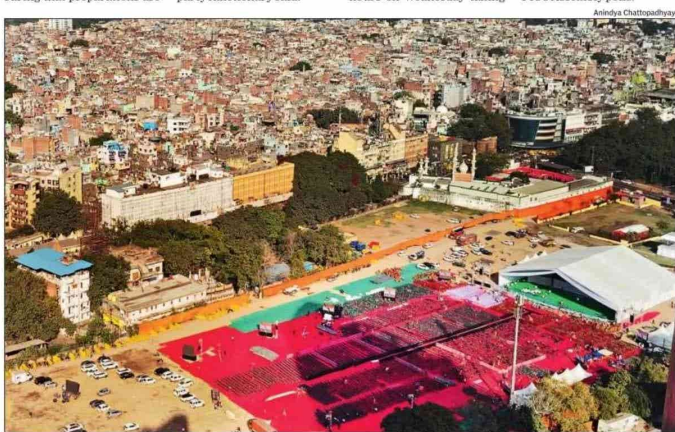
The advisory gives routes for these points, which include Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg (ITO to Delhi Gate), JLN Road (Delhi Gate to Guru Nanak Chowk), Asaf Ali Road, Minto Road to Kamla Market to Hamdard Chowk, Ranjitsingh Flyover to Turkman Gate, and Ajmeri Gate to Kamla Market.

Commuters are advised to use public transport to avoid congestion, park only in designated areas and adhere to police directions.

Satyvir Katara, additional commissioner of police at traffic headquarters, said: "Our target is to release the traffic from the outskirts. This is why the diversions are implemented, so that people can safely commute, if not by this route, then by some other. A map is also shared on social media. Real-time updates will be given on social media too."

DCP of the traffic headquarters and VIP route, Shashank Jaiswal, will work to ensure that the public do not face inconvenience during the movement of dignitaries to and from the location.

Several key roads around Ram Lila Maidan will either be closed or see diversions between 7am and 4pm. The diversions will impact commuters mostly around Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, close to key places in Old Delhi, NDLS, and offices such as MCD and DJB. It is a few kilometres from



A bird's-eye view of preparations at Ram Lila Maidan ahead of the chief minister's swearing-in ceremony scheduled for Thursday

The event is expected to start around 11am. The chief secretary and additional chief secretary will receive Gupta and those who will join the new cabinet.

Around 12.30pm, the secretary to the LG will seek permission from the LG to commence the oath ceremony. Then, the chief secretary will request the LG to administer the oath of office and secrecy.

The LG will administer the oath to each future cabinet minister individually, and they will then sign the papers. The event will conclude with the national anthem, played by the police band. The event promises to be grand. Prominent figures of the BJP-led NDA, business leaders, religious heads and other distinguished guests are expected to be there.

A senior BJP functionary

New Delhi: Rekha Gupta has joined a growing band of BJP members who have risen through the ranks of RSS-affiliated outfit Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad to hold key positions in govt and the party. For her to be chosen from a crowded field of CM aspirants would have been gratifying in any case, but now it is even more so as she marks BJP's return to power in the capital after 27 years.

Her appointment reinforces the dominance of ABVP alumni in BJP's power structure, aligning her with stalwarts such as home minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda, union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and road transport minister Nitin Gadkari. Had their political journeys not been cut short by untimely deaths, former CMs would have held the reins of power for decades.

Gupta is part of a long list of influential BJP leaders nurtured by ABVP including Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami and former Himachal Pradesh CM Jairam Thakur. ABVP's legacy as a breeding ground of BJP leadership has once again been highlighted through Gupta's rise to power.

Pradhan lauded Gupta's appointment, saying, "I am sure that a compassionate leader and social worker like Rekhaji will fulfil the trust of the party and Modi's guarantee to the people of Delhi. Her rise to the position of CM of Delhi is a reflection of ABVP's culture and the democratic tradition of BJP which believes in the ability of its grassroots members."

His statement underscores BJP's emphasis on internal democracy and merit-based leadership, which has enabled figures like Gupta to emerge from student politics to positions of national significance. Incidentally, the BJP observers for Delhi — Ravi Shankar Prasad and OP Dhanraj — are also from the students outfit. Gupta also fills the gap of a woman taking over as one of BJP CMs since Vasundhara Raje made the opportunity in Rajasthan in 2023 after Lal Sharma was chosen to helm the state.

Gupta's political journey began in DUSU, in which she served as secretary in 1995-96, before winning the president's post in 1996-97 as an ABVP candidate. Her trajectory mirrors BJP's strategy of grooming leaders from grassroots movements. Sources said during her DU days, Gupta was mentored by leaders who were also DUSU president.

ABVP national general secretary Shivangi Kharwal emphasised how the organisation has long been committed to fostering leaders across various domains. He said "has been the tradition and our principled stand to follow the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda, the 'vidyarthi panchsheel' also tried to lead leaders of their 'sangathan'. With her grassroots experience, we are hopeful that Rekhaji will fulfil the critical students, education, health, and unemployment issues," Kharwal said.

Excess ticket Sales: HC Seeks Answers

Pulls Up Indian Railways Over NDLS Stampede

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New Delhi: In the wake of the recent stampede at New Delhi railway station that led to 18 deaths, Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Indian Railways to address the sale of excess tickets beyond the number of passengers that can be accommodated in a coach.

"If you fix the number of passengers to be accommodated in a coach, then why does the number of tickets sold exceed that number? That's the problem," a bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyay and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela told Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, representing the Railways.

The court was hearing a PIL over the recent stampede at the New Delhi railway station and asked the authorities to file an affidavit giving details of measures taken on these issues. The plea sought the implementation of existing provisions by Railways that may have helped avoid such incidents and cited sections 57 and 147 of the Railway Act that deal with overcrowding.

"If you could implement a simple thing, such situations could be avoided... but not fixing the strength to be accommodated in a particular coach, this provision appears to have been neglected all along," HC remarked, while referring to Section 57 of the Railways Act, which says that railway administration must fix the maximum number of passengers allowed in



TOO MUCH TO HANDLE

each compartment of every carriage type. The SG Mehta submitted that the PIL was not taken in an adversarial manner and the Railways is bound to follow the law. He said there was an "unprecedented" situation and assured the court that the issues raised in the PIL would be considered at the highest level. "We are following the law as far as we can," Mehta assured the court.

During the hearing, the HC also pointed out that as per rules, the number of passengers that can be carried in each compartment should be "conspicuously displayed outside each compartment." It asked the SG to show what steps Railways will take to implement railway administration must fix the maximum number of passengers allowed in

each compartment of every carriage type. The SG Mehta submitted that the PIL was not taken in an adversarial manner and the Railways is bound to follow the law. He said there was an "unprecedented" situation and assured the court that the issues raised in the PIL would be considered at the highest level. "We are following the law as far as we can," Mehta assured the court.

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RTES to design holding areas in New Delhi, other stations

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The railway ministry on Wednesday tasked RTES to design permanent holding areas in New Delhi, Anand Vihar, Ghazipur, Varanasi and Ayodhya stations. Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw made the announcement after a meeting with Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RTES) officials.

"Once the model is ready, it will be expanded to 60 high-density football railway stations. All unauthorised access points to the stations will be closed," a top ministry official said.

The initiative aims to prevent overcrowding at key stations, which will help improve passenger security and streamline movement. "The holding areas will be seamlessly integrated into the Amrit Bharat Station Redevelopment Programme, a flagship initiative aimed at modernising key railway stations with better infrastructure, enhanced passenger amenities, and improved safety measures," the railway ministry said.

The decision comes days after tragic stampede at New Delhi railway station, which claimed 18 lives.

Earlier, Vaishnaw announced a series of crowd management measures at several stations to prevent similar incidents in the future. The permanent or temporary holding areas outside the platforms will be used to regulate the flow of passengers to the stations. These stations include New Delhi, Patna, Varanasi, Surat, Bengaluru and Coimbatore.

Railways will also come up with a crowd management manual to handle passenger rush during festivals and special occasions.

Students barred from CBSE Board exams get relief

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Gurgaon: Two Class 10 students, who were denied admit cards to appear for Board exams, should be allowed to take the remaining papers till it decides on their petition, the Delhi high court directed CBSE on Tuesday.

The HC single-judge bench of Justice Kumar Sharma was hearing a petition filed by the two students of Orchid International School in Gurgaon who missed the Board exam for English held on Feb 15.

CBSE refused to give the students admit cards, as it wasn't certain if the students had appeared for and passed Class 9 exams

The other papers for Class 10 Boards are scheduled from Feb 20.

Hearing the plea, the HC bench told CBSE to file a counter affidavit in four weeks over the matter, but in the "meanwhile", to "let the petitioners be allowed to appear in Class 10 examinations".

"However, the results of Board exams shall be subject to the outcome of the present petitions," the bench ruled.

The dispute stems from two students - Sneha Das and Purvansh Nayak - who took admission into the Gurgaon school mid-term in Class 9.

In Class 10, CBSE refused to give them admit cards, along with a third student of the school, over its contention that it wasn't cer-

tain if the students had appeared for and passed Class 9 exams.

CBSE, in Oct 2024 and Jan this year, rejected the students' direct pleas to the Board to allow them to sit for the papers.

On Tuesday, CBSE's counsel MA Niyazi told the court that the petitioners had not approached HC "in good faith", and the two students had left their previous schools without completing Class 9 exams.

But the students' counsels Sulaiman Mohammed Khan argued that the teenagers appeared for the Class 9 exams and submitted their mark sheets from Orchid International School to the court.

Khan emphasised that the problem was that the school did not submit the students' declaration to CBSE in time, and that wasn't the fault of the teenagers.

"The two children took admission in this school in Nov 2023 in the middle of 9th standard. They completed Class 9 from this school itself and we have submitted the required documents to prove the same, which is the passing marksheet," said Paras Nayak, Purvansh's father.

The petitioners had also requested HC to direct CBSE to hold an English re-examination for the two students as they were not allowed to sit for the paper.

CBSE's counsel said the Board cannot hold re-examination, but the students can appear for compartmental exams.

The court will take up the case on April 3 next.



Sisodia flags law and order issue after minor's rape in Tilak Nagar

New Delhi: Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia on Wednesday slammed BJP over law and order in the capital, citing a recent case of alleged sexual assault on a minor in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar.

Addressing a joint press conference with Tilak Nagar MLA Jarnail Singh, Sisodia claimed that crimes against women were on the rise and the perpetrators were not afraid of the law.

"I want to say to BJP that elections are over and now it should pay attention to law and order that has collapsed in Delhi," the former deputy chief minister said. No immediate reaction was available from BJP. A student of Class II was allegedly sexually assaulted in school by a sanitation

worker a few days ago. The police arrested the suspect on Tuesday.

"Criminals in Delhi have become fearless, and the law and order situation has collapsed. I am addressing this press conference today to remind BJP that elections are over. You have done enough name-calling and mudslinging before the polls. Now at least focus on governance," Sisodia said.

BJP is set to form a govt in Delhi after 27 years. It defeated AAP in the recently concluded assembly polls. The new govt will take oath at Ramila Maidan on Thursday. The law and order in Delhi, however, is directly handled by the Union ministry of home affairs.

BJP functionary's defamation plea against Bharadwaj rejected

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Wednesday dismissed a criminal defamation complaint against AAP functionary Saurabh Bharadwaj, citing delay in filing the case.

The court of additional chief judicial magistrate Neha Mittal dismissed the complaint by BJP functionary Suraj Bhan Chauhan, stating that the alleged offence took place in Sept 2018. The court said the limitation period for filing the complaint was three years.

It also said that none of the grounds pleaded by the complainant to explain the delay was found to be justifiable.

The court, taking note that the basic idea behind the principle of condonation of delay is to advance the cause of justice, said this principle emphasises that legal procedure should support the pursuit of justice. It allows for genuine circumstances causing delays to be considered. The court rejected all the factors cited by Chauhan - the death of the complainant's nephew, the surgery of his wife, and his father going missing - as grounds for delay.

"None of the grounds... is found to be justifiable. Accordingly, the application is dismissed," the court said.

Keirriwal, Atishi among those to congratulate Rekha

Vibha.Sharma@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Several political leaders, including home minister Amit Shah and defence minister Rajnath Singh, on Wednesday congratulated Rekha Gupta on being elected as Delhi's chief minister.

Shah posted on X in Hindi: "I heartily congratulate Rekha Gupta ji on being elected the leader of the BJP legislative party. I have full faith that you will work with dedication in the direction of the resolution taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make Delhi one of the top capitals of the world. I am confident that BJP govt under your leadership will work day and night to fulfil the hopes and expectations that the mothers and sisters of Delhi have blessed BJP with."

"Many congratulations and best wishes to Rekha Gupta ji on being elected as the leader of the BJP legislative party in Delhi. I firmly believe that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his efforts, Delhi will become the developed capital of developed India," Singh posted on X.

Finance minister Nirmla Sitharaman, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath and his Haryana and Rajasthan counterparts Nayab Singh Saini and Bhanu Singh Sharma, Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj and former Union Minister Harsh Vardhan were among those who congratulated Rekha Gupta.

In the 2025 assembly elections, BJP secured 48 seats, establishing a clear majority in the 70-member assembly. The party's pre-election commitments included the Yamuna river restoration, elimination of three landfills, implementation of Mahila Samridhi Yojana with Rs 2,500 payments to eligible women, and extending Ayushman Bharat Yojana benefits to Delhi residents.

Former chief minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal posted on social media: "Many congratulations to Rekha Gupta ji on becoming the chief minister of Delhi. I hope that she will fulfil all the promises made to the people of Delhi. We will support them in every work for the development and welfare of the people of Delhi." Outgoing CM Atishi also



Celebrations erupt outside CM-designate Rekha Gupta's residence

expressed his wishes on social media, stating: "It is a matter of happiness that Delhi will be led by a woman. I hope that the promises made

to the people of Delhi will be fulfilled. You will get full support of AAP for the development of Delhi." Ramvir Singh Bidhuri,

BJP's south Delhi MP who played a key role in crafting the Delhi manifesto through stakeholder consultations, expressed confidence that Gupta would serve as Delhi's finest chief minister. "Our party has always been a pioneer in women empowerment and this is another example of that. Delhi will now become the developed and prosperous capital of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dreams," he said.

Congress urged the CM designate to avoid divisive politics and prioritise mass commitments. DPCC chairman Devender Yadav urged her to work towards safeguarding the interests of the people of Delhi. NDMC vice-chairman Kuljeet Chahal highlighted Gupta's experience, noting: "She has been a councillor three and she started her political career from Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) elections. In her long public life, she paid special attention to important issues like education, women empowerment and urban development. Her leadership abilities and commitment to work at the grassroots level made her popular among the public."

After the announcement of her name, Gupta thanked top leadership for trusting her and giving her the responsibility. "Your trust and support gave me new energy and inspiration. I pledge that I will work with complete honesty, dedication and dedication for the welfare, empowerment and overall development of every citizen of Delhi. I am fully committed to this important opportunity to serve Delhi and to new heights," she stated on X.

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, an RSS-affiliated student organisation, also expressed happiness over her appointment as the chief minister. "On behalf of ABVP, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Rekha Gupta ji on becoming the fourth woman chief minister of Delhi. As a former student activist, she actively championed student issues, including the introduction of university special buses and women's empowerment in her DUSU election manifesto. We are confident that she will continue working on youth-related concerns in Delhi, such as unemployment, health, education, and educational infrastructure," said Shivangi Khawar, ABVP's national secretary.

Security tightened near Ramlila Maidan ahead of swearing-in

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Central Delhi will turn into a fortress Thursday to secure the dignitaries at the swearing-in ceremony of the new chief minister and the council of ministers.

About 15,000 security personnel and a web of over 200 CCTV cameras will be used to monitor movements and ensure law and order is not disrupted. A central command room will coordinate the entire apparatus. The police brass has briefed boots on the ground to ensure students going for board exams aren't delayed due to the arrangements.

Besides drones, cops will also use a special van equipped with AI-powered facial recognition cameras to keep an eye on suspicious activities. On Wednesday night, Ramlila Maidan was sanitised and SPG sleuths took charge as PM Modi will attend the ceremony along with several ministers and CMs. Many of them are 2 and 2+ category protectees.

"The centre stage and the surrounding areas will be totally out of bounds. We will also place policemen dressed as civilians among the public to ensure no untoward incident happens," said a senior cop.

Police have marked proper entry and exit routes, besides an emergency route. "Every visitor will be properly screened with hand-held and doorframe metal detectors installed at the entry points. They will be a separate entry system for the dignitaries," the cop added.

Several 'machans' have been installed and only authorised people will be allowed near the venue. Snipers and spotters will be stationed on rooftops and teams will keep an eye on suspicious vehicles. There will be several layers of barricades to ensure the dignitaries' safety. Commandos, quick reaction teams, PCR vans and SWAT teams will be deployed at strategic locations. First aid kiosks and other facilities will also be set up at the venue, they said.

On Wednesday night, patrolling was increased in the area. A total of 16 companies of central paramilitary troops will be deployed in central and New Delhi areas. Ravindra Singh Yadav, special commissioner law and order, said his teams are well prepared for the event for several days. "We are sure we will manage it smoothly," he added.

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 Ravi Kumar CTO, Kotak Life Insurance	 Ratan Kumar Chief Technology Officer Central Bank of India	 Rohit Klam Chief Technology Officer HDFC Life Insurance	 Rajesh Ram Chief Digital Officer Bank of India	 Yogesh Garg Chief Digital Officer Kotak Mahindra Bank
 Mangalam Ganesh Chief Technology Officer Axis Securities	 Ravi Pichan Chief Technology Officer RBL Bank	 Rajesh Choudhary Chief Technology Officer CSB Bank	 Shreshth Gupta Chief Technology Officer SBI India Credit	 Johnson Jose Group President, Chief Technology Officer Federal Bank
 Pankaj Pandey Chief Information Officer SBI General Insurance	 K M Abdul Salam Chief Information Security Officer, NABID	 Girish Nayak CTO & Health UIC & Claims ICICI Lombard General Insurance	 Satyanandam Aiyam Chief Technology Officer TATA AIG General Insurance	 Shivani Venkatesh Head-Client Insights RBL Bank
 Pinak Chakraborty Chief Technology Officer Airtel Payments Bank	 Ashutosh Mishra GM & Technology Officer Bank of India	 Padmabhushan Bahadure Chief Technology Officer NUECO	 Dr. Srinath Perera Chief Architect WSO2	 Bhairavi Subramaniam CTO India and the Middle East, Thoughtworks

Helmetless Bikers: Traffic Problem No. 1

Tops Violations Reported By 'Traffic Praharis'

Ishita Jaiswal@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: A new complaint pops up with a beep: "No helmet". It is tagged with location and vehicle details. Seconds later, one on "illegal parking" arrives. The officers click, verify, reject or forward the complaint. The queue never stops growing. The numbers keep ticking.

This is inside Delhi Traffic Police's control room, where a giant LED screen beams live feeds from CCTV cameras across the city. Officers sit in rows, eyes glued to their monitors, fingers tapping away as they sift through an endless stream of complaints — not from enforcement cameras but from Delhiites themselves on the Traffic Prahari mobile app.

In the six months between Aug 8, 2024 and Jan 31 this year, over 22,000 traffic rule violations were reported on the app. After verification, around 9,941 were deemed as necessitating action.

It turns out that Delhi's most pressing traffic transgressions for the citizen prahari aren't high-speed chases or reckless signal jumps. The top offences are more mundane. Nearly three-fourths of the 9,941 accepted complaints were about two helmetless riding and illegal parking. There were 5,274 cases, 53.1% of the complaints, about two-wheeler users not wearing helmets. Close behind were parking violations at

TRAFFIC OFFICER SAYS

The Traffic Prahari app lets citizens file complaints in real-time, with date and time automatically recorded from their devices

2,189 complaints (21.8%), constituted of 1,155 cases of improper parking and 1,014 of vehicles parked on footpaths.

Driving against the traffic flow, a dangerous yet common sight on Delhi roads and commonly called 'wrong-side driving', accounted for 924

complaints. While 890 cases were related to defective number plates, complaints about rider riding on two-wheelers numbered 317. While zig-zag driving and red light jumping are major causes of accidents, only 16 and 5 cases, respectively, of these were reported. Experts believe this is because most red-light violations are caught by enforcement cameras rather than citizen reports.

Surprisingly, only one complaint was registered for overcharging by taxis — a number that seems oddly low for the city.

Filing traffic complaints

isn't just about civic duty any longer — it comes with cash incentives. In Sept last year, four citizens were recognised for vigilance on the road, having together filed 15% of the complaints received in six months. The top complainant, who flagged 576 cases, received Rs 50,000 as reward. The second-most active user logged 560 complaints and bagged Rs 25,000. The rewards for these months after Sept last year will be given out soon.

Satyajit Kumar, additional commissioner of police, traffic headquarters, said: "The Traffic Prahari app lets citizens file complaints in real-time, with date and time automatically recorded from their devices. The traffic headquarters then verifies the

complaints and decides whether to take action. Traffic police can't be present at every location, so some vigilantes think they can dodge scrutiny and the CCTV cameras. But there are lakhs of Delhiites keeping an eye on such people."

The officer added, "While the top complaints are about helmetless riding and parking, all reports about zig-zag driving or any less common offence are also welcome. There is only one consideration. Sometimes the angle of a photograph can be tricky so every Prahari is requested to click photos with the proper angle and details."

TIMES Special

Ringing in relief: Crime branch op seizes 305 stolen phones, restores 216 to rightful owners

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: For most people, a stolen phone is gone for good, a loss accepted with a sigh of resignation. But for 216 individuals, the Delhi Police crime branch has defied expectations, pulling off a remarkable feat that has brought relief and joy to those who thought their phones were lost forever.

As part of their 'Operation Track Back', the crime branch recovered 305 stolen phones worth over Rs 3 crore. Of these, they managed to find the owners of 216 phones and returned their devices to them in a special gathering organised in central Delhi on Wednesday.

According to special commissioner Devesh Srivastava, this was one of the initiatives to connect with citizens.

"Recognising the incidents of mobile phone theft in Delhi-NCR and the associated damage to citizens' personal data and security, the crime branch launched the operation with the tag line, 'returning happiness to the citizens'. We have made a significant breakthrough in tracking and recovering stolen and lost phones," Srivastava said. "The initiative aims to

OPERATION TRACK BACK

Objective

To recover stolen mobile phones and ensure their return to rightful owners. Result: 216 mobile phones restored to owners after verification.

About the Op

Op launched keeping in mind incidents of mobile phone theft in Delhi-NCR. Associated risks to citizens' personal data and security prompted an organised system to track back.

Source of returned phones

Jan 10 | Crime branch recovered 195 phones worth over Rs 2 crore from a receiver of stolen phones. Jan 30 | Crime branch seized



A stolen phone being returned to its owner

58 phones worth over Rs 1 crore from a supplier.

Feb 10 | 52 phones seized by crime branch from a seller of stolen phones.

Challenges

Extracting details was challenging, as most phones were either locked or drained of battery. Linking these phones to registered FIRs and lost reports required meticulous effort. Verification process of more mobile phones still on.

Recently, the crime branch carried out several operations against smuggling networks and seized a large number of phones. On Jan 10, they recovered 195 mobile phones worth over Rs 2 crore from a receiver of stolen phones.

provide relief to innocent victims who suffer distress due to the loss or theft of their valuable mobile devices. Besides solving heinous cases, these are small steps which can restore happiness to common people," he added.

Recently, the crime branch carried out several operations against smuggling networks and seized a large number of phones. On Jan 10, they recovered 195 mobile phones worth over Rs 2 crore from a receiver of stolen phones. On Jan 30, they seized 58 stolen phones worth over Rs 1 crore from a supplier.

er. On Feb 10, the branch confiscated 52 phones from a seller of stolen devices.

Restoring the devices to their owners was not easy. According to additional commissioner Sanjay Sain, many phones were either locked or completely drained, rendering the task challenging. "There were a large number of recovered devices and linking these phones to the registered FIRs and lost reports required meticulous efforts. But the team did a remarkable job," Sain said.

The process involved using a combination of technical tools and investigative techniques, particularly IMEI analysis, according to sources. A team of police officers spent several hours tracking IMEI numbers, FIRs and new numbers of phone users whose stolen devices they had recovered.

This laborious task required the team to sift through tons of data, checking details and following up on leads to identify the rightful owners of the recovered phones.

Despite the complexity and time-consuming nature of the task, the team managed to reunite the stolen devices with their owners.

Lane driving enforced on 3 key stretches in Noida, 335 fined on first day

Noida: Traffic police implemented lane driving at three major stretches — Charkha roundabout near Amity University, Gardens Galleria Mall to Film City, and Bird Feeding Point near Durgam Sitala — on Wednesday to address frequent snarls. Those found violating norms will be issued a fine of Rs 2,000.

Around 335 challans were challaned for changing lanes at these stretches till Wednesday evening, traffic cops said.

DCP (traffic) Lakhan Singh Yadav said that banners with information on the new rules have been placed nearly 100m ahead of the stretches, advising commuters to switch to their lanes there only.

"They will not be allowed to change the lanes in the 'no lane changing zone'. Police teams are also deployed to ensure compliance. We advise commuters to adhere to the traffic rules and traffic signs, or challans will be issued to them," the DCP said.

He went on to explain that vehicles suddenly switching lanes leads to multiple issues at key locations, adding, "In such a situation, the drivers may not have enough time to react, leading to accidents." TNN

Traffic cops help recover two stolen vehicles

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Though their primary role is managing traffic, traffic cops played a crucial role in recovering two stolen scooters in separate incidents this week. The recoveries were made in Kotwali and Bhajanpura.

On Feb 17, ASI Anoop from Kotwali Traffic Circle was on towing duty near Red Fort when he came across an unattended scooter that was improperly parked. The vehicle was towed away as per the protocol.

In usual cases, cops would have waited for the vehicle owners to arrive and take it back. But Anoop did not waste even a day and started verifying the vehicle's details immediately. The vehicle was found to be stolen from Gandhi Nagar, Shahdara.

"The officer swung into action and informed the authorities, who then initiated the recovery process," said a senior traffic police officer.

The next day, head constable Kuldeep and DCP Rohit caught a vehicle that was stolen from Sadar Bazar.

"Over 50,000 retail investors hold nearly 61% shares of the company. Some shareholders, representing over 10% of the public holding of the company, expressed their concern regarding the revenue-generating capability of the company and consequently their investment."

"They said the concerns of the ordinary shareholders need to be presented and taken into account by the apex court," an NTBCL statement said.

Shareholders proposed to form a common forum to represent the interest of retail investors in the court proceedings and ensure their written representations are submitted to relevant authorities to safeguard their interests. They also proposed to file petitions in the Supreme Court elaborating their concerns and seeking intervention with regards to their interest.

An estimated 1.5 lakh vehicles used the flyway daily before the toll was scrapped the day that it had not recouped its investment, citing financial difficulties exacerbated by cessation of toll collection.

In the meeting on Tuesday, some shareholders expressed concerns that the court's decision ignored initial financial shortfalls due to low traffic and the Noida Authority's failure to grant developmental rights promised under the concession agreement, a source said.

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DOING YOUR BIT TO MAKE ROADS SAFER

TRAFFIC PRAHARI initiative allows citizens to report traffic violations in Delhi via an app

- Every second complaint was about riding without a helmet
- You can become a traffic prahari too
- All violations that fulfil the essential requirements are prosecuted

9,941 Total Approved Complaints

*Use of Hand-Held Communication Device While Driving

Note: Traffic Prahari challans from Aug 1, 2024, to Jan 31, 2025

Renovated RSS office inaugurated

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday inaugurated the organisation's renovated office — Keshav Kunj — in Jhandewalan here and said it has been transformed to reflect the Sangh's growth and vision.

Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, and BJP president J.P. Nadda were among the dignitaries present, along with RSS functionaries like Dattatreya Hosabale and Pawan Jindal.

Speaking at the 'Pravesh Utsav', Bhagwat emphasized the necessity for RSS volunteers to match the grandeur of the new facilities with their dedication and purity in work. "Keshav Kunj has been transformed to reflect the growth and vision of the Sangh," Bhagwat said and urged volunteers to ensure that their efforts align with RSS's ambitions to position India as a global leader.

The renovation project, completed over eight years at a cost of nearly Rs 150 crore, includes three 13-storey towers named Sadhana, Prerna, and Ardhana. The complex is equipped with modern amenities like an auditorium, a library, an OPD hospital, and facilities for sustainable energy and waste management.

Religious leader Gopinath Giri Ji Maharaj linked the day's anniversary of RSS ideologue MS Golwalkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

NTBCL shareholders to move SC against order to scrap DND toll

Shafaque Alam@timesofindia.com

Noida: Nearly 200 shareholders of Noida Toll Bridge Company Limited (NTBCL) on Tuesday discussed the Supreme Court judgment that scrapped toll on the eight-lane DND Flyway and decided to challenge the order. In Jan, NTBCL also filed a review petition in the Supreme Court, which is sub-judice.

The apex court, in its order on Dec 20, 2024, upheld an Allahabad high court's 2016 decision barring NTBCL from levying toll charges on commuters, citing concerns over "excessive" user fees and directing that the costs of the flyway project be audited.

The toll, originally charged by NTBCL since the flyway's inauguration in 2001, was a subject of contention as residents complained of poor road conditions, including potholes and dysfunctional streetlights, despite ongoing toll collection.

A 2016 petition by Federation of Noida Resident Welfare Associations (FONRWA) that led to the high court's decision claimed NTBCL had already recovered its project costs — around Rs 408 crore — multiple times over.

NTBCL, however, contended that it had not recouped its investment, citing financial difficulties exacerbated by cessation of toll collection.

In the meeting on Tuesday, some shareholders expressed

concerns that the court's decision ignored initial financial shortfalls due to low traffic and the Noida Authority's failure to grant developmental rights promised under the concession agreement, a source said.

"Over 50,000 retail investors hold nearly 61% shares of the company. Some shareholders, representing over 10% of the public holding of the company, expressed their concern regarding the revenue-generating capability of the company and consequently their investment."

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**Sex assault case:
Kenya has option
to recall envoy**

Continued from P1

The matter has been looked into. A waiver of the person's diplomatic immunity has been sought, said a govt source, speaking on condition of anonymity. An FIR was lodged under the 2012 Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (PoCSO) after the victim's father confronted the school principal and the matter was taken up with the cops.

Kenya has the option of recalling the diplomat. As per Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the receiving state can't prosecute diplomats, and their families also have immunity from criminal and civil jurisdiction. While diplomats are expected to act in accordance with local laws, in the event of any misconduct, only the sending state can take action by recalling the diplomat or waiving his or her immunity.

Gurgaon Lawyer Held For Noida Boy's Death In Celebratory Firing

Says Was Drunk, Fired Several Rounds In Air To 'Commemorate' Friend's Wedding

Aditya.Bahl@timesofindia.com

Noida: A 24-year-old Gurgaon resident, a lawyer by profession, was arrested on Wednesday for firing shots from a wedding procession in the city that led to the death of a two-year-old boy. Three police teams are still on the lookout for a second accused in the case.

Deepanshu, police said, is the groom's friend and was perched on the main buggy next to him while firing into the air as a mark of celebration as the baraat made its way through Aghapur village in Noida's Sector 41 on Sunday.

DCP (Noida) Rambhadr Singh said the accused was arrested near Sector 47 following a tip-off. Cops recovered a pis-

tol from his possession, but it was not immediately clear if the bullet, which had pierced the child's head, was fired by Deepanshu. The pistol will now be sent for forensic analysis, the officer said.

During the interrogation, the accused claimed he didn't remember most of the details of the evening but said he fired many rounds in the air. Police said he claimed to be drunk at the time and had bought a gun to "commemorate" the event and flaunt it as a show of power. He hid at a relative's place in Gurgaon and kept changing locations within the city.

A resident of DLF Phase 3, Deepanshu started practising in the Gurgaon district court after completing his gradu-

HID IN KIN'S HOME AFTER CHILD'S DEATH

Cops made first arrest in the celebratory firing case on Wednesday, three days after 2-year-old Ansh died in celebratory firing in Aghapur village

Gurgaon resident and a lawyer, Deepanshu, was arrested near Noida's Sector 47 following a tip-off

He was among the two accused perched on the main

buggy while firing into the air as the baraat made its way through Aghapur village on Sunday

He told interrogators that he was drunk at the time and had bought a gun to "commemorate" the event

Deepanshu hid at a relative's place in Gurgaon and kept changing locations within the city after the child died

ation last year from a private university in Greater Noida.

Meanwhile, police are on the lookout for Happy, the oth-

er man who was firing from the buggy during the wedding procession.

"Teams are conducting

searches in Gurgaon, Delhi, Noida and other possible hide-outs for Happy," additional DCP Sumit Bhukta said. Happy's police said, is a resident of DLF Phase 3.

Two-year-old Ansh was on his father's lap on the third-floor balcony of their house overlooking the road in Theok Wali Gali when a bullet fired by the two baraat hit him in the head. The boy was rushed to Prayag Hospital, about 2km away, but died to death. An FIR was filed against Happy and Deepanshu under BNS section 105 (Culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and Section 30 (contravention of licence or rule of the Arms Act, 1959) on a complaint filed by Ansh's father Vikas Sharma.

India's space missions and astronomy to find star billing at Nehru Planetarium

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New Delhi: A gallery at Nehru Planetarium, currently under renovation, is set to feature new interactive screens on India's space missions and developments in the field of astronomy. It is likely to open between July and August this year.

According to Anurag Arora, the planetarium's assistant administrative officer, the updated exhibition will showcase detailed scale models of the moon, featuring craters, lunar seas and landing locations of spacecraft, including the touch-down site of Chandrayaan-3 in the moon's south pole. An interactive multimedia kiosk will provide details about historic lunar expeditions, including Apollo and Luna missions and contemporary moon explorations.

Visitors will have access to comprehensive information about the Chandrayaan-3 mission, including its aims, the Vikram lander and discoveries made by the Pragati rover. The exhibition aims to enhance visitors' knowledge of lunar science, space exploration, and India's contributions to Moon exploration.

The gallery will also present information about the moons orbiting other planets, such as Jupiter's volcanic Io, Saturn's ringed Enceladus and Neptune's intriguing Triton.

Arora said that the previous gallery was predominantly static and maintained a conventional approach with information boards and physical models. The new exhibition area will feature virtual reality for a more immersive and interactive experience. Visitors will be able to engage with space exhibits in a whole new way, enhancing their understanding of celestial bodies, cosmic phenomena, and the universe beyond," he said.

The exhibition has an in-

RENOVATED GALLERY TO OPEN IN JULY-AUG

Nehru Planetarium was renovated in 2010 during Commonwealth Games

3D was introduced in 2023

Now, its gallery is being upgraded

Upgraded version will have

- More dynamic and interactive exhibits
- Digital touchscreens and multimedia displays
- Integration of virtual and augmented reality
- Modernised design and lighting

The exhibition is structured into multiple sections

- Our Universe
- Sun and Solar System
- Moon
- Starry Night
- Astronomical Observations
- Children Activity Area
- Astronomy and Space Science India
- Quiz Corner

terductory exhibit featuring a holographic display (Pepper ghost technology) with touch interface navigation through space. This section presents the universe's structure from earth's position in the solar system to galaxies and broader cosmic formations. The solar system and sun section feature a backlit display illustrating the sun's distinct regions—photosphere, chromosphere and corona. A dedicated information station presents details about solar composition, sunspots and cyclical patterns.

Planet exploration occurs through spherical 3D models equipped with RFID capabilities, providing visitors access to planetary data. An interactive gravity well installation demonstrates planetary motion in curved space-time.

Other sections include the moon (phases and eclipses), stars (constellations and life cycle of a star), astronomical observations (ancient and medieval observatories, Jantar Mantar, telescopes), universe (evolution, expansion) and scale of the universe), children activity area (a to-

uch-screen simulation allowing visitors to create their own planetary systems, an interactive touch table where users can set a date and location to visualise the night sky and build their own spacecraft), astronomy and space science in India (coverage of Vedanga Jyotisha, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskara II, Nilakantha, Fathullah Shirazi, and modern scientists like S. Chandrasekhar and Vainu Bappu) and a multi-player quiz station with electromechanical switches and a digital interface, testing visitors' knowledge of astronomy and space science.

Prerna Chandra, programme manager of the planetarium, said that the astronomy and space science exhibition is a meticulously designed, technology-driven experience that combines interactive models, multimedia displays, VR experiences, and hands-on activities to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cosmos. The exhibition aims at offering a rich, educational and immersive journey through the wonders of the universe.

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New Delhi: Delhi University held a session for college principals and department heads on Wednesday to provide clarity on the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) as the first batch of students prepares to enter their final year.

The faculty and students are confused regarding the optional fourth year of FYUP. Rama Sharma, principal of Hansraj College, said, "We had an online session previously but today's in-person meeting offered more clarity. The university has ensured that any college still uncertain can seek independent clarification."

Sharma emphasised the advantages of FYUP, particularly its flexibility. "Students can exit at any stage, depending on their career choices. Once teachers, principals and administrative staff have clarity, students will also understand the structure better."

She added, "Today's students are flexible. We will offer quality counselling and sessions to ensure they make informed choices."

The session aimed to explain learning outcomes for fourth year, following the Feb 10 notification. Amendment to Ordinances which was approved by DU's executive council on Jan 17. According to it, students can choose from three specialisation tracks: dissertation writing, academic projects, and entrepreneurship. From semester V, all BA students can also choose generic electives from an open pool, outside their core disciplines. But the faculty has questioned the feasibility of integrating the new tracks into the academic structure. A three-year student said that since enrolling in 2022, they haven't received a detailed update on the fourth year.

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Put your thinking cap on and get ready to debate! Speak for India is back

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Get ready to sharpen your critical thinking skills and unleash your voice as Speak for India, the country's largest debating platform for college students, is back.

An initiative by Federal Bank Hormis Memorial Foundation, in association with The Times of India and Narmadharat Times, it aims to inspire young, dynamic and passionate college students from across the country to step up, voice their opinions on issues that matter to them, and embrace their role as change-makers in the society. It serves as a platform to cultivate innovative ideas, bringing together youngsters with a strong sense of social responsibility to stand up for what they believe is right.

The statewide debate competition will begin soon in Delhi-NCR, offering college students a unique opportunity to showcase their oratory skills, compete with the best, and challenge themselves to think on their feet.

Speak for India will be conducted in multiple stages, culminating in a grand finale. The preliminary rounds in each district will feature a one-minute audition round, followed by debate rounds for the selected qualifiers. As the competition progresses, participants will receive co-

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aching to enhance their skills. Over the years, Speak for India has attracted some of the finest orators from the college circuit.

The winner will receive a cash prize of Rs 2.5 lakh while the runner-up will take home Rs 1.5 lakh. Six other finalists will get Rs 50,000 each.

The participants can choose to debate in either Hindi or English. Students can register online at www.speakforindia.in or scan the attached QR code.

Live-in partner, teenaged contract killer held for murder of 35-yr-old man

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 19-year-old man from Punjab in connection with the murder of a 35-year-old man at his residence in north Delhi's Gulabi Bagh earlier this month. The victim's live-in partner, aged 35, allegedly hired the suspected contract killer and has been arrested.

The murder took place on the intervening night of Feb 23. Police said the victim's body was dumped in a ditch near a godown in Roop Nagar, was discovered on Feb 3 and sent for post-mortem, which confirmed strangulation as the cause of death.

"The victim was identified through fingerprint records, as his details were available in the criminal dossier due to prior involvement in several cases. His family initially filed a missing person complaint, stating he left with two unknown people. We believe it was an attempt to mislead the investigation," a senior police officer said.

A police team from North District analysed CCTV footage, call detail records and internet protocol detail records. It revealed that the suspects had travelled from Punjab to Delhi shortly before the murder and were seen near the crime scene," DCP (North) Raja Banthia said.

"Subsequently, a police raid in Punjab's Muktsar Sahib led to the arrest of the prime suspect, Bagga Singh. Further investigation implicated the victim's live-in partner in the plot, leading to her arrest," he added.

During interrogation, Bagga Singh disclosed that he and an associate, Gurpreet, who is absconding, were hired by the victim's live-in partner to carry out the killing.

"The woman admitted to hiring the contract killer, saying she wanted revenge for her 16-year-old daughter's death. She told police that before moving in with the victim, she was married and lived with a man who sexually assaulted her daughter," a police source said.

"When she attempted to file a case against him, she claimed he set her daughter on fire and staged it as a cylinder blast, leading to her death in Aug last year. Since then, she was planning to kill him. She got in touch with the contract killer through a relative in Punjab and contacted him to carry out the murder," the source added.

Police teams recovered the victim's mobile phone from Bagga Singh's possession. The motorcycle used to transport the body was also seized. Efforts are underway to arrest Gurpreet.

Meet puppets! Pulling at heart's strings in AI age

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New Delhi: In a world dominated by cutting edge animation, artificial intelligence and computer-generated imagery, the timeless art of puppetry often goes unnoticed. Yet, for many, puppets evoke a certain magic that technology simply cannot replicate. To celebrate this form of storytelling, the 21st edition of Ishara International Puppet Theatre Festival is set to captivate Delhiites with performances over 10 days from Feb 21 to March 2 at India Habitat Centre.

While digital animation may dazzle with its visuals, puppetry offers an organic and tangible connection to the art that resonates deeply with audiences. According to festival director and renowned puppeteer Dadi Pudumjee, "People often say meetings can be done over video calls, but why do they still insist on in-person meetings once a year? The same applies here. While digital media has its place, live theatre is something truly special."

The festival will feature puppeteers from across the globe, including Italy, Mexico, Russia, Spain, Turkey and Poland. Visitors will experience a wide range of puppetry styles, from traditional rod, string, shadow, and glove puppets to contemporary mixed performances that combine dance, theatre and music. The festival's roots go back

to 2001 when it began as a national event with just one international group, said the director. Over time, it expanded into a major international platform, with over 100 countries participating since its inception. Pudumjee recalls, "It started as an idea between me and Sanjay Roy. Now it's a global celebration of puppetry."

Roy, managing director of Teamwork Arts and producer of the festival, said, "Since its inception, the festival has become a beacon for puppetry arts, fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation while celebrating this ancient craft."

One of the highlights this year is "Monkey and the crocodile", a 45-minute performance by Puppet Studio India. This beloved tale from the Panchatantra, brought to life by the puppeteers of the popular TV series Gali Gali Sim Sim, features a clever monkey and a group of quirky crocodiles in a vibrant, colourful show.

Other exciting international performances include Volar Volar (To Fly) by Mexico's Lormiga Titeres, which tells the story of a puppet named Greta on a journey of perseverance and observation. Italy's celebrated puppet Pulcinella returns in a musical homage to Neapolitan culture, while other international performances such as Theatre In The Pocket from Russia, The Rock from Turkey, Sea of Possibilities from Poland, and Pay Attention to Those Two and Juke-

TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD!

21st edition of Ishara International Puppet Theatre Festival

India Habitat Centre

WHERE: Feb 21 to March 2

WHAT'S IN STORE: The festival will feature puppeteers from across the globe, including Italy, Mexico, Russia, Spain, Turkey and Poland

Visitors can experience a wide range of puppetry styles, from traditional rod, string, shadow, and glove puppets to contemporary mixed performances that combine dance, theatre and music

VOLAR VOLAR (TO FLY) | Mexico

MONKEY & THE CROCODILE | India

THEATRE IN THE POCKET | Russia

THE SEA OF POSSIBILITIES | Agnieszka Cytycka

THE ROCK | Turkey

IO, PULCINELLA | Italy

box from Italy promise to enrich the festival with diverse narratives and traditions.

Puppetry's unique charm lies in its ability to forge a deep emotional connection with the audience. As Deepali Raina, a mother attending the festival with her toddler, explains, "It's not just for my son to experience the magic of live performance. When you see a puppet move, it's not just mechanical—it's a living, breathing entity that forms a genuine connection with the audience."

The subtle manipulation of the puppet's movements by the puppeteer transforms an inanimate object into something full of life. For puppeteers, it's not just about controlling the puppet; it's about giving it personality. "In puppetry, the audience is always a part of the magic, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive," Pudumjee said.

The festival director added, "What's most encouraging is seeing parents—many of them first or second generation—bringing their children to the festival. Some of these parents were once young audience members themselves when I ran my puppet company at Sirram Centre in the 1980s. I believe it's important for children to experience different cultures in person, to touch and feel the art."

Awards Man 14-Year RI For Assault On Minor Girl In 2018

antecedents are not major

The court was hearing the arguments on sentencing against the 40-year-old man convicted for rape as well as under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

that sentencing is one of the important aspects of a criminal justice system and that criminal courts are often confronted with determining the appropriate punishment to a convict, said "Sentencing usually takes into account a number of factors.... The sentencing takes into account the nature of the offense committed by the victim, its impact on society, circumstances peculiar to the victim, and the circumstances associated with the accused, and the sentence should not be inadequate or excessive."

urt said, balancing the need for an appropriate sentence is required.

"Punishment awarded should commensurate with the offence committed by the convict as well as the fact that the convict is also required to be reformed so that he is integrated with society," the court said.

It then sentenced him to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) for the rape of the minor and an RI of two years for criminally intimidating her. The sentences will run concurrently, the court said.

The court also awarded Rs 16.5 lakh compensation to the victim.

▶Continued from P1

court emphasised that adolescents should not be criminalised for expressing their feelings or engaging in relationships. The ca-

minor. The high court, while upholding the man's acquittal and dismissing the state's plea against the trial court's decision, said the acquittal order was well reasoned and did not warrant any interference.

"I believe the prosecution failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the girl was a minor and that the

stemmed from a complaint filed in Dec 2014 by the father of a girl who had not returned home from tuition. Suspensions were raised against the accused since he was 16 so missing from his house.

An investigation was conducted, and the girl, who was around 16 at the time of the incident, was brought back home. A case was lodged against the accused for allegedly sexually assaulting the

relationship was not consensual," the court said. "The age of majority must be understood in the context of the law being applied. In cases like this, where the minor is certain and unwavering in her opinion and desire, it would not be appropriate for the court to disregard her views simply because she is not 18 years as on date, but 16 years, 10 months, and 21 days old."

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
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GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-QUOTATION NOTICE (2nd Call)
 e-Quotation is invited by the Executive Engineer, Midnapore Division, P.H.E. Dte. on behalf of Governor of West Bengal vide Ref. No. PHE/MID/eMQ. 05/2ND/CA/24-25

Route 101 & Way Leave permit for the project will be issued along & across NH for different PWSS in Midnapore Division, P.H.E. Details will be available in the website: www.btdenr.gov.in. The last date for submission of tender is 04.03.2025 upto 18:00 Hours. Sd/- for Executive Engineer, Midnapore Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA-T34853/2022

... From the material collected on record, it appears that passion/lust overpowered the convict to such an extent that he committed aggravated penetrative sexual assault or rape on a minor girl. Poverty and lack of criminal

The court, observing

Adolescent

emotion

►Continued from P1

ove is a fundamen-
tal part of the
human experience
and adolescents have
the right to form emo-
tional connections,"
the judge said.

Recognising the im-
portance of the legal age of
consent to protect minors, the

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E-Tenders in prescribed form are invited. If tenders are to be submitted by the system for "Resolving of Blittunious Road at various places of BKTP Township", Tender Document Download Start Date: 05.02.2025 at 10:00 AM, Bid Submission End Date: 25.02.2025 at 02:00 PM. Corporate Identity No. U40104WB1985SO039154, WBPDCL, WBPDCL, Mobile: 8373055604, E-mail: ce_bktp@wbpdcl.co.in

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PUBLIC NOTICE
In pursuance of rule 19(2) of DOS of Maharashtra, 1960, the following notice is hereby issued by the Government of Maharashtra from General Public Down in India in the conditions laid down in rule 19(2) of DOS of Maharashtra, 1960 for filing TWO (2) vacancies in the Maharashtra Housing Society Bill, Plot no 21 Sector C, Dwaraka New Delhi-110075 for Three Bedroom flat in the area of 200 Sq. Yards. The interested persons can apply on prescribed Application Form available from 28.02.2025 to 15.03.2025, along with Pay on Demand Draft amounting to INR 400000/- drawn in favour of Maharashtra Co-operative Housing Society, Dwaraka New Delhi. The prescribed Application Form can be had from society office between 10.00 hours to 16 hours on working days. The Application completed in all respects must reach society office physically up to 15.03 hours on or before 15.03.2025. For queries if any contact the persons given below.
103746729 - Manager
891101343 - President

Sd/-
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Plot no 21 Sector C, Dwaraka, New Delhi-110075.

LEGAL NOTICE
Whereas, **Neelima Thakur** (hereinafter Plaintiff) has instituted that above **SUIT FOR RECOVERY** against the defendants. You are hereby summoned to appear in this Court in person or by a pleader on the **24TH day of MARCH 2025**, at **10.00 o'clock**, to answer the same, failing which the Suit will be disposed of ex parte.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this **24TH FEBRUARY, 2025** to be published in English Newspaper **THE TIMES INTERIOR**.
NOTE: Defendant is informed to file WGS within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of summons with advance copy to the plaintiff along with WGS in stamped and in 100 days duration mandatory and no extension can be granted.
District Judge (Court, Court-65)
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Dr. Mohan Yadav
CM, Madhya Pradesh

WEAVING A NEW ERA OF POSSIBILITIES IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENTS SECTOR

MADHYA PRADESH IS WITNESSING A SURGE IN INVESTMENTS, POSITIONING ITSELF AS
A CRITICAL PLAYER IN INDIA'S TEXTILE EXPORTS AND SUPPLY CHAINS



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Madhya Pradesh is rapidly gaining prominence as India's textile and garment manufacturing hub, leveraging its abundant raw materials, strong industrial framework, and supportive government policies.

THE COTTON CAPITAL OF INDIA

Madhya Pradesh leads in organic cotton production, accounting for 47 per cent of India's and 24 per cent of the world's organic cotton supply. The state is also the sixth-largest cotton producer in the country, boasting a 60 per cent CAGR in cotton production. With extra-long-staple cotton cultivation and a strong silk industry, Madhya Pradesh is a cornerstone of India's textile sector.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Organic cotton leader:** Produces 43 per cent of India's organic cotton.
- **Silk production:** Largest producer of mulberry silk in India.
- **High export value:** Textile exports exceeded Rs 10,000 crore in FY 2023-24.
- **World-class facilities:** Home to the world's largest terry towel and spun-dyed fibre units.
- **Rich heritage:** Famous for Chanderi, Maheshwari, and hand-printed textiles.
- **Specialised hubs:** Over 50 manufacturers of technical textiles.



INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Madhya Pradesh boasts a well-developed industrial landscape, with textile parks in major cities such as Indore, Bhopal, Ujjain, and Jabalpur. The state's advanced warehousing, skilled workforce, and educational institutions ensure a steady supply of talent and innovation.

INDUSTRIAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- **PM MITRA Park:** India's largest integrated textile and apparel park in Dhar, MP, spanning 2,100 acres.
- **Manufacturing prowess:** 60+ large textile mills, 4,000+ looms and 2.5 million spindles.
- **Key production hubs:** Indore, Dhar, Dewas, Gwalior, Chhindwara and Jabalpur.
- **Garment clusters:** Major apparel and hosiery production centres in Indore, Gwalior, and Jabalpur.
- **PLI scheme advantage:** The highest investment of Rs 3,513 crore is under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

A FAVOURABLE BUSINESS DESTINATION

With its business-friendly environment, Madhya Pradesh offers seamless investment opportunities. The state facilitates quick land allotments, single-window clearances, and financial incentives, making it attractive for textile entrepreneurs and investors.

INVESTMENT BENEFITS:

- **Capital subsidies:** Up to 40 per cent for textile units and 200 per cent for garment units.
- **Competitive utility costs:** Special tariffs for water and power in PM MITRA Park.
- **Ease of business:** Online approvals and streamlined regulatory processes.
- **Export growth:** Expanding international markets in the USA, China, Sri Lanka, and Germany.
- **Sustainability leadership:** Strong focus on eco-friendly and organic textile production.

THE FUTURE OF TEXTILE MANUFACTURING

The establishment of the PM MITRA Park in Dhar aligns with the government's 5F vision—Farm to Fibre to Fashion to Foreign—ensuring seamless production and export processes. This mega-project is expected to generate over 1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect jobs, further boosting the textile industry. With robust infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and strategic government support, Madhya Pradesh is set to become a global leader in textile manufacturing, offering vast opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs alike.

LOGISTICS AND WAREHOUSING

STRENGTHENING INDIA'S SUPPLY CHAIN BACKBONE

MADHYA PRADESH IS RAPIDLY POSITIONING
ITSELF AS A KEY PLAYER IN INDIA'S LOGISTICS
AND WAREHOUSING SECTOR



With its central location, extensive transportation network, and progressive policies, the state is creating a seamless supply chain ecosystem. Recognised as a 'Fast Mover' in the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) index, Madhya Pradesh is outperforming national and regional benchmarks in logistics efficiency. Its focus on energy-efficient infrastructure, cutting-edge technology, and investment-friendly policies is driving growth in the sector.

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL IN MADHYA PRADESH'S LOGISTICS SECTOR

Madhya Pradesh offers a dynamic investment landscape, supported by proactive government policies and strong infrastructure development plans. Key reasons to invest include:

- **Strategic connectivity:** Centrally located with 46 national highways, six airports, and an expanding railway network for seamless logistics movement.
- **High-growth market:** Expanding logistics hubs, multimodal parks, and ICDS to meet rising demand.
- **Sustainability focus:** Emphasis on energy-efficient logistics solutions and green industrialisation initiatives.
- **Investor-friendly policies:** Simplified regulatory frameworks, attractive tax incentives, and infrastructure development assistance to encourage private sector participation.

THE FUTURE OF LOGISTICS IN INDIA

With its comprehensive infrastructure expansion, technology-driven efficiency, and investor-friendly approach, Madhya Pradesh is poised to become a logistics powerhouse. By strengthening its supply chain capabilities, enhancing sustainability, and promoting global trade connectivity, the state is unlocking immense potential for businesses and investors in India's booming logistics sector.

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Madhya Pradesh is leveraging its strategic geographical advantage by expanding multimodal logistics capabilities. Some of its key initiatives include:

- **Logistics corridors & multi-modal hubs:** Development of multi-modal logistics parks (MMLPs) in Indore and Bhopal, with a vision to establish five MMLPs by 2047.
- **Expanding inland container depots (ICDs):** Currently home to seven ICDs, with plans to expand to 10 by 2029 and 15 by 2047.
- **Integrated Gati Shakti cargo terminals:** 15 cargo terminals under development, targeting a total of 20 by 2047 to boost trade efficiency.
- **State-of-the-art cold storage networks:** Enhancing agricultural and allied industries with strategically located cold storage near Pragati Paths, reducing post-harvest losses and improving supply chain efficiency.

DRIVING LOGISTICS GROWTH THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) play a crucial role in accelerating infrastructure development. The state actively collaborates with private investors to bring funding, technical expertise, and operational efficiency to logistics projects. These partnerships are expediting large-scale projects while ensuring sustainable and efficient resource management.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Madhya Pradesh is integrating modern technologies into its logistics framework to optimise supply chain management:

- **Smart logistics solutions:** Deployment of RFID tracking at ICDS and real-time monitoring for enhanced operational efficiency.
- **Digitised supply chains:** Use of artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and automated warehouses to streamline logistics operations and reduce turnaround times.
- **Sustainable energy practices:** Adoption of green logistics initiatives, including Behind-the-Meter power infrastructure, to reduce the environmental footprint of logistics operations.

- **EV market expansion:** Madhya Pradesh's initiatives align with the growing demand for sustainable and eco-friendly vehicles.
- **Strategic investment hub:** With a strong focus on infrastructure and policy support, the state attracts both domestic and international investors.

WHY CHOOSE TO INVEST IN MP?

Madhya Pradesh presents a compelling investment opportunity for the automobile and component industry due to its robust infrastructure, skilled workforce, and investor-friendly policies. The state is home to major automotive hubs such as Pithampur, Mandideep, and Dewas, attracting leading manufacturers like Mahindra & Mahindra, Eicher Motors, and John Deere. With seamless connectivity to key markets, Madhya Pradesh ensures smooth supply chain operations and export growth. The growing EV sector, with an 88 per cent increase in registrations, highlights the state's commitment to green mobility. Government incentives, including tax rebates, capital subsidies, and export benefits, make investment highly lucrative.

Madhya Pradesh also offers a stable business environment with easy land acquisition, a single-window clearance system, and incentives for employment generation. Its progressive policies, expanding market demand, and emphasis on innovation position it as a top choice for investors looking to capitalise on India's booming automotive sector.

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

PHARMA AND HEALTHCARE

A rising hub for pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and healthcare

MADHYA PRADESH IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL, MEDICAL DEVICE, AND HEALTHCARE INDUSTRIES, POSITIONING ITSELF AS A MAJOR PLAYER IN INDIA'S MEDICAL LANDSCAPE

With over 300 pharmaceutical manufacturing units, a rapidly expanding medical device sector, and a robust healthcare infrastructure, the state is a lucrative destination for investors and industry leaders. Strategic government initiatives, world-class research facilities, and a skilled workforce further strengthen Madhya Pradesh's role as a leader in healthcare innovation and production.

A POWERHOUSE OF PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING

Madhya Pradesh has established itself as a pharmaceutical manufacturing powerhouse, contributing 20 per cent to the state's total exports and supplying medicines to over 160 global markets. The state houses 30+ API (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient) and bulk drug manufacturers, ensuring a steady supply of essential pharmaceutical ingredients. With the presence of WHO-GMP and USFDA-compliant plants, the industry is well-equipped to meet global demand for generic drugs, life-saving medicines, and herbal products.

MEDICAL DEVICE INDUSTRY: A GROWING OPPORTUNITY

The Vikram Udyogpuri Medical Device Park,



EXPLORE THE FUTURE AT GIS 2025

Madhya Pradesh is at the forefront of India's healthcare revolution. Join us at the Global Investors Summit 2025 to discover unparalleled business opportunities, build strategic partnerships, and explore the next wave of growth in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and healthcare.

spanning 360 acres, is at the heart of Madhya Pradesh's medical device sector. Currently, 60 per cent occupied with 57 operational units, the park offers state-of-the-art scientific laboratories, testing facilities, and plug-and-play manufacturing units. It provides a strategic base for the production of imaging devices, implants, diagnostic equipment, and medical consumables. The presence of Plastic Parks and a Rare Earth Mineral & Titanium Park ensures easy access to raw materials, making it an attractive destination for medical device manufacturers.

A STRONG HEALTHCARE ECOSYSTEM

Madhya Pradesh boasts a comprehensive healthcare network, with over 2,700 private hospitals and 12,100+ government healthcare facilities. The state is also a leader in AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) healthcare, with 9 AYUSH colleges, 800 wellness centres, and 1,770 dispensaries providing holistic treatment options. With 25+ operational medical colleges and a rising focus on medical tourism, the state is attracting patients from across the country and abroad.

KEY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Madhya Pradesh offers vast investment potential across multiple sectors:

Pharmaceutical expansions

- Establish WHO-GMP and USFDA-compliant manufacturing units for generic drugs, biopharmaceuticals, and herbal medicines.
- Invest in research and development for nutraceuticals, vaccines, and biotechnology-driven healthcare solutions.

Medical device production

- Set up units in Vikram Udyogpuri Medical Device Park, benefiting from advanced scientific labs and plug-and-play facilities.
- Focus on producing high-demand medical electronics, implants, and diagnostic tools.

Skilling and research innovations

- Collaborate with premier institutes such as IIS and AMRI to drive innovation in pharmaceuticals and medical technology.
- Establish partnerships with Sant Shriomani Ravidas Global Skill Park for workforce training in the healthcare sector.

WHY MADHYA PRADESH? A STRATEGIC INVESTMENT DESTINATION

Unmatched connectivity & logistics

- Extensive transport network, including 20 major railway stations and 5.1 lakh+ km of roadways.
- 6 Inland Container Depots (ICDs) for global exports and efficient cargo handling.
- 6 Airports providing seamless domestic and international air connectivity.

World-class infrastructure

- Home to multiple WHO-GMP and USFDA-compliant pharmaceutical manufacturing units.
- 9 active pharmaceutical clusters fostering industry growth.
- Ranked among the top 8 states in India for API manufacturing.

Skilled workforce & research excellence

- 40 medical colleges, 50+ private universities, 200+ pharmacy colleges, and 140+ engineering institutions.
- A youthful workforce, with 47 per cent of the population engaged in employment and 25 per cent under the age of 30.

Business-friendly policies & incentives

- Deemed approval provisions allow investors to start operations within 30 days.
- Exemption from approvals for three years under the Madhya Pradesh Jan Vishwas Act 2024.
- Strong Ease of Doing Business ranking, with single-window clearance and quick land allotment.

Financial incentives for investors

- Investment promotion assistance covering up to 40 per cent of project costs.
- Capital subsidies ranging from 1.0x to 1.5x for employment generation.
- Stamp duty and registration charge exemptions for pharma and healthcare units.



LEADING THE EV TRANSITION

Madhya Pradesh is at the forefront of India's EV revolution, with an 88 per cent surge in EV registrations as of January 2025, reaching approximately 1.94 lakh electric vehicles. The state is rapidly expanding its EV infrastructure and manufacturing capacity to align with India's national priorities for sustainable mobility. With a projected CAGR of 49 per cent for the Indian EV market between 2022 and 2030, Madhya Pradesh is well-positioned to play a pivotal role in this green transformation.

MADHYA PRADESH'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL GROWTH

- **Automobile exports:** The state plays a vital role in India's USD 191 million automobile and component exports.

AUTOMOBILES

Madhya Pradesh rides the automotive revolution wave

WITH INDUSTRIAL HUBS IN PITHAMPUR, MANDIDEEP AND DEWAS, MADHYA PRADESH IS EMERGING AS A DRIVING FORCE IN AUTOMOTIVE EXCELLENCE

Madhya Pradesh is accelerating its presence in India's automotive and electric vehicle (EV) sectors, capitalising on its strategic location, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and business-friendly policies. The state has attracted major manufacturers consolidating its position as a key player in the industry.

CUTTING-EDGE TESTING AND INNOVATION

The state is home to the National Automotive Test Tracks (NATRX) in Pithampur, one of Asia's most advanced automotive testing facilities. Featuring a high-speed testing track, 14 specialised test tracks, and five auto-specific laboratories, NATRX strengthens the state's reputation as a hub for automotive research and development. This world-class facility enables manufacturers to test vehicles under real-world conditions, fostering innovation and safety in the sector.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

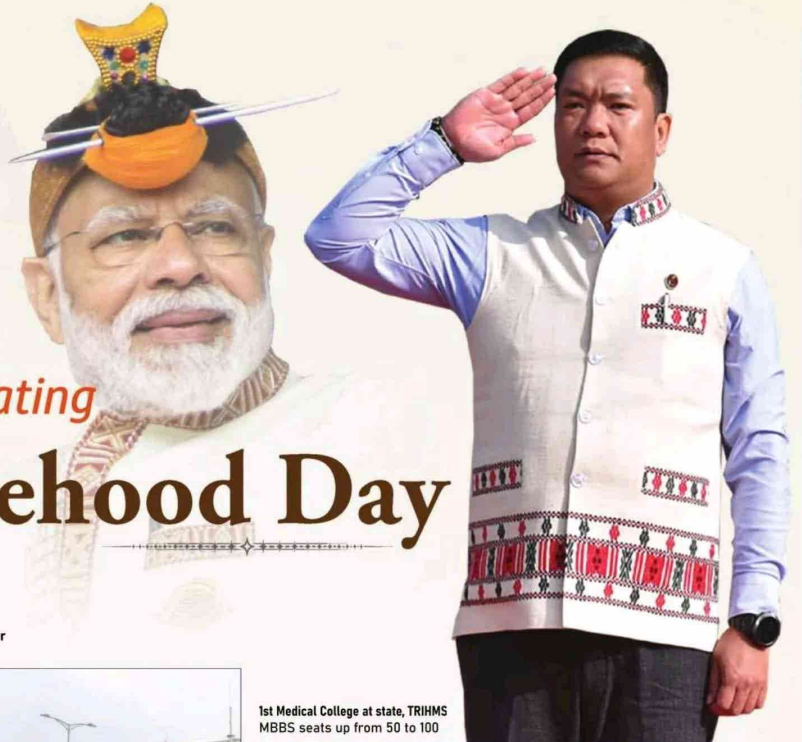
- **Pithampur auto cluster:** One of India's largest, spanning 4,500 hectares.
- **High-Tech automotive testing:** NATRX features Asia's longest high-speed testing track.
- **Employment growth:** Over 25,000 individuals are employed in the auto sector.
- **Global supply chain integration:** Auto components exported to 200+ countries.
- **Robust industry presence:** Home to 30+ original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), 200+ auto component manufacturers, and 1,000+ equipment manufacturers.

अध्यक्ष

हए निविदादाताओं को ही वित्तीय निविदा खोली जायेगी। किसी भी निविदा को स्वीकृत/अस्वीकृत करने का अधिकार अभ्योहस्ताक्षरीकर्ताओं के पास सुरक्षित होगा।



Viksit Arunachal celebrating 39th Statehood Day



Sela Tunnel
Delivered March 2024



Donyi Polo Airport, Itanagar
Delivered November 2022



1st Medical College at state, TRIHMS
MBBS seats up from 50 to 100



Arunachal Pradesh University
Delivered July 2022



Kameng Hydro Electric Project
Delivered November 2022



Pipsorang, Vijaynagar & Tali
connected by road network for first time since Independence



Governance reaching at people's doorsteps
- 1st Cabinet Aapke Dwar conducted at Nyapin on 17th February 2025
- Key decisions made for overall development of Arunachal Pradesh



Itanagar Underpass
Delivered October 2021

Development... Promised... Delivered...

JAI HIND, JAI ARUNACHAL



SPSCCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
 Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala -147001.
 Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SG033813
 Website : www.pssccl.in (Contact No. 94621-22185)
 Tender Enquiry No. 34/5SD-1568/25 dated: 20/02/2025
 Dd. CE/Substation Design/ TS Organization, C-1 Shakti Vihar, PSCCL, Patiala invites Short term E-tender for manufacturing, testing and supply of 10 nos. 25/31.5 MVA 66/11KV Power Transformer. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 20.02.2025 (11:00 AM onwards).
 Note : Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published on <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
 C-11925, DPHR/PT, 16/15/21/33032/22341839



NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction Distribution) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and on behalf of President of India hereby invites sealed "Open Tender" for submission on Line 6B (Tendering) for the following work:

E-Tender No. : JHS-2D-TENDER-2024-01 [Approx Cost (Rs.) : 2855668.28]

Description of work : Replacement of large Span wire with Catenary & Contact wire for reliability of 25kV OHE in Jhansi division.

Earnest Money/Bid Security (Rs.) : 292800.00

Date of closing Tender : 12.03.2025 15:00 pm.

Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter : 09 Months.

* Tender online can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs. on 12.03.2025 / For full details of submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.irconsp.gov.in







fssai FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS
AUTHORITY OF INDIA
Inspiring Trust, Assuring Safe & Nutritious Food
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi-110002

TENDER NOTICE

FSSAI has invited bids for procurement of
“**Microbial Detection System**” in FSSAI
through GeM portal. The Last date for
submission of Bids is 31.03.2025(1300hrs)
For detailed advertisement, please visit
GeM Portal or FSSAI website.

www.fssai.gov.in/tenders.php

CBC 17/63/11/0017/2425
ED(HR)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

अगरा छात्री/छात्रिकाए/ए.टी. 2024-25
दिनांक:17.02.2024

E-Tender Notification

CMS/AGRANORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No AGC-MD-LP-2025 Closing Date/Time 11/03/2025 10:30 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Tender No. :- AGC-MD-LP-2025

Name of Work:- Contract with Firms for day to day Retail Local Purchases of Medicines, Surgical & Pathology items for a period of two years.

Last Date & Time of Tender :- 11/03/2025 10:30 Hrs.

Original tender price/costs are available on Indian Railway's E-tender website www.irops.gov.in. Kindly note that manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

North central railways, www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in
32725/ID

[illegible]

ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक 18.02.2025

- कार्य का नाम-पंपिंग शक्ति, उत्तराखण्ड पंचराज निगम, देवघराज के अंतर्गत जल संचयन कार्यक्रम का प्राथमिक चरण डिप्टी के क्लिफहाउस देवघराज के अंतर्गत "Constructive Works" All civil and E & M works under **Devprajay Pumping water supply Scheme** Block Devprajay of District Tehri (Uttarakhand). Work included Constructing Pumping, Designing, Tending and Commissioning and all necessary **Waterline Maintenance of Scheme area** under Handing over to Uttarakhand JAL Sansthan/UJLS under Ammt. 2.0 programme" प्रिनर कार्यालय, देवघराज
- कार्यकारी संस्था** - प्रिनरि शक्ति, उत्तराखण्ड पंचराज निगम, देवघराज।
- प्रारंभ परामर्शी / कार्य शुरू करने की तिथि - देवघराज नौकरी / अंदाज / 24 माह।
- निविदा प्रक्रिया की अंतिम तिथि - अंदाज 04.03.2025, समय 15.00 बजे अंदाज।
- निविदा सूचना - देवघराज नौकरी के अंदाज।
- निविदा प्रक्रिया की अंतिम तिथि - अंदाज www.uktenders.gov.in में देवघराज नौकरी के अंदाज 20.02.2025 को 17.00 बजे प्रारंभ की जाएगी।

आशाजि रायनिकर

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त प्रमुख अभियन्ता,
जन स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, क्षेत्र-प्रमुख, जोधपुर
Tel: 0291-2680750 Email: rj_acejo@rediffmail.in

क्रमांक अमु.प्र.सं. जो.प्र.पु. 14/2024-25 दिनांक: 10.02.2025

विद्युत संचालन प्रमुख प्रभाग-2, NIB रायपुर 13-14/2024-25


आज्ञा है कि आप को यह निर्णय संचालन 13-14/2024-25 में निर्णित प्रक्रम में अतिरिक्त प्रमुख अभियन्ता के कार्यालय विद्युत संचालन प्रभाग-2 का है कि <https://erp.rajasthan.gov.in> पर <https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> पर परामर्शित किया जाये।

निर्णय संचालन 13/2024-25 [EC:R 1974/74, 37] (UEN- PHE2425W/OB08268)
 निर्णय संचालन 14/2024-25 [EC:R 1974/74, 37] (UEN- PHE2425W/OB08269)

Sd/-
 (निर्णय संचालन प्रमुख अभियन्ता)

DIPR/C/1970/2025

जन स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, क्षेत्र-प्रमुख, जोधपुर

 NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY S. No. _____/2023-RECR/HR (General) (Contract) 5 & 48: Date: 17/06/2023	
TENDER NOTICE 1. Sr. Electrical Engineering (TRIG-6, CR-PP)Programs, for and on behalf of the tenderer, to provide the following T- tender, the details of the tenders are as under:	
Description of work: Provision of Monkey Anti Climbing Device to prevent climbing of Monkey over Trackson Trackson Structures in Section between Pt. Dain Dayan Upadhyay and Pt. Dain Dayan Upadhyay.	
Advertised value : Rs. 63,89,614.27	Bid Security : Rs. 1,27,90,000.00
2023-TRD-WC-599-2025	
Description of work: Provision of Monkey Anti Climbing Device to prevent climbing of Monkey over Trackson Trackson Structures in Section between Jinhnjah - Chhijanyan.	
Advertised value : Rs. 60,81,885.00	Bid Security : Rs. 1,21,200.00
Completion Period : 09 Months	Bidding system : Single Packet
Tender Closing date & time : 10.03.2025 at 04:00 Hrs	
Tender Opening date & time : 10.03.2025 at 09:00 Hrs	
Note :- 1. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tender can be available on Website www.irpsa.gov.in 21 days prior to the date of opening of the tender. 2. Bids other than the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above E-Tender. 3. The bidders are required to register with IRPS before submitting any Digital Signature Certificate. 3. In case of any difficulty in registration available on the website of IRPS, the bidders are approved to approach the	

SPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
 Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
 CIN: U40109PB2005GO338313 Website: www.spcl.in
 E-mail: genops@spcl.in, genops@pseb.in
 (An wholly owned subsidiary of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited, PSPL)
 (A wholly owned subsidiary of Gujran Amb Thermal Power Limited, GATPL)
 (A state owned wholly owned subsidiary of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited, PSPL)
Dipd-HNO, Chemistry GATPL, Chemicals, invites e-Tender for the work of:
Tender Enquiry No. 61SGAT/GATPL/20016867 dated 19/02/2025
"TENDER FOR Supply of Alum (Non-Ferri-) Commercial Grade
–(Pre-Treatment Chemical)"
 at 2X270 MW Gujran Amb Thermal Power (GATPL), Gujran Amb, Distt. Tarnan, Punjab as per details given in the tender specifications/
 For detailed NIT & tender specifications, please refer to the tender enquiry page in the link: <https://www.spcl.in>
Note : Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at <https://eproc.spcl.gov.in>
 For more details, please refer to the link: <https://www.spcl.in>



TAMIL NADU MARITIME BOARD

(Government of Tamil Nadu)



Tender No.4770/S1/2022 Dated:18.02.2025

Request For Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Port Operator for Operation, Maintenance & Marketing of Cuddalore Port for a Period of 40 Years

Tamil Nadu Maritime Board invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Port Operator for Operation, Maintenance & Marketing of Cuddalore Port for a period of 40 Years. The schedule of important dates are as follows:

Date of Issue of RFP Documents	20.02.2025 @ 11:00 AM
Bid Due Date and Time	07.04.2025 @ 11:00 AM
Opening Date and Time	08.04.2025 @ 11:30 AM

For detailed Request for Proposal, please visit:
<https://tenders.gov.in/nicppp/app>

DIPR /661/Tender/2025
Sd/- State Port OFFICER

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified male is named **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown**, was found dead due to train accident on 17.02.2025, at KM Fole No. 5/25 05277 Upline, Adarsh Nagar, Railway Station, Delhi. In this regard **NO. : 19A, Dated 17.02.2025, US 19A BNSH**, has been lodged at Police Station, Adarsh Nagar, Railway Station, Delhi-110007. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:

Sex: Male, **Age:** Approx: 25 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Complexion:** Fair, **Build:** Slender, **Shallow, Injury Mark:** Head Crushed & Both Legs are Broken, **Identification Mark:** "Trishool" Tattoo on Right Hand, **Wearing:** Grey Lower, Grey Inner, Orange T-Shirt & Printed White T-shirt on Black T-Shirt. The body of the deceased was preserved for 72 hours in Subzi Mandi Mortuary for identification.

If any one having any information or clue about this deceased may kindly be informed undersigned.

SH. SINGH
Police Station
Subzi Mandi Railway Station, Delhi-110007
Ph.: 8750877303, 9810615888

E-mail: cecib@chic.nic.in
D/2638/17/02/25



UJVVN LIMITED

(An Indian Public Limited Company)

R.O. "UJYAN", BHAMBHURDA, (IN) 500 002, INDIA. Co. Regd. Office: 100, Park Street,
New Delhi-110 005. TEL: 011-23250000. FAX: 011-23250001. Website: www.ujvvn.com

Tender No.130 Date : 19/02/2023

e-Tender Date Extension Notice-09

Due to unavoidable reasons, the dates of submission of tenders are hereby extended as follows:-

- e-NIT No. 01/UJVVN/ DGM/(Civil-Arakot-Tiuni-Plasu)/TPI/2023-24,
- e-NIT No. 02/UJVVN/ DGM/(Civil-Arakot-Tiuni-Plasu)/TPI/2023-24,
- e-NIT No. 03/UJVVN/ DGM/(Civil-Arakot-Tiuni-Plasu)/TPI/2023-24

are hereby extended as follows:-

Last date for submission of bids on website : 17.03.2025 at 16.00 Hrs
Last date of Offline Submission of document : 19.03.2025 at 16.00 Hrs

Date & Time of Opening of e-Tender Part-I:

- Lot 1 : 20.03.2025 at 11.00 Hrs.
- Lot 2 & 21.03.2025 at 11.00 Hrs.
- Lot 3 : 22.03.2025 at 11.00 Hrs.

Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/ cancellation etc. may be obtained from e-procurement portal bidder.tenders.gov.in

By, General Manager (Civil)
Arakot-Tiuni/Plasu Project, Dakshinapeta

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Komal D/o Harish R/o Jhuggi No. N-116/258, J. Camp, Badli, Samaypur Badli, Delhi Age: 15 years, Height: 5 feet 3 inch, **Built:** Medium, **Complexion:** Wheatish wearing black Colour jacket & lower and white chappal in feel has been missing from her house since 14.02.2025. In this regard a FIR No. 185/2025 u/s 137(2) BNS dated 14.02.2025 has been registered at P.S. Samaypur Badli, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: clc@cbci.gov.in
Website: <http://clc.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639
Tel: 24368638/24368641

SHO : P.S. Samaypur Badli, Delhi
Ph. : 7065003638
8959617338
DP : 2025/03/25

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that a female **namely Laxmi W/o: Siddhartha, R/O - M-229-230 Mangolpuri, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped from her home. In this regard, a **DD NO 100A DI. 16.02.2025** has been registered at **PS: Mangol Puri, Delhi** The description of the missing female is as under.

Laxmi

Age: 27 years, **Height:** 5'4" **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Black Colour Top & Flazo and Slipper in hand. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. Any person is having information or clue about this missing female may kindly inform to the following.

Ph. No. 011-24366838, 24366641
Website: <http://cbic.in>
E-mail: cbic@cbi.gov.in
Fax No. 011-24366639
DE/2033/R/2025

PS: Mangolpuri, Delhi
Ph No. 8750205454, 7065036122

S.H.O.



NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

श्रीरहो श्री. दी.एच.-33004/99

REGD. NO. D. L-33004/99

भारत का राजपत्र

The Gazette of India

सौ.जी.-नं.पी.-नं.-22012025-260370

CG-UP-CE-22012025-260370

अतिरिक्त

EXTRAORDINARY

भाग II-अवध-3-उप-खण्ड (ii)

PART II-Sub-section (ii)

प्राविष्टि से कांति

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

नं. 326/ नई दिल्ली, सोमवार, जनवरी 20, 2025/पि.पी.30.1946

No. 326/ NEW DELHI, MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2025/PAUSHA 30, 1946

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

(North Central Railway (Engineering Department)

NOTIFICATION

Aggra, the 7th January, 2025

S.O. 328(E), in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (7A) of Section 2 of the Railways Act 1989 (24 of 1989), the Central Government hereby authorizes the officer mentioned in column (2) of the Table below as competent authority to perform the functions as such authority under the said Act with effect from the date of publication of this notification in the official gazette in respect of the Special Railway Project of **AF: BKK Doubling Rail Project** in the state of Rajasthan relating to sub division mentioned in column (3), District mentioned in column (4) of the said Table for the public purpose or operation, maintenance, management and operation of such Special Railway Project.

TABLE

Sr.No.	Competent Authority	Sub Division	District
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	Sub Divisional Officer,Bandikui	Bandikui	Dausa
2	Sub Divisional Officer,Laxmangarh	Laxmangarh	Alwar


[F] No. NCR -HQ/ENG (L&M)/60224-O/o DY C&E-1/AGRA

(Computer No. 11442)

North Central railway, Aggra, Chief Administrative Officer (Const.)

34/221 (A5)

VPIN KUMAR, Chief Administrative Officer


कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता,
चतुर्थ वृत्त, लोक निर्माण विभाग, रुद्रपुर (ऊधम सिंह नगर)
 (Phone/Fax) : 05944-240921 mail- sepdwun@gmail.com

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	धरोहर धनराशि (लाख में)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (₹ 100 में)	निविदा की वैधता (दिन)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	टेकेंदार की श्रेणी
1.	जलपट्ट ऊपरीमहिर् नगर में प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (शहरी) हेतु उकरीली-सितारगंज-1 आवासियों परियोजना हेतु मुख्य मार्ग से परियोजना स्थल तक पहुँच मार्ग निर्माण कार्य। (1.575 कि०मी०)	10.00	5000.00 18%GST	120 दिन	15 माह	भारत सरकार / निम्नरी भी राज्य सरकार के विभाग एवं उपक्रम की श्रेणी A एवं उपनगर में पंजीकृत

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता



Central Electricity Regulatory Commission

6th, 7th, & 8th Floor, Tower-B, World Trade Centre,
Naraina Nagar, New Delhi-110029

Petition No. 225/T/2024		Dated: 14.02.2023	
<p align="center">NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003</p> <p>An application under Section 14 of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by Karur Transmission Limited, C 105, Anand Niketan, New Delhi-110021 for the grant of a separate transmission licence for "Augmentation of 2x500 MVA, 400/230kV transformation capacity (3rd & 4th ICTs) at Karur PS and implementation of the 1 no. of 230kV line bay at Karur 400/230kV PS for interconnection of REGS of Nannai Solar Park Pvt. Ltd. on RTM route" (hereinafter referred to as the "Project") consisting of the following elements:</p>			
Sl. No.	Name of the scheme and Implementation timeframe	Estimated Cost (₹ Crores)	Remark
1	Augmentation of 2x500 MVA, 400/230 kV transformation capacity (3rd & 4th ICTs) at Karur PS. Tentative Implementation timeframe: 18 months.	115	Approved to be implemented under RTM by Karur Transmission Limited
2	Implementation of 1 no. of 230kV line bay at Karur 400/230kV PS for interconnection of REGS of M/s Nannai Solar Park Pvt. Ltd. 15 months from the date of issuance of OM by CTUIL. E, 23/1/2026.	5.57	Approved to be implemented under RTM by Karur Transmission Limited

Detailed scope of the Scheme is given below:		
S. No.	Scope of the Transmission Scheme	Capacity/km
1.	Augmentation of 2x500 MVA, 400/230 kV transformation capacity (3rd & 4th ICTs) at Karur PS	1,500 MVA, 400/230 kV ICTs – 2 Nos. 400 kV ICT bay – 2 Nos. 230 kV ICT bay – 2 Nos.
2	1 no. of 230kV line bay at Karur 400/230kV PS for interconnection of REGS of M/s Nannal Solar Park Pvt. Ltd.	1,230kV line bay–1 No.

3. The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited, vide its letter dated 17.7.2024, has recommended for the grant of a transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.

4. Based on the material available on the record, the Commission vide order dated 14.2.2025 in Petition No. 225/TU/2024, has proposed to issue a transmission licence to the applicant for establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.

5. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to the Commission Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the www.adanienergysolutions.com or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.

6. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by 4.3.2025 at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.

7. The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on 6.3.2025. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TADA/ shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

NORTHERN RAILWAY
PROCLAMATION REQUIRED
(THE APPEARANCE OF PERSON ACCUSED
(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Suraj Suman Etc.S/o Krishan Kumar, Age 30 years, Temporal Address- H.No. 516/06, Shiv Laxi Chak, Govind Pur, Kalkaji Delhi-19. Permanent Address-Village-Choti Ali Ganj Panku (Ward No. 01), Post+Thana, District-Pakur (Jharkhand), has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No-2094/2023 punishable U/ 143(1) RLY Act and he has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that said accused Suraj Suman can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Suraj Suman has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said Warrant),

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Suraj Suman is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 25.04.2025.

556/2025 By order
Shri APURAV GUPTA, SRM, Delhi
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

GREATER RANCHI DEVELOPMENT, AGENCY LIMITED
3rd Floor, Yojna Bhawan, Room No. 303, Nepal House Complex,
Doranda, Ranchi, Jharkhand, 834002
CIN: U45203JH2003SGC010045

NIB No.: GRDA/YOJ/REC_ZONE/05/2024-01, Date: 18.02.2025
National Competitive Bidding

BID NOTICE	
1. Name of the Work	CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR PLANNING & DESIGNING AND PREPARATION OF DETAILED PROJECT REPORT (DPR) FOR RECREATIONAL ZONE OF CORE CAPITAL CITY AT SITE-I, HEC AREA, RANCHI.
2. Mode of submission of	Online Bidding (from bid system)

3.	Bid Fee (through online)	Online Bidding (Two bid system) Cost of Tender Document: Rs. 10,000/- (Payable irrespective of whether the tender is successful or not)
4.	Minimum Money Deposit (in NR) (through online)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) / Rs. 20,00,000/- (Two lakh rupees only) (Refundable)
5.	Performance Guarantee	5% (in form of Bank Guarantee) 5% (as retention money from each running bill)
6.	Availability of Tender On-line	From To
7.	(Date & Time)	20.02.2025 at 13:00 19.03.2025 at 17:00
8.	(Date & Time)	20.02.2025 at 13:00 19.03.2025 at 17:00
9.	(Date & Time)	20.02.2025 at 13:00 19.03.2025 at 17:00
10.	Date & Time of Pre-bid meeting	03.03.2025 at 11:00 Hrs.
11.	Date & Time of submission of pre-bid queries	28.02.2025 at 11:00 Hrs.
12.	Date & Time of Tech. Bid Opening	20.02.2025 at 17:00 Hrs.
13.	Date of Presentation of Financial Bid	To be intimated
14.	Office Address	To be intimated
15.	15.	Greater Ranchi Development Agency Ltd., 3rd Floor, Room No. 303, Vijaya Bhawan, Nepal House Complex, Dardara, Ranchi, Bihar-834002. E-mail: project.gardara@gmail.com Tel: 91-2491160/2491034
16.	16.	

Note: Only Bid will be accepted
 Further details are available on Jharkhand Government e-procurement website www.jharkhandprocurement.gov.in and tender managers.

PR 346730 (Urban Development and Housing)-24-25 (D)

Sd/-
General Manager (P&P)



सेवा संस्थान (Pvt.)
sewdsan@gmail.com
 फ़ोन: 18.02.2025



SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY
 Tender Notice No. SADR/ENR/2025/0225
 Dated: 13-02-2025

अनुमोदित प्रस्ताव

दिनांक: 18.02.2025

उपरोक्त, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Bengaluru Division - (IN. 36.34.69.50) Construction of 2 lane ROBS in lieu of LC No. 46 (Manned) at Channarayana with 1x36m Composite Girder in Malsandya Yard and Construction of Limited Height Substation with 5.5x2.5m between Tumakuru & Malsandya Stations (Composite Work) (Tender Ref. No.: ASK-TK-ROBS-LC-46R)	

Last date for submission of bids:
 Upto 15:00 Hrs on 11-03-2025

For details log on to: www.inps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction Works/Bengaluru Cantonment

एवं उपक्रम में
मार्ग कार्य हेतु
श्रेणी A एवं
उच्चतर में
पंजीकृत

अधीक्षक अभियन्ता

Public Works Commission

Head Office, P.W.D. Office,
Rajmahal, Bhopal-462001

Advertisement No. : C-710-TORI-A-GCT.

1. Name of the work with its location & completion period : Development of Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal (GCT) at TORI-A-(TORI) Station Entirely on Railway land for the period of thirty five years (35

<p>Section 5 (f) of the ACT, 2003</p> <p>has been made by Karur for the grant of a separate information capacity (3rd & 4th unit) at Karur 400230 PSV for the " " (hereinafter referred to as the " ")</p>	
Cost	Remark
5	<p>Approved to be implemented under RTM by Karur Railway Station Limited</p> <p>Divisional Railway Manager (Compl.) Eastern Railway</p> <p>DD12014ADHNC/Compl./T/24-25</p>

[illegible]

	KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED (A Government of India Undertaking)	
	LIMITED E-TRACITION (SINGLE PACKET SYSTEM) INVITATION NOTICE	
<p>1. Name of Work: Execution of OHE works for 2 x 25 KV Traction system between Ilave to Khavdas section (RM 744 to 750) of Bhopad Division under West Central Railway in the state of MP. Notice No: KR/COE/OTD/KN/09/25 Dtd. 20/07/2023. Completion Period: 6 (Six) Months. Estimated Cost: ₹ 1,53,26,461/- excluding GST. EMD : ₹ 2,26,650/- Last Date & time for Online Submission of Tender: 07/02/2023 upto 15.00 Hrs. Dating of Tender: On 07/02/2023 at 15.00 Hrs.</p>		
<p>2. Name of Work: Execution of OHE works for 2 x 25 KV Traction system between Ilave to Khavdas section (RM 744 to 750) of Bhopad Division under West Central Railway in the state of MP. Notice No: KR/COE/OTD/KN/09/25 Dtd. 20/07/2023. Completion Period: 6 (Six) Months. Estimated Cost: ₹ 1,53,26,461/- excluding GST. EMD : ₹ 2,26,650/- Last Date & time for Online Submission of Tender: 07/02/2023 upto 15.00 Hrs. Dating of Tender: On 07/02/2023 at 15.00 Hrs.</p>		
<p>Amendments / Corrigendum if any, would be uploaded on IRP's website only. Submission of Tender Documents: Through IRP's. Manual Tender Documents</p>		

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one female namely **Radha W/o Pintu, R/o H.No. 37/16, Gali No. 02, Phase-4, Shiv Vihar, Karawal Nagar, Delhi, Age: 18 years, Height: 5'3", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Built: Thin, wearing Yellow colour Jacket, Blue colour Plazzo and Chappal in**

Karawal Nagar, Delhi since 11.02.2025 at 4:30 PM. In this regard a DD No. 51A, dated 15.02.2025 has been lodged at P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the female but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about her please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/2051/NE/2025



SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one Girl Namely: **Diksha, Do: Rajesh**
R/o: H. No. 2668, Gali Arya Samaj, Sita Ram Bazar, Turkman Galla Delhi, Sex: Female, Age: 22 Years, Height: 4'5", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Strong, Face: Round, Wearing: Yellow Colour Suit. In feet has been missing since 15.02.2025 from H. No. 2668, Gali Arya Samaj, Sita Ram Bazar, Turkman Galla Delhi, from the jurisdiction of Police Station Chandni Mahal Delhi. In this regard **DO. NO. 65A DATED 15.02.2025** has been registered at **P.S.: Chandni Mahal Delhi**, Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the Missing Girl but no clue has been found so far. Any information about this Missing Girl Please inform to the following.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID : cbicg@cbi.gov.in
Call : 011-23686659
DE2/P3/CG/2025

SHO
P.S.: Chandni Mahal Delhi
Mobile: 8750870423



India, Malaysia to boost ties in defence production, AI

New Delhi: India and Malaysia on Wednesday decided to enhance cooperation in maritime security, defence production and multilateral engagements as well as in emerging areas like cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The 13th meeting of the Malaysia-India defence cooperation committee at Kuala Lumpur, co-chaired by defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and his counterpart Lokman Hakim Bin Ali, held wide-ranging discussions on "effective and practical initiatives" to further expand bilateral defence engagements as well as on regional and global issues.

The two sides also exchanged the finalised "terms of reference" (ToR) on the establishment of a forum on the Russian-origin Sukhoi-30 fighters that both countries operate. As part of its policy to steadily enhance defence ties with Asian countries, India had earlier trained Malaysian pilots to fly the Sukhoi-30 jets.

"The Sukhoi-30 forum will enable closer cooperation between the two air forces in exchanging expertise and best practices in the maintenance of the aircraft," the official said.

"The two sides identified ways to deepen existing defence collaboration, particularly in the industry, maritime security and multilateral engagements. They agreed to form a joint focus group to address non-traditional maritime security threats," the official said.

Chargesheet not filed in 180 days, trio with terror links gets bail

New Delhi: A Delhi court recently granted defence bail to three men allegedly part of a terror module linked to al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), observing that accused individuals are entitled to bail if investigation is delayed beyond the 180-day period from the date of arrest, reports Vineet Upadhyay.

"Despite the lapse of the statutory time period of 180 days, the chargesheet in the instant matter has not been filed against them. Learned additional public prosecutor submits that the investigation regarding them is still pending. In my considered opinion, there is no embargo on the powers of the investigating agency to investigate the matter further; however, after the lapse of statutory time, the accused persons are entitled to statutory bail," said the court of additional sessions judge Hardeep Kaur.

The three accused — Umar Farooq, Hasan Ansari, and Arshad Khan, all from Ranchi — had been arrested by Delhi Police's special cell on Aug 22 last year in Rajasthan's Bhilwadi district for allegedly receiving arms training as part of a terror module. Another accused, Shahab Ansari, was arrested in Delhi this year and is in judicial custody.

The court granted bail to the three men under various conditions, including furnishing a bail bond of Rs 50,000 each with two sureties each in the like amount.

Spared gallows, man rapes & kills 11-year-old, held

Bhopal: A pedophile who was jailed once for raping a child, sentenced to death for raping a second child, and then acquitted by HC, has been arrested for the rape and murder of an 11-year-old hearing-and-speech-impaired girl in MP's Narsinghgarh town, reports Amarjeet Singh.

The suspect, 40-year-old Ramesh Khatri, was caught after a 16-day hunt. Police questioned over 400 suspects, scanned more than 400 hours of CCTV footage, and scoured nine districts and 17 railway stations until they located him in Prayagraj and then tracked him to the MP-Rajasthan border where he was arrested Wednesday. The child had been missing on the night of Feb 1 and was found the next morning in the jungles of Sonjay Nagar, covered in blood. Her family did not approach cops and it was an Anganwadi worker who alerted police two days later on seeing blood on her clothes. She was brought to Bhopal, and was on ventilator for six days but couldn't be saved.

83% of Ladki Bahin recipients married, widows mere 4.7%

At 29%, Most Women Are In 30-39 Yr Group

Priyanka Kakodkar | TNN

Mumbai: Almost 83% of beneficiaries of the Mukhya Mantri Ladki Bahin Yojana are married women, according to an analysis of around 2.5 crore recipients of the scheme. Unmarried women account for 11.8% of beneficiaries while widowed women are 0.3% of total beneficiaries, deserted women 0.2%, and destitute women 0.1% of the total.

The 30-39 year age group had the highest number of beneficiaries at 29% of the total. The 21-29 year group followed next with 25.5%, while the 40-49 year group accounted for 23.6% of the beneficiaries. Indeed, 70% of beneficiaries fell between the 21-39 year



Divorced, destitute and deserted women collectively account for less than 1% of beneficiaries of the BJP-led Fadnavis gov't flagship welfare scheme in Maharashtra, data shows

age group and 22% fell in the 50-65 year group. The 60-65 year age group accounted for almost 5% of beneficiaries.

"Almost 5% of women aged 60-65 years have received the benefit indicating that women who were not receiving any benefit have received much-needed financial support," said women and child welfare secretary Anurag Kumar Yadav.

Pune district topped in applications, followed by Nashik and Ahmednagar. The scheme provides a stipend of Rs 1,500 per month to married, divorced, widowed, deserted and destitute women

between ages of 21 and 65 years, whose annual family income is below Rs 2.5 lakh and who are domiciled in the state. One eligible unmarried woman from each family can also be considered. The Mahayuti alliance had promised to raise the stipend to Rs 2,000 once voted to office and is under pressure to announce it in the budget next month.

Beneficiaries are being checked to remove those ineligible for the scheme which costs Rs 46,000 crore annually. So far, 5 lakh beneficiaries have been identified. The figure could go up to 15 lakh, CM Fadnavis has said.

VALLEY TENSE OVER PARCHED JHELMU



A dried-up portion of the Jhelum on Wednesday. J&K is staring at water crisis due to a massive deficit in rainfall. Kashmir has witnessed a dry winter this season with an overall 80% rainfall deficit, raising the possibility of a drought in the valley. CM Omar Abdullah on Thursday called for a more proactive water management to overcome the crisis

EAM to attend G20 meet in SA, may hold talks with China's Wang

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: External affairs minister S. Jaishankar will participate in the G20 meeting of foreign ministers in Johannesburg on Feb 20-21, said govt on Wednesday.

Jaishankar's US counterpart Marco Rubio will skip the event, but China's Wang Yi and Russia's Sergey Lavrov will attend the meeting.

While Jaishankar is likely to informally meet Wang and Lavrov, a formal bilateral meeting is also not ruled out, according to govt sources, and will depend on the schedule of the leaders.

Jaishankar had last met Wang at the G20 Rio summit in Nov during which they discussed ways to take the relationship forward, following the border disengagement agreement.



Jaishankar had last met Wang at the G20 Rio summit in Nov, during which they discussed ways to take the relationship forward, following the border disengagement agreement

"EAM's participation in the G20 FMM will strengthen India's engagement with G20 countries and bolster the voice of the Global South in this important forum," said the govt, adding that the minister will also have a few bilateral meetings on the margins of the event. South Africa holds the G20 presidency this year and will host the summit in Nov. Its presidency though has run into a

controversy, with the US secretary of state Marco Rubio boycotting the foreign ministers' meeting because South Africa is seeking to promote diversity, equality and inclusion. "In other words: DEI and climate change. My job is to advance America's national interests, not waste taxpayer money or coddle anti-Americanism," he had said earlier this month.

2 more GBS deaths take Pune toll to 11; India count hits 23

Steffy Thevar
@timesofindia.com

Pune: Two young people being treated for Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) in a private hospital on Jan 22 but was moved to a government hospital after the bill shot up to Rs 3 lakh, said a source. She was on ventilator support at Nalavale Hospital for around 25 days.

The preliminary cause of death was septicemic shock with multi-organ failure. The patient was a 21-year-old woman from Pune, who had been in intensive care with symptoms of GBS. 16 were on ventilator support until Wednesday evening. The health department didn't report any new cases, which stand at 21, with most patients being from Pune and its nearby areas.

HEALTH ALARM

shock with multi-organ failure. The patient was a 21-year-old woman from Pune, who had been in intensive care with symptoms of GBS. 16 were on ventilator support until Wednesday evening. The health department didn't report any new cases, which stand at 21, with most patients being from Pune and its nearby areas.

Bitcoin scam: ED seizes ₹10.6cr assets in Dubai

Mumbai: ED has temporarily attached commercial properties worth Rs 10.6 crore in Dubai owned by the late bitcoin fraud suspect Amit Bhardwaj, as part of a money laundering probe. It has asked Dubai officials to prevent any transaction involving these assets, reports Vijay V Singh.

The ED has attached a 300 sq ft residence and a bungalow in Pune, along with equity shares, collectively worth around Rs 100 crore of actress Shilpa Shetty and her husband Raj Kundra in the same case. There are allegations that Kundra received 28 bitcoins (valued at Rs 150 crore) from Amit to establish a bitcoin mining operation in Ukraine. ED has so far seized assets worth Rs 172 crore. The accused allegedly collected funds in bitcoins worth Rs 6,600 crore in 2017, promising investors monthly returns of 10%. The bitcoins were intended for mining operations, but organisers concealed the illegally obtained bitcoins in hidden online wallets.

Blow to Shinde as BMC scraps ₹1.4k cr project

Mumbai: Yet another pet project of former CM Eknath Shinde, now the deputy CM, has hit a dead end, with BMC scrapping its Rs 1,400 crore tender for a four-year period for door-to-door solid waste collection, slum passage cleaning, and drainage and toilet maintenance, reports Richa Pinto.

The tender was invited in Feb last year. Last year, BMC, upon instructions of Shinde, organised a deep-cleaning drive every weekend and was also directed to appoint an agency for regular cleaning of slums across the city.

Trouble began when Federation of Berojar Sansthas, previously involved in such work, moved HC. In the 2024 monsoon assembly session, MLC Pravin Darekar sought to know why community-based groups were not included within its ambit. With the matter dragging on, BMC scrapped the tender altogether.

UP govt faces HC ire for 11-year aid delay to acid attack survivor

Meerut: Allahabad HC Wednesday slammed the district magistrate of Meerut and UP govt for the "apathetic handling" of a compensation case involving an acid attack survivor, who has been waiting for relief under the PM's National Relief Fund for 11 years, reports Sandeep Rai.

A division bench said, "The lackadaisical approach of the district magistrate, Meerut, and the UP govt in handling the case of a woman who has been suffering from severe burns in an acid attack following a dispute over road construction. The attack left her with 10% disability, affecting her eyes, chest, neck, and face. While state govt granted her Rs 5 lakh compensation in 2016, she is yet to receive an additional Rs 1 lakh from the PM Relief Fund."

Gunshot kills 5-yr-old boy at MP wedding

Bhopal: A five-year-old boy succumbed to gunshot injuries sustained while attending a wedding in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district Tuesday night. His family was initially reluctant to file a complaint, but cops convinced them to do so, sources said. A case of murder was registered against accused Abhishek Shrivastava (23), a neighbour of the groom. Shrivastava is on the run. The boy's father had come with his family to attend his son's wedding. While playing with other children, a gunshot rang out, and Gappu collapsed, bleeding from a wound to his chest. He died on way to hospital. Probe was under way to determine if the shooting was an accident or an act of vengeance, police said.

A Unique Birthday Gift: TOI front page from the day you were born

Imagine receiving a newspaper front page from the day you were born. It's not just a collection of headlines; it's a snapshot of the world as it existed on that very day. The stories, advertisements, and photographs on the page offer a glimpse into the culture, technology and events of the time. It's like stepping into a time machine and experiencing history first-hand.

TOI presents a truly unique and thoughtful birthday gift — TOI front page from the day you were born. It combines the allure of history with a personalised touch, creating a present that is both meaningful and educational. It

allows the recipient to connect with the past in a tangible way and serves as a reminder of the richness of our shared history. So, the next time you're searching for that perfect birthday gift, consider giving the gift of history — a newspaper front page from a date that holds special meaning for the person you care about.

A Personalized Connection: What makes this gift idea even more special is the ability to personalize it with the recipient's first name on the front page (Rakhi's special day in the life of The Times of India). This personalisation adds a layer of thoughtfulness that makes the gift truly unique.



Assam tribunal on foreigners can't overturn own finding: SC

Dhananjay Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has ruled that once a designated Foreigners Tribunal rejects Assam gov't claim that a person is an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant who entered the state after March 25, 1971, the tribunal cannot review its own order based on the administration's fresh plea and additional documents.

A tribunal had on Feb 15, 2018, after considering oral and documentary evidence in a case filed in 2016, decided that one Rejia Khatun was not a foreigner from Bangladesh who entered India on or after March 25, 1971.

There was another case registered in 2012 alleging the same person to be a foreigner from Bangladesh. This was taken up for hearing on Dec 24, 2019, and the



SUPREME JUDGMENT

tribunal ruled that despite its Feb 15 order, it had the power to scrutinise documents and materials and even its findings in earlier proceedings. This was challenged by Khatun before Gauhati HC, which upheld the power of the tribunal to go into the question afresh notwithstanding the earlier decision declaring Khatun as not a foreigner.

Senior advocate Pijush Roy appearing for Khatun,

told a bench of Justices A S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan that the tribunals had no power to review its own orders. Accepting the argument, the bench said state govt was a party to the 2018 order and neither did it seek recall of the order nor challenge it before the HC.

"The (Dec 2019) order indicates that the tribunal wants to sit in an appeal against its own concluded judgment and order. Such power can never be exercised by the tribunal. The remedy of the state govt or for that matter the central govt was to challenge the order dated Feb 15, 2018," it said. The bench said the tribunal is powerless to reconsider its own orders and set aside the HC order as well as the Dec 24, 2019, decision of the Gauhati HC. The bench shut out the Centre or Assam govt from challenging the tribunal's 2018 order.

HC seeks U'khand reply as UCC form asks for live-in couples' past info

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Dehradun: Uttarakhand high court has directed the state govt to respond to a petition challenging the registration format for live-in relationships under the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), which seeks details of past relationships, including divorces and widows. The next hearing is scheduled for Friday.

The bench of chief justice G Narendran and justice Ashish Joshi heard the petition filed by a man from Ranikhet, originally from Mumbai, who resides in the state as a tenant. The counsel representing the live-in couple — an IT Bombay alumnus and a fashion designer — argued that the registration form under UCC requires them to provide details of past events, including marital history, which they claim is unfair.

"The form asks for unnecessary details about di-

A couple's counsel argued the registration form under UCC needs them to provide details about events, including marital history, which they claim is unfair

vorces, widows, etc. This is not required for live-in registration," the couple's counsel said, adding that only documents related to residence, date of birth, Aadhaar, and tenancy should be necessary.

Under UCC, implemented in Uttarakhand on Jan 27, live-in relationships must be registered within a month of commencement. Failure to do so could result in penalties, including imprisonment for up to six months or a fine of up to Rs 25,000. The law has sparked debate over privacy, with concerns that registrars have the authority to summon partners and record statements, raising fears of intrusion.

2 PFI men held over 'anti-India' activities get conditional bail

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: Bombay HC granted conditional bail to two former office-bearers of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI), arrested by Maharashtra anti-terrorists on Jan 13, 2022 for allegedly mobilising support for "anti-India" activities, reports Mohammed Akhif.

HC's Aurangabad bench ordered Mohammad Nisar and Mohammed Abdul Karim — former district treasurer and former district secretary of PFI's Parbhani unit, respectively — to present themselves before the court on Feb 20. The court also directed the police to hand districts unless permitted by the trial court, and cooperate with court proceedings.

The bail was granted against a personal bond of Rs 15,000 each with one surety of the same amount. Nisar and Karim were among 20 suspects arrested statewide in Sept 2022 during a nationwide crackdown on PFI.

As oven deadline looms, Maha neta seeks heritage tag for Irani bakeries

Chaitanya Marpalkar
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Mumbai: The pav-makers must be spared, former BJP corporator Makrand Narwekar has demanded. With the July 8 deadline looming for restaurants to make the switch from charcoal and wood-fired tandoors to cleaner alternatives, Narwekar has urged CM Devendra Fadnavis to exempt the city's iconic Irani cafes and bakeries from the ban and accord them heritage status to preserve their culinary and historical legacy. Narwekar said the demand after receiving a letter from Irani Bakers Association, which said implementing HC order prohibiting the use of wood and charcoal in commercial eateries as part of measures to tackle Mumbai's worsening air quality would adversely disrupt the supply



Pointing out that Irani cafes and bakeries use wood-fired ovens to make pav, BJP's Makrand Narwekar sought an exemption from the ban on the use of wood and charcoal in commercial eateries

of pav required for vada pav. Narwekar said the cafes have long been a cornerstone of the city's food culture and history. "These cafes have been in existence for over a century, and the wood-fired ovens they use are an integral part of their legacy. The distinct taste and aroma of the baked goods that these cafes are known for are the direct

result of the wood and charcoal-based ovens. The non-wood or coal ovens will change the taste of the cuisine, which patrons have cherished for generations." Narwekar said the cafes trace their origins to 19th century, when Zoroastrian immigrants brought their culinary traditions to the city. "To preserve this integral part of our

heritage, I request that govt consider granting heritage status to these cafes, with exemption from the prohibition on wood and charcoal use."

He said in New York, historic restaurants are exempt from regulations to protect traditional cooking methods, while in the Netherlands, centuries-old windmills, in the middle of cities, are preserved as national heritage. Meanwhile, a section of bakery owners has said switching over to piped gas isn't easy for all. Samajwadi Party MLA Rishi Shukla, who led a delegation of bakery owners to the additional municipal commissioner, said, "There is no piped gas within city limits, where a large number of bakeries are located. How does one then expect these bakery owners who are willing to make the switch from solid fuels to cleaner fuel in the next six months?"

Sangam water fit for drinking, bid to defame Kumbh: Yogi

3 from Delhi among 10 killed in crashes

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DD refuses to telecast AMU founder biopic; maker alleges politics

AMU vice-chancellor's Nandini Khanna's biography on the campus recently.

In its letter to Mumbai-based production house Dark Horse Productions, Prasar Bharati's programme executive has said: "I am directed to inform you that your proposal for offering programme (s) on the life of Syed Ahmad Khan could not be qualified (sic) for telecast/stream under Revenue Sharing Mode (RSM) on

masters, and Chaudhary's biography by Syed Ahsan Ali Haider. Hayat-E-Javed, the biopic depicts Sir Syed's struggles to found Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College which became AMU in 1920 and the visionary's efforts to inject scientific thinking into the Islamic religion. During the centenary celebrations of AMU in 2020, PM Modi had called the AMU campus "mini-India".

PHEW! THANK GOD YOU ARE NOT WATCHING ALLAMBADIA SHOW!

Design transport system for people, not cars: WHO DG

Marrakesh: Govts and agencies must design transport system for people and not for cars, World Health Organisation (WHO) director general Tedros Ghebreyesus said, while urging global communities to support the cause of road safety reports. **Dinak Dash**

Speaking in an inaugural session of the 4th ministerial conference on road safety on Tuesday, he said, "In this complex and often divisive world, we must find common ground on an issue that we can all rally around. It can help make people healthy, cities sustainable and societies equitable."

While highlighting how 10 countries have reduced road deaths by 50% in the past decade and another 35 nations by 30%, the WHO chief said road traffic deaths in Africa increased by 17%.

"This is because in Africa and elsewhere, many countries lack the resources and systems designed for cars, not

Addressing the conference, which has participants from more than 100 countries, UN special envoy for road safety Jean Todt said, "The road toll in Africa is like Marlene Dietrich's wig pulled out by road crashes. It's scary."

Reading out India's commitment to reduce crash fatalities and injuries, MoS road transport Ajay Tamsil said India will make road safety an enforcement priority by embedding it into road infrastructure planning, vehicle design and transport regulations.

"India is not just making a commitment today; we are making a commitment to the future. Road safety is non-negotiable."

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	उपयुक्त धनराशि लाख में	निविदा कीमत (18% जीएसटीडीएफ सहित)	कार्यवधि
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मुख्य अभियंता

Catalysing Change From Within, This NGO Is Charting A New Course In Self-help And Women Empowerment

However, during probe police discovered Sajid's wife and her neighbour, Sumit Kumar had conspired to kill him. At a press conference on Wednesday, Mainpuri police head Sandeep Singh said, "We found that the woman had been in communication with a neighbour named Sumit for several days. Their friendship had grown to the extent that the wife wanted to get rid of her husband."

The SI said another motive was that the order was to shift the blame onto Yadav, as there had been previous allegations against him.



DROP IN CREDIT GROWTH IS DUE TO SLOW DEPOSIT EXPANSION: SBI CHIEF C S SETTY

PICK-UP IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY LIKELY IN H2 FY26: SANJAY MALHOTRA-LED RBI'S REPORT

Tesla likely to import cars from Germany, skip China

Maha, Guj, TN Frontrunners To Approach Co For Factory

Pankaj Deval
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New Delhi: Tesla is likely to import cars from its German factory and will skip shipping them from China in view of concerns raised by govt.

As it prepares to begin sales in India — initially through the import route and thereafter through local manufacturing — the electric carmaker is now being approached by a host of state govt for setting up its manufacturing unit, with Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana being the frontrunners.

Sources said the Elon Musk-run company will "in all likelihood" apply for benefits under the new EV policy that govt had announced in March 2024. This will allow the company to import 8,000 cars annually at a highly-subsidised 15% customs duty (against 110% now), only after it commits to invest Rs 4,350 crore (little less than) \$900 million

MAJOR APPEAL

➤ Tesla is likely to apply for benefits under the new EV policy

➤ This will allow the company to import 8,000 cars annually at 15% customs duty (against 110% now), after it commits to invest \$500mn for a local factory, with value addition

➤ Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu have the advantage of providing easier access to ports, seen as a must for Tesla's India factory, which will also be an export hub

➤ The company has decided to skip import from China after govt raised objection

for a local factory, with additional domestic value addition (DVA) mandates.

"There is excitement and nervousness in investment departments of key states as they scurry to attract the Tesla investments. The plan is to approach the company management as soon as possible and begin negotiations, including giving out any special benefits," a source said.

Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are already key automotive manufacturing hubs, and so is Gujarat where man-

vestment from a high-technology company is a big attraction for various govt. "Some of the states are already in discussions with the company's management having initiated the talks last year, when the company looked close to entering India. The talks will now happen at a more advanced level as things have progressed much ahead from the previous levels. There is also an effort to understand demands of the company management, including issues around local connectivity to the port," another source said.

Asked about the govt's demand to not to import from China, one source said Tesla "appears to be in sync" with the request, considering the Indo-China diplomatic issues. "German factory in Berlin, which produces Tesla Model Y, will now be used to manufacture right-hand drive cars, which will come to India."

➤ Related report, P21

Irdai forms committee to review Insurance Act

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Irdai) has set up a high-powered committee led by former SBI chairman Dinesh Khara to review key aspects of Insurance Act, 1938. The committee, which includes top industry experts, is expected to submit its report in three months.

Based on recommendations of the Khara committee, Irdai will propose changes to the Union finance ministry, after which the department of financial services will issue a new draft bill for stakeholder feedback.

The committee includes Dinesh Khara, former SBI chairman; N Kannan, former CEO of ICICI Pru Life; Sanjay Sinha, former ED at RBI; Girish Radhakrishnan, former CMD of UIIC; Alok Mishra, MD and CEO of MFIL; Rakesh Joshi, former WTM at IRDAI; and legal expert L Vishwanathan.

Industry sources said the formation of the committee suggests that insurance reforms may take longer than expected. The regulator appears to be laying the groundwork to facilitate the proposed changes in insurance laws announced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

In the Budget, Sitharaman said govt would amend the Insurance Act to allow 100% foreign direct investment in the sector. She also said safeguards would be implemented to ensure that revenue from insurance sales remains within India.

At a post-budget press conference in Mumbai, financial services secretary M Nagara-

GenNext less focused on building cos: Kotak

Says India's Animal Spirits May Be Fading As Kids Of Biz Families Keener On Managing Investments

Mayur Shetty
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Mumbai: Veteran banker Uday Kotak has warned that India's economic 'animal spirits' are fading as the next generation of business families focuses more on managing investments than building and running companies.

Kotak also called for a cohesive strategy from policymakers to counter the "vacuum cleaner" effect of US policies, which are pulling foreign capital away, straining the current account, and affecting the exchange rate and liquidity.

Speaking at the group's flagship investor event, Chasing Growth 2025, he said, "What concerns me is that many in this generation are taking the easy way out, especially in the post-Covid world. They claim to be managing family offices and investments, trading in the stock market, allocating funds to mutual funds, and treating it as a full-time job."

He added, "If someone has sold a business, they should be thinking about starting, buying, or building another business. Instead, I see many young people saying, 'I'm running my family office.' They should be creating real-world businesses. Why not start from scratch?" he said.

While acknowledging the importance of startup funding, Kotak questioned why individuals at 35 or 40 were not contributing directly. "I would love to see this generation be hungry for success and build operational businesses. Even today, I firmly believe that the next generation must work hard and create businesses rather than becoming financial investors too early in life."

Kotak also highlighted the risks of relatively high stock valuations in India. "Should we continue encouraging retail investors to keep buying? Retail investors in India are funneling money into equities daily, contributing to domestic institutional flows. Money from individuals from Lucknow to Coimbatore is flowing to Boston and Tokyo," he said.

➤ The US dollar is acting like a vacuum pump, sucking capital out of emerging markets
➤ This \$2.5 trillion has the potential to leave. Of course, not all of it will, but could 5% exit? Could \$100 billion flow out in a year? We have seen that happen before. In such a scenario, two things could happen — RBI depletes its reserves, or the rupee weakens. I believe we could see a mix of both outcomes.



—UDAY KOTAK | VETERAN BANKER

noting that foreign companies were taking advantage of high valuations to book profits and repatriate funds.

"The US dollar is acting like a vacuum pump, sucking capital out of emerging markets," Kotak said, pointing to the impact of a strengthening dollar and rising US Treasury yields above 4.5%, which are drawing capital from global markets. Indian stock valuations remain significantly higher than those in most other global markets.

India's external account has three key components: foreign portfolio investment (FPI) at \$800 billion, foreign direct investment (FDI), including both listed and unlisted capital, at close to \$1 trillion, and \$700 billion in external commercial borrowings. This brings the total

repatriable capital stock to \$2.5 trillion, while forex reserves — net of RBI's forward short positions — stand at \$560 billion.

India has seen exits from both FPIs and FDI. Companies like Whirlpool and Hyundai are reducing their holdings in Indian arms due to high valuations. In the financial sector, Prudential is looking to sell its stake in Pru-

➤ What concerns me is that many in this generation are taking the easy way out, especially in the post-Covid world. They claim to be managing family offices and investments, trading in the stock market, allocating funds to mutual funds, and treating it as a full-time job

Auto on govt's list for trade talks with US

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New Delhi: Automobiles are among the list of items identified by the commerce department for consultations with other departments and ministries ahead of negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement with the US — an indication that govt is seeking feedback for a possible duty cut for bikes and cars such as Harley Davidson and Tesla.

Sources told TOI that the commerce department is looking at the list of sectors where it can offer duty cuts following consultations and auto figures prominently.

The discussions are being held at the level of commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal to identify India's offensive interests, meaning areas where it would seek a reduction in import duty from the US, as well as its defensive interests — where it may have to offer concessions.

Ministries and departments, in turn, have been told to come back with feedback from industry so that a final view on the sector can be taken in a comprehensive manner.

Given Trump's outbursts in recent weeks — as well as the move to impose up to 25% tariffs on auto imports into

US — cars and bikes are seen as an area of defensive interest for India, especially as Americans see steel and automobiles among sectors where the world's largest economy should regain its dominant position that it has had to concede to China in recent years.

Trump has repeatedly flagged high tariffs in India as a concern, including on Tuesday, and said that companies such as Harley Davidson and Tesla are left with little choice but to set up factories in India.

This is despite govt slashing import duty on Harley Davidson and other bikes in the Budget, while lowering

the basic customs duty on cars to 70%, although the effective levy, including cess, has been retained at 110%.

For Trump, the other area of interest is easier access for American agricultural goods, such as pecan nuts and fruits, despite cornering a dominant share of almonds and pistachios.

For India, sectors such as textiles and footwear, as also some of its farm products, will be areas of offensive interest with non-tariff barriers too expected to figure prominently in the discussions as the two sides seek to expand trade from less than \$200 billion to \$500 billion by 2030.



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A thought for today
The best car safety device is a rearview mirror with a cop in it
DUDLEY MOORE

Elon Riders

Trump thinks Tesla factory here's 'unfair'. But Musk's car company needs to be here

On a day when Tesla fans cheered the brand's likely entry in India, Trump made it clear he's not thrilled by a Tesla factory here. "That's unfair to us. It's very unfair," he said, circling back to his pet peeve about India's high tariffs. He needn't have bothered. With just 13 jobs advertised on a portal for Delhi and Mumbai, Elon Musk clearly does not have a manufacturing or assembly plan yet. Why would he, with plenty of spare capacity abroad? So, all he's looking for now is to import-market sell.

Besides, with Chinese showroom prices of the cheapest Tesla, Model 3, starting around \$32,000 (€28L), the brand can only aim for a niche in India — rich people with green sensibilities. And those are Shanghai-made cars. Even if Musk gets Teslas from Germany, with Indian import duties, the cars will be costlier. Regardless, Tesla needs to be in India. Unlike 2022, when it announced intent and then backed off because India did not relent on tariffs without a commitment to manufacture locally. Or 2014,



when then Tesla CIO Jayaprakash Vijayan mentioned a 2015 plan that didn't materialise. Modi visited Tesla's California factory in Sep '15; Musk announced his China manufacturing plan a month later.

So, why now? Because this is not 2022 when Tesla's gross profit margin was 30%. It slipped below 15% in the last three months of 2024. The average sale price of its cars has fallen by a third to almost \$40,000. All-brand EV sales in Germany, where Tesla has a Gigafactory, fell 40% last Dec. Yes, it broke its own record in China with 657,000 cars sold last year, but faced stiff competition from local brands like BYD and Xiaomi. While it sold 1.79m cars worldwide — a dip of 1.1% — BYD sold 1.76m, recording 12.1% growth. Meanwhile, Mercedes and BMW, premium brands Tesla will be up against in India, have started EV assembly here.

The car industry is in a flux. Legacy carmakers can't sit on their laurels anymore, nor can Tesla. It was seen as cutting-edge, but others have jumped into the autonomous car race. BYD will soon roll out driver assistance with DeepSeek. Meanwhile, Musk's impatience is showing in US — he wants crash investigations related to his cars, and a dept of justice probe about whether he overstated his cars' capabilities, scrapped. What he also needs is a new and growing market.

Aqua Ain't Purus

NGT data on Kumbh river water quality frames a larger national question on cleaning up rivers

How many Indian rivers are polluted? A Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) assessment of 603 rivers, has identified 311 polluted stretches on 279 rivers, based on the organic Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) indicator. So, the same river can be clean in some parts, but not in others. Given the huge gatherings at Kumbh, the confluence of rivers at Prayagraj presented an extraordinary cleanliness challenge for UP authorities. Their preparations have been at scale too. But now, with only a week left for the 45-day event to wrap up, the National Green Tribunal has drawn attention to worrying water quality data.

It quotes a CPCB report dated Feb 3. The report raises red flags, less on the BOD measure, more on Fecal Coliform. It also says sewage treatment plants were found operational, and all but one complies with stipulated norms. So, if the increase in fecal concentration was caused by the sheer number of people taking the holy dip, were the countermeasures inadequate? A thorough transparent investigation is critical. It's acutely owed to the over 55cr that UP govt claims have already taken the holy dip. The risks of patchy disease surveillance are staring us in the face, after the Guillain-Barre Syndrome outbreak in Maharashtra has been linked to E coli contamination in water. More broadly, doing dependable monitoring and following it up with scientific fixes is the only way for India to clean up its rivers.

For all the remedial measures India has taken in recent decades, it still continues to discharge intolerable amounts of untreated industrial, agricultural and domestic runoffs into its water bodies. Even 25% of our municipal solid waste remains unprocessed. For the world's most populous country, every shortfall in waste management has painfully multiplied social and economic costs. River systems are dynamic and self-healing, but only if we let them breathe.

Ald-de-camp

Long before Artificial Intelligence, diverse devices have done our thinking for us

Jug Suraiya



In 1637 a Frenchman penned three words which would prompt future generations to proclaim him to be the Father of Modern Western Philosophy.

The man was René Descartes and the three words were Cogito, ergo sum: I think, therefore I am. Had he been around today, would his historic proposition be pre-empted by a chatbot: AI think, therefore AI am?

AI, or Artificial Intelligence, is a genie that has emerged out of the bottle of digital technology, and no one knows how to put it back, or even if we should try to do so, because we don't know if the genie is a boon or a bane for humankind.

The unbelieved genie of AI has got the world Twitter, for fear that it will not only think for us, but will out-think us and make millions unemployed. From call centre employees made redundant by chatbots, to writers of columns such as this, who will be replaced by LLMs, Large Language Models, which can replicate spoken and written words in endless permutations and combinations.

But for all the hullabaloo raised about it, AI is the inevitable outcome of a long process by which we have outsourced our ability to think to various devices.

Perhaps the first of these was the abacus, which did the chore of addition and subtraction for us by moving beads on a framework, and was the prestigious forerunner of the pocket calculator which did away with the need for us to do mental calculations or to mug up multiplication tables.

Calculators, which were mini portable computers, gave way to smart-phones which, apart from fulfilling their main function of taking selfies, are the Khulusi SIM to treasure trove of information, never mind if some of it is misinformation or fake news, but which relieves us of the chore of learning history, or geography, or acquiring any form of knowledge. Thinking? Let Wikipedia do it for us.

The cumulative result of this mental abdication is AI. Descartes? Wasn't he the dude who said, AI think, therefore I Ain't...?

ION'T BE F-35ed

Does India need these super-pricey, 5th gen US fighter jets? It's got buyers' clout because IAF needs 100-plus planes. Shop for 4.5 gen fighters & push HAL to deliver sooner

Manmohan Bahadur



There's a quick formula that helps keep feet firmly on the ground when Westerner praises you. Slash the praise by half, evaluate remaining 50% for kernels of correct takes — the outcome is a reality check. That means keep aside compliments India received in Washington, and realistically evaluate Trump's offer of an arms sale — F-35 fighters — to New Delhi.

US pundits have several questions about F-35 fighters. But more important are geopolitical and strategic reasons to have a long think on Trump's offer.

Wars are not going to be fought only with high-end expensive trinkets. Missiles & unmanned aerial vehicles are revolutionising warfare. India is doing reasonably well in these sectors

There's a persistent belief among many Indians that US cannot be trusted as an all-weather friend, given the historical baggage of India-US relations. But that's not the point. No nation-state can be blindly trusted in geopolitical power plays. At the bargaining table, it's always each nation guarding its own interests, and turf.

Take Russia, for instance, India's 'accepted' bad-weather friend. The then USSR promptly looked the other way in 1962 when the Chinese attacked India because Moscow wanted Beijing on its side during the Cuban missile crisis. It's a different matter that Moscow came around later as our 'trusted' friend with the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty that

stood us in good stead in the 1971 war. Thereafter, it has been a dependable ally for India's armament requirements. The only catch was that, although reliable, Russian products were technologically inferior to Western ones. As a quid pro quo, India retained its neutrality, sidestepping repeated attempts to make us lean West.

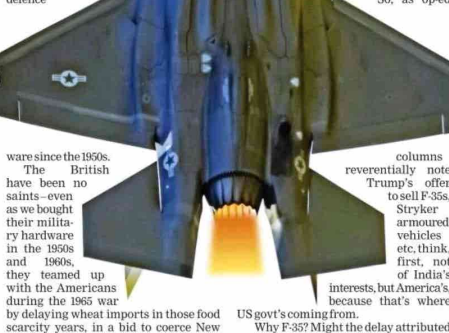
French govt has been extraordinary merchants. With their independent stance vis-à-vis Americans and Nato, and no geopolitical ambitions in our part of the world, they sold their wares to anyone who had the money. However, New Delhi has never received any niche technology from Paris — and they've been selling us defence

Delhi into arriving at an agreement with Pakistan on Kashmir.

America was a 'great friend' with economic aid in the early years following Independence. However, it twined this with measures to 'balance' India by propping up Pakistan with aid and armory. Islamabad was 'used' as long as it suited Washington's geopolitical need. It needed Pakistan as a buffer against Moscow's expansion into Afghanistan — only to be thrown out like the proverbial fly in a teacup on USSR's withdrawal.

After Pokhran II, US was the first country to impose wide-ranging sanctions on India. Restrictions on some select entities remain in force to this day.

So, as op-ed



ware since the 1950s.

The British have been no saints — even as we bought their military hardware in the 1950s and 1960s.

They teamed up with the Americans during the 1965 war by delaying wheat imports in those food scarcity years, in a bid to coerce New

columns reverentially note Trump's offer to sell F-35s. Stryker armoured vehicles etc, think, first, not of India's interests, but America's, because that's where US govt's coming from.

Why F-35? Might the delay attributed to 'supply chain issues' in the delivery of GE-F404 aero engines for India's vital Tejas programme — that caused Air Chief's outburst in Aerofield — be as innocent as it is made out to be? Further, given that the American take contractual agreements seriously, even the nine-month-and-counting wait for the supply of Apache attack helicopters for the army becomes suspect.

So, what should India do to safeguard its interests? As always, New Delhi is on its own even as the China-Pakistan nexus strengthens. Yes, Beijing has operationalised its fifth generation fighter and flown the next generation prototype. But wars are not going to be fought only with high-end, super-costly trinkets. Missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles are revolutionising warfare. India is doing reasonably well in these sectors.

However, knowing HAL's state of aircraft production, and its likely development trajectory of Tejas Mk2 and Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), some aircraft must be bought to tide over the immediate crisis of IAF's squadron depletion.

Europe, firmly in Trump's cross-hairs, offers India with options. No country requires the numbers IAF does — 10 at a minimum. While our fifth generation AMCA is at least a decade away, the interim purchase need not be a small number of ultra-pricey F-35s, like the 36 Rafales we bought. Such an F-35 deal would mean getting too little after spending too much on a machine that would come with its cutting-edge avionics and radar denied to us. It would also, most likely, mean American end-user restrictions of F-35 utilisation vis-à-vis Russian radars deployed by India.

New Delhi has buyer's clout. It should flex that clout to purchase a 4.5 generation machine to make up the numbers urgently. Having done that, GOI should push HAL to deliver Tejas Mk2 and AMCA.

The writer is a retired Air Vice Marshal

50-Over Cricket's Midlife Crisis, With India Twist

Champions Trophy, an ODI tourney, will get real buzzy only with an Indo-Pak final. Indian selectors, however, have batted for the past and interrupted the future

Avijit Ghosh@timesofindia.com



When the last ICC Champions Trophy took place in 2017, Gautam Gambhir was yet to join, let alone walk out of active politics. Virat Kohli was making cover drives look easier than drinking coffee. And Kohli, who was a key finisher in the lower middle order. Since then, ICC has organised three T20 World Cups (2020, 2021, 2024), two with Corona around. Which means that the attempt to manufacture hype notwithstanding, the ODI championship isn't even close to enter on ICC's menu.

The predicament isn't specific to Champions Trophy. Over the decades, ODI has developed an identity crisis: it neither enjoys Tests' elite status, nor T20s' new-money brash. In 16 months since the 2023 ODI World Cup final, top cricket boards scheduled far fewer ODIs than T20s. India played only 9 ODIs, the lowest among Test playing nations, in these months. In comparison, it played 26 T20Is in 2024.

Despite the reduced value of ODIs and ICC's casual attitude towards Champions Trophy, the eight-nation tournament, which began with primary host and defending champion Pakistan battling New Zealand on Wednesday, has its lures. With no associate nations in the fray — India is grouped with Bangladesh, New Zealand and Pakistan in Group A — there are no easy games. Group B is even tighter: Australia, England, S Africa and the ever-improving Afghanistan.

Champions Trophy is the first major ICC tournament being hosted by Pakistan in nearly three decades. For a country grappling with major political, economic and security issues, much more is at stake than cricket. Organising the tournament well would certainly induce a sense of achievement to the beleaguered nation, but also act as a testimonial of being a normal, functioning state.

India, though, is playing its matches in neutral Dubai. The reason is political and well-known. Nonetheless, the Sunday face-off between the two, promoted on TV as a revenge game for India's 2017 loss, will be a

showstopper. Only Puspita 2 can be better and bigger than Puspita 1.

Yesterday once more. Ideally India should have used the Champions Trophy to test the skills and temperament of its young and brightest for the 2027 ODI World Cup. But displaying long-term vision isn't easy in a country where the team is expected to win every match in every tournament. Yashvir Jaiswal, the 22-year-old aggressive southpaw opener and India's standout batter on the dismal tour Down Under, couldn't make the 15.

The selectors, it seems, have batted for the past and interrupted the future. Eight of those who played in the depressing 2023 ODI WC final against Australia are likely to turn up in India's opening game against Bangladesh on Thursday. You can add Hardik Pandya to that list. Rohit, Shubman, Virat, Shreyas, Rahul — it is a fray 5 line-up on paper. But appearances can be deceptive. Rohit and Virat, two superstars who BCCI often allows to create the brown itineraries, are way past their best — a recent ton and a half-ton aside. How India performs is closely linked to how they play.

If they fail to be a showstopper, only Puspita 2 can be better and bigger than Puspita 1. Yesterday once more. Ideally India should have used the Champions Trophy to test the skills and temperament of its young and brightest for the 2027 ODI World Cup. But displaying long-term vision isn't easy in a country where the team is expected to win every match in every tournament. Yashvir Jaiswal, the 22-year-old aggressive southpaw opener and India's standout batter on the dismal tour Down Under, couldn't make the 15. The selectors, it seems, have batted for the past and interrupted the future. Eight of those who played in the depressing 2023 ODI WC final against Australia are likely to turn up in India's opening game against Bangladesh on Thursday. You can add Hardik Pandya to that list. Rohit, Shubman, Virat, Shreyas, Rahul — it is a fray 5 line-up on paper. But appearances can be deceptive. Rohit and Virat, two superstars who BCCI often allows to create the brown itineraries, are way past their best — a recent ton and a half-ton aside. How India performs is closely linked to how they play.

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Rohit's in-form partner (Shubman Gill) as well as the middle order (Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul) will come under pressure. Rahul, especially, has constantly failed in major knock-out matches in the past. Even in waiting Rishabh Pant's batting record in key white-ball games in 2019 ODI WC and 2024 T20 is underwhelming.

What makes India impressive is its lower middle order. The versatile floorers, like Hardik, Hardik Pandya, and Ravindra Jadeja, who's on a roll with the ball again, are the team's batting insurance. Of late, Axar has been India's unheralded X-factor in white-ball cricket. His 47 off 31 balls was key to India's triumph in the 2024 T20 WC final. Like Hardik, whose fitness and form are heartening, Axar doesn't have performance anxiety in high-octane games, which cannot be said of several regular middle-order batters.

But there are other worries. The pace attack without Bumrah, to misquote Gay Talese's immortal lines, is like "Ferrari without fuel". But at least the squad has two promising newcomers, Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana, and Mohd Shami, the classy pacer hoping to strike peak form again. That apart, if the think tank is bold enough to try the new spin Kul-Cha (Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy), India can have a more incisive bowling line-up. Overall, teams that relish pressure in key moments are likely to come back when cornered will be fancied.

Tailpiece: The 2025 IPL, which begins a fortnight after CT, will be played for the next 65 days. The first IPL was held over 45 days in 2008. Simply put, 20 more days have been added to its calendar. Any doubts which way the world of cricket is heading?

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace

Why do you go away? So that you can come back. So that you can see the place you came from with new eyes and extra colours. And the people there see you differently too. Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving.

Terry Pratchett

External Circumstances Cannot Dictate Inner Peace

Ananda Tirtha Das

Individuals often encounter persons whose behaviour challenges patience and principles. These individuals may slander, belittle efforts, or bark in the glow of pomp. These moments test one's resolve but also a sense of purpose.

What do you think should be done in such situations? It is tempting to react emotionally, to fight back against every insult or injustice. Yet this approach often leads to frustration, pulling one into a vortex of negativity. However, another way requires a deeper understanding of oneself and a shift in perspective.

When confronted with unreasonable people, the first instinct is often to confront or compete. This 'fight mode' seems like a natural response: focusing on their every word and action, crafting rebuttals, and defending oneself. But such a path, while momentarily satisfying, can become an obsession. It

drains energy, clouds judgment, and shifts life's focus to something external and temporary.

The Bhagwad Gita offers an alternative perspective rooted in faith and inner transformation. Krishna speaks of the power of conscious alignment with the Divine, assuring that his grace can overcome obstacles. The challenge is not to control external circumstances but to redirect energy inward towards growth, purpose, and trust in the higher plan.

When viewed as a tool for self-improvement rather than a hindrance, adversity transforms into an opportunity for growth. The unreasonable person, however tricky, becomes like a weight at the gym. Lifting that weight strengthens resilience and faith. Faith, like a muscle, requires exercise to grow. Without trials, faith remains untested.

The unreasonable behaviours of others serve as a unique test, pushing one to rely not on 'the shifting sands of circumstances' but on a steady foundation of spiritual connection.

Human nature often gravitates toward negativity. When wronged, it is easy to fall into cycles of blame and self-pity. These thoughts, repeated over time, create chemical responses in the brain, forming habits that can be hard to break. This addiction to playing the victim, constantly reliving scenarios of being wronged, perpetuates negativity.

To break this cycle, the Gita teaches the recognition of true identity as eternal souls connected to the Supreme. When anchored in this understanding, thoughts shift. The same situation that once evoked despair now becomes manageable, even meaningful. Faith in

this higher Truth rewrites thinking, breaking the addiction to negativity.

Choosing faith and integrity over conflict is not about passivity. It is an act of quiet strength, a declaration that external circumstances will not dictate inner peace. This path is not without effort, but leads to freedom rooted in knowledge of support from something more significant.

Krishna assures in the Gita: "To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me." This assurance invites focus not on solving every problem but on remaining steadfast in trust and efforts. When the need to control outcomes is relinquished, and faith is aligned, a peace that surpasses all challenges is found. Unreasonable people may still exist, and obstacles will arise, but they no longer hold sway over the heart or mind.

The writer is a trustee, ISKCON

GOLDMAN SACHS BUYS BSE'S SHARES FOR ₹401CR THROUGH OPEN MKT TRANSACTION

E-RECYCLING SECTOR PROJECTED TO REACH NEARLY \$200 MILLION BY 2032: REPORT



US reciprocal tariffs on India to have limited impact: S&P

New Delhi: India will be less impacted by the proposed US reciprocal tariff as the country's economy is mainly driven by domestic demand, and has substantial services exports, which is not going to be targeted by the Trump administration, S&P Global Ratings said on Wednesday. S&P Global Ratings, economist Asia-Pacific, Vishrut Rana, said the reciprocal tariff will hurt countries like Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan more as they have high trade surplus with the US. AGENCIES



Kothari plans \$1bn investment in 3 yrs

Chennai: Kothari Industrial Corporation (KICL) is expanding its fertilizer and footwear facilities and setting up an industrial park, which entails a cumulative investment of about \$1 billion over the next three years. TNS

Hyundai India aims to be export hub

New Delhi: Hyundai Motor India is looking to position itself as a manufacturing hub for exports for emerging markets like Africa and neighbouring nations, MD Unsoo Kim said. It continues to face challenges with shipments to the Middle East. AGENCIES

Probus raises \$5mm to expand tech

New Delhi: DeepTech startup Probus Smart Things has raised \$5 million in a funding round led by Unicorn India Ventures. It will allocate the capital to expand its communication technology to smart grid and renewable energy projects. AGENCIES

iPhone parts maker Murata eyes India base

Chennai: Japanese iPhone component maker Murata Manufacturing has started test production in India and is exploring to shift certain part of its production here to cater to the growing demand in the country.

"This will gain experience in factory operations in India, and prepare for future manufacturing activities in the country," the company said. It aims to start full-scale operation in FY26.

Murata plans \$6.6 million investments for five-year lease to test long-term demand, a report said. TNS

RB net sold over \$15bn forex in Dec

Move Aimed At Checking Rupee Volatility

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervention in the foreign exchange market to stabilise the rupee resulted in net sales of \$15.2 billion in Dec 2024, latest data released by RBI on Wednesday showed. This was a drop of \$5 billion from \$20.2 billion in Nov 2024 when the then President-elect Donald Trump stockpiled a tariff war, resulting in significant gains for the US dollar.

In Dec 2024, RBI sold \$99 billion of forex and purchased \$33.9 billion in the spot market. The RBI's net outstanding forward sales stood at \$67.9 billion at the end of Dec, compared with net sales of \$38.9 billion in the prior month, the data released in the RBI Bulletin showed.

RBI intervenes in the spot and forward markets to check excessive volatility or very strong movement. In recent months, it has been stepping in actively to sell dollars, in the process, pushing out liquidity. A sharp depreciation, however, sues up the import bill and exerts price pressure, especially for pro-

DIPPING INTO ITS KITTY

Foreign currency purchases (\$bn)



Source: RBI

ducts such as crude and edible oil. RBI governor, who had recently reiterated the central bank's policy on exchange rate management, had said that a 3% depreciation in the rupee resulted in a 30-35 basis point inflation in the domestic market.

While the intervention resulted in the rupee appreciating against a basket of 40 currencies, in Jan, the trade weighted real effective exchange rate, which measures the real competitiveness of the currency, was pegged at 104.82 against 107.13, indicating weakening. A weaker currency is seen to be good for exports. RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra recently said that RBI is sticking to its policy on exchange rate management.

While data is yet to be released, forex sales by the central bank had continued in Jan following record sales by foreign institutional investors. FII recorded significant outflows in Jan 2025, amounting to Rs 97,375 crore. This figure represents one of the highest monthly sell-offs in recent years.

Forex reserves had depleted by nearly \$68 billion to \$338 billion as of Feb 7, down from a peak of \$701 billion in Oct 2024.

HANG IN THERE

Purchasing Managers' Index shows improvement in industrial activity, says RBI's State of The Economy Report

Higher tractor sales and fuel consumption signal to rising demand

Increased air passenger traffic and growth in FMCG sales further support the recovery, the report adds

veils last seen during the 2019 US-China trade war. Restrictive trade policies and fragmentation could lead to a long-term shift in global trade patterns rather than a short-term disruption, pushing up consumer and business costs," it said.

The Purchasing Man-

agers' Index shows improvement in industrial activity while high tractor sales and fuel consumption indicate rising demand. Increased air passenger traffic and growth in FMCG sales further support the recovery. RBI's enterprise surveys and the performance of listed non-govt non-financial companies, with accelerating sales growth and improving profit margins, reinforce the positive trend.

The report suggests India will remain the fastest-growing major economy in 2025-26, with high-frequency indicators pointing to a sustained recovery in the second half of 2024-25. Retail inflation moderated to a five-month low in Jan 2025, mainly due to lower vegetable prices.

At \$18.5bn, FDI declines marginally in April-Dec

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Direct overseas investment into India dipped marginally to \$18.5 billion during April-Dec 2024, compared with \$18.8 billion during the first nine months of the previous fiscal year, as overseas companies significantly stepped up repatriation from the country.

Latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed that during April-Dec, repatriations or disinvestment from India shot up by \$10.9 billion, or by a third, to \$44 billion. In contrast, gross

MONTHLY SWINGS



Source: RBI

foreign direct investment flows were \$10.7 billion or 20.5% to \$62.5 billion.

Within this, equity inflows were pegged at \$41.4 billion, 8.3% higher than April-Dec 2023, with reinvested earnings rising 17.4% to \$16.9 billion.

A part of the repatriation could be on account of some of the investors, including the likes of Hyundai and investors in startups, selling their stake in Indian companies at the time of initial public offers and posting hefty gains in the process.

As has been focusing on stepping up gross inflows into the country, positioning India as an attractive investment destination at a time when overseas investors are looking at diversifying their manufacturing bases to reduce dependence on China.

In Dec 2024, gross FDI inflows were estimated to have crossed \$18.5 billion, data released in the RBI Bulletin showed.

Based on the current run rate, analysts expect the gross FDI inflows to be higher than last year. India saw record inflows of nearly \$85 billion in 2021-22 when there was a rush of investment in startups and telecom sector, led by Reliance Jio.

Poor response to Burmans' open offer for Religare

New Delhi: Burmans' open offer of \$18 crore for the acquisition of additional 36% stake in Religare Enterprises has received tepid response.

As per the data of open offer, against 90,042,541 shares, only 20,025 shares (0.1%) were tendered.

The open offer closed on Feb 13 and the date of payment of consideration was Feb 17, the data said.

The tender price for open offer was fixed at Rs 235 per share. Following the open offer, the shareholding of four entities would rise to 24%. AGENCIES

EV policy: Cos require ₹2.5k cr sales in 2nd yr

Rules Will Be Notified Within Few Weeks, Car Makers Will Have To Apply In 120 Days

Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: As govt readies to notify the rules for the new EV policy in next few weeks, allowing lower duty imports by the likes of Tesla, it is all set to stipulate a minimum turnover of Rs 2,500 crore in the second year for companies applying for benefits under the scheme.

It also expected to allow them to set up assembly lines with the current factory set-up. However, past investments will not be considered and companies will also not be allowed to consider land and building costs as part of the mandated Rs 4,150 crore (a little less than \$500 million) investments that need to be made to avail of highly subsidised import duty of 15% against the current effective tariff currently.

The final guidelines, which have been prepared following extensive consultation with the industry will be notified as soon as they are cleared by heavy industry minister H D Kumaraswamy, sources told TOI. "The ministry is hoping to notify them in the next one or two weeks and after that the window for applications will be open," said a source.

The application window will be kept open for 120 days, allowing companies to import up to 8,000 annually units of high-end EVs (import price of \$35,000 or more), said a source.

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the fifth year from the date of manufacturing.

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HITS BACK AT ALL BATTERS

Skipper Rohit Defends Spin-Heavy Attack, Says Squad Picked On Strength

THE TIMES OF INDIA IN DUBAI

Gaurav Gupta@timesofindia.com

Dubai: He arrived 40 minutes late and coughed incessantly. However, once he spoke, Indian captain Rohit Sharma didn't take time to hit back at suggestions that picking as many as five spinners for their Champions Trophy squad for their campaign on what is likely to be a flat wicket at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium could be a luxury.

Talking to the media on the eve of his team's tournament opener against Bangladesh on Thursday, Rohit asserted that three of the five spinners in India's arsenal were all-rounders, and his team was playing to its strength, which was spin.

"There are two spinners, the other three are all-rounders. I am not looking at them as five spinners. Those three guys can bat and bowl. The other teams have fast bowlers and all-rounders. They say that they have six fast bowlers, which is good. But we work on our strength and try to run the team. Those three guys, Jadeja, Axar, Wasli, give us a different dimension to the game, to our combination and our squad. And they add a lot to this team and give us a lot of depth. That is why we wanted to try and get the players who can have two skills rather than one skill," Rohit said on Wednesday.

Mystery spinner Varun Chakaravathy and Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav are the two specialist spinners, while Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar are genuine all-rounders.

'Gill a very classy player'

Naturally, Rohit was pleased as punch with



PLANNING STAGE: India skipper Rohit Sharma (R) has a word with Ravindra Jadeja (L) as coach Gautam Gambhir looks on

"WITH GILL, WE KNOW THE NUMBERS ARE CRAZY. HE'S BEEN SUPERB FOR US IN THE LAST THREE, FOUR YEARS. AND OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS A REASON THAT HE'S BEEN ELEVATED TO BE THE VICE-CAPTAIN OF THE TEAM AS WELL. HOPEFULLY, HE HAS A GREAT TOURNAMENT."

—ROHIT SHARMA | ON SHUBMAN GILL

the sublime form of his deputy, Shubman Gill, considering how he struggled a bit in Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Having cracked scores of 87, 60 & 112 against England in the recently held ODI series at home. Showcasing praise on the 25-year-old opener, Rohit said, "Look, Gill is a very classy player. There was never a doubt about his ability in this squad. We tend to mix formats. That's not the right way to judge any player. Certain players have their strength in

certain formats. And if one format doesn't go well, it doesn't mean that the other format will also go the same way.

Citing Gill's ODI record—he has scored 2587 runs in 50 matches/60.16, with seven hundreds and 15 fifties—Rohit said, "With Gill, we know the numbers are crazy. He's been superb for us in the last three, four years. And obviously, there is a reason that he's been elevated to be the vice-captain of the team as well. Hopefully, he has a great tournament. That will eventually help us achieve the things that we are looking to achieve."

On the importance of the Champions Trophy, which is taking place after eight years, Rohit said: "Every time, or ICC trophy that you play is so important. And not just this Champions Trophy, but the previous World Cups that we played were all important for us. And it's no different here."

"Can't keep thinking about dew factor"

The Indian captain didn't seem too fussed

about the usually dreaded 'dew factor' which can hurt teams while defending at night, as he felt that it in any case tough to predict whether dew would be there during the match or not. "Dew is an unknown factor to all of us. And it is unpredictable. When we played in Nagpur the previous day before the game there was so much dew, but during the game there was no dew. You can't think too much about that and prepare," Rohit said.

Praise for Pakistan net bowlers

Meanwhile, Rohit praised two young net bowlers who hail from Pakistan—left-arm pacers Wasim Akram (named after Pakistan great Wasim Akram by his father) and Owais Ahmed, whom the Indian batters faced in the last few days. "Both were good bowlers. I got a lot of feedback from our batters that they were good. And we had a little bit of time to chat with them as well. They live here. Other than that, I don't know much. They were both quality bowlers," Rohit complimented.

Power-packed effort sees NZ trample Pak

Karachi: Will Young and Tom Latham struck fine hundreds as New Zealand maintained their recent dominance over hosts Pakistan with an emphatic 60-run win in the Champions Trophy opener on Wednesday.

Young compiled an important innings of 107 off 113 balls, while Latham remained unbeaten on 118 off 104 balls to steer the Black Caps to 320 for five after Pakistan put them in to bat.

Glenn Phillips' 39-ball 61 also went a long way in the Kiwis getting past the 300-run mark as New Zealand overcame a shaky start.

The Pakistan top-order comprising Babar Azam (64 off 90), Mohammed Rizwan (3 off 14) and Saud Shafeel (6 off 19) were a tad too conservative in their approach. That ultimately cost the home team as they were bowled out for 280 in 47.2 overs.

Fakhar Zaman (24 off 41) batted at number four after being off the field for a major part of the New Zealand innings due to an injury scare.

It was New Zealand's third win over Pakistan, less than two weeks, the Kiwis having beaten the Rizwan-led side twice in the preceding tri-series. The sole positive for defending champions Pakistan abated of the class against India was the performance of the lower-order with Khushdil Shah smashing 69 off 49 balls. Salman Agha also scored plenty of intent in



5 Will Young (R) and Tom Latham became the first New Zealand batters, and fifth overall, to score hundreds in the same innings in the Champions Trophy. The first four instances were: India vs England in Colombo on Sept 22, 2002; West Indies vs England in Ahmedabad on Oct 22, 2006; Australia vs England in Centurion on Oct 2, 2009 and Bangladesh vs New Zealand in Cardiff on June 9, 2017.

his 42 off 28 balls but that urgency was missing in the approach of the top-order. "New Zealand pacers as well as spinners bowled with accuracy, not allowing the opposition batters to get away. The efforts of William O'Rourke (21/47) and Mitchell Santner (3/66) stood out."

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND: Will Young c sub (Ashraf) b Naseem 107, Devon Conway b Ahmed 10, Kane Williamson c Rizwan b Naseem 1, Daryl Mitchell c Afridi b Rauf 10, Tom Latham not out 118, Glenn Phillips c Zaman b Rauf 61, Michael Bracewell not out 0
Extras: (LB-4, W-9) 13; **Total:** (For five wickets in 50 overs) 280

320: Fall of Wickets: 1-39, 2-40, 3-73, 4-191, 5-316; **Bowling:** Shaheen Shah Afridi 10-68-0, Naseem Shah 10-63-2, Abrar Ahmed 10-47-1, Haris Rauf 10-83-2, Khushdil Shah 7-40-0, Salman Agha 3-15-0.

PAKISTAN: Saud Shafeel c Henry b O'Rourke 6, Babar Azam c Williamson b Santner 64, Fakhar Zaman b Santner 64.

Mohammad Rizwan c Phillips b Rourke 3, Fakhar Zaman b Bracewell 24, Salman Agha c Bracewell b Smith 42, Tayyab Tahir c Williamson b Santner 1, Khushdil Shah c Bracewell b O'Rourke 69, Shaheen Shah Afridi c Latham b Henry 14, Naseem Shah b Henry 13, Haris Rauf c Mitchell b Santner 19, Abrar Ahmed not out 0
Extras: (LB-1, W-4) 5; **Total:** (all out in 47.2 overs) 266
Fall of Wickets: 1-8, 2-22, 3-69, 4-127, 5-128, 6-153, 7-200, 8-229, 9-260; **Bowling:** Mitchell 7-21-25-2, O'Rourke 9-0-47-3, Michael Bracewell 10-1-1, Glenn Phillips 5-0-63-0, Mitchell Santner 10-4-66-3, Nathan Smith 2-0-20-1
Result: NZ won by 60 runs

GILL REPLACES BABAR AS NO. 1 ODI BATTER

Dubai: India vice-captain Shubman Gill on Wednesday replaces Babar Azam as Pakistan from the No. 1 spot in the ICC ODI Rankings for batters on the back of his strong show against England in the recent series.

Gill, who scored two fifties and a century against England, jumped one place to the No. 1 spot. He now has 786 rating points compared to Babar's 773. India skipper Rohit Sharma is placed at the third spot with 761 points followed by South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen and New

GILL vs BABAR IN ODIs SINCE 2022

Player	M	Runs	HS	Ave	100s/50s
Shubman Gill	47	2538	208	63.45	7/15
Babar Azam	43	2034	151	53.52	5/17

Babar's status before Wednesday's match. Source: ESPN Cricinfo

Zealand's Daryl Mitchell at fourth and fifth respectively.

Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana, meanwhile, has taken the first position in the ODI rankings for bowlers as he replaced Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan. The Sri Lankan spinner has 680 rating points.

HAVE ALWAYS LIKED CT AS A TOURNAMENT: KOHLI

Dubai: Virat Kohli has always liked the format of Champions Trophy as it demands the eight participating teams to be at their best from the get go.

The Champions Trophy is taking place for the first time since 2017.

"The tournament is happening after a long time. I have always liked this

KOHLI IN CHAMPIONS TROPHY

tournament. It represents consistency as you have to be in the top 8 of the rankings (to qualify). The level of competition is always good," Kohli told Star Sports.

Kohli, who has played three editions of the 50-over event in 2009, 2013 (when India won) and 2017, likened the

GALLERY

Former Mumbai captain Rege passes away

Dubai: The Mumbai cricket fraternity went into mourning on Wednesday as news of former Mumbai captain, noted administrator, and one of the closest friends of cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar, Milind Rege passed away in Mumbai after suffering a cardiac arrest and renal failure. He was 76. He is survived by wife Raj and two sons.

Djokovic loses to Berrettini in Doha: Novak Djokovic was upset by Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (4), 6-2 on Tuesday at the Qatar Open in the Serbi's first match since exiting the Australian Open with a hamstring injury. The 37-year-old Djokovic, ranked No. 7, lost to the Italian for the first time in five career matches.

Defending champions Gopi, Ashwini return to New Delhi Marathon: Defending men's and women's champions Gopi Thonakal and Ashwini Madan Jadhav will headline in the 10th edition of Apollo Tyres New Delhi Marathon scheduled to take place on Feb 23. Runners will compete across four categories - full marathon, half-marathon, 10K and 5K.

Hyderabad FC hold Mumbai to draw: Hosts Hyderabad FC's backbone, led by goalkeeper Arshdeep Singh, stood firm and forced a wasteful Mumbai City FC to settle for a goalless draw in an ISL clash at the GMC Balayogi Stadium, AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

CRICKET: Champions Trophy, Bangladesh vs India, 2.30 pm (Star); Ranji Trophy Semifinals, Gujarat vs Kerala, Vidarbha vs Mumbai, 9.30 am (JioHotstar); **FOOTBALL:** ISL, Mohammedan vs Jamshedpur, 7.30 pm (Star); Europa League Playoffs, 11.15 pm & 1.30 am Friday (Sony); **TENNIS:** Doha Open, 5 pm (Eurosport)

LUKE OF THE PRO RING

There is a growing trend of elite Indian boxers making a transition from amateur to professional circuit. **TOI** looks at the reasons behind this

Sabi Hussain
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: A story which first unfolded three decades ago, is getting written again in Indian boxing.

The year 1995 witnessed an exodus of several distinguished boxers - Dharmender Yadav, V Devarajan, Rajkumar Sangwan and Gurcharan Singh - from the nation's amateur boxing circuit to the professional ring.

Fast forward to 2025, and India's medal winners in Asian Games, World Championships and CWG, boxers Nishant Dev and Amit Panghal, have followed in the footsteps of their predecessors to join the cash-rich world of professional boxing.

Nishant has signed with Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Boxing and will be making his professional debut at "The Cosmopolitan" in Las Vegas soon. Panghal has teamed up with US-based talent management company Critical Sports and Entertainment. He hasn't been allocated a fight yet.

They aren't the only ones who have quit the amateur circuit. TOI has learnt that some women boxers, including Pooja Rani, Simranjit Kaur, Manju Rani and Nitu Ghanghas, have been contemplating transition to either pro boxing or Mixed Martial Arts (MMA).

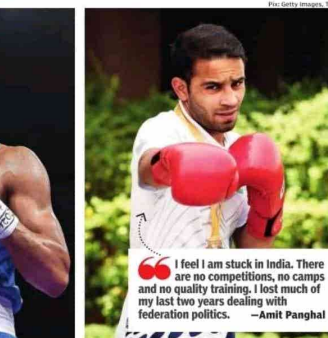
Wrestler Ritu Phogat - a three-time national champion and a gold medalist at the 2016 Commonwealth wrestling - made a successful transition to MMA's 'ONE Championship' after starting the sporting fraternity with her abrupt retirement from the Tokyo Olympic Games 2020.

Many would not be surprised by Panghal's decision to turn pro given his advancing age - he will be 30 in Oct this year. But Nishant's decision to quit amateur circuit at the age of 24 came as a big surprise to many ardent followers of amateur boxing. The pugilist from Haryana's Karnal district had emerged as one of India's most promising boxers in the light middleweight (71kg) category.

His father Pawan Dev explained his son's decision: "He didn't see his future in the



Nishant Dev



Amit Panghal

amateur circuit. The money that comes in the professional world was tempting. He wants to become India's first-ever world professional boxing champion."

Reasons behind turning pro

Each boxer has own reasons - advancing age, the uncertain over boxing's future at the Olympic Games, limited opportunities in the national set-up, financial security and greater fame in the pro world. Additionally, for some, the Boxing Federation of India's

(BFI) internal politics, insufficient support from the federation, constant chopping and changing of foreign and Indian coaches, unconventional coaching methodology of foreign experts, no precise training and competition blueprint ahead of important

events such as Olympics and Asian Games, dearth of quality sparring partners at the national camps and insistence on training in foreign locations which leads to dietary and acclimatisation constraints, have impacted their decisions.

"YOU EARN GOOD MONEY"

"Until you become part of the national boxing set-up, no one is concerned about you. Boxers toil ardently to win that elusive Olympics or Asian Games medal in their entire career. If you succeed, you receive cash awards. If you don't, you end up struggling financially. In the professional realm, you can earn anywhere between Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1 crore per fight. Everyone aspires to emulate Neeraj Goyat (one of the most successful and affluent Indian boxers in the pro circuit)."

—V Devarajan, 1994 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS BRONZE MEDALLIST WHO TURNED PRO IN JUNE 1996

"I appreciate Nishant, Amit or, for that matter, any other Indian boxers' decision to switch to pro boxing. You earn good money; there's no age limit and you can fight against some of the world's top boxers. Amateur boxing has its shelf life. Beyond a point, you can't explore much."

—Vijender Singh, 2008 OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALLIST WHO TURNED PRO IN JUNE 2015

"Indian boxers have been making the right choice to turn pro. The fault lies with the BFI for not doing enough for our pugilists. First, there is constant change in the coaching department. You have to learn new techniques whenever a foreign expert comes. It affects your training and mindset. Also, the selection policies where a boxer has to go through evaluation tests before every important tournament. This is not good."

—Vikas Krishan, 2010 ASIAN GAMES AND 2018 CWG GOLD MEDALLIST WHO TURNED PRO IN JAN 2019

Vidarbha on top vs Mumbai

Hosts Extend Lead To 260 After Bowling Out Defending Champs For 270

Sandeep Dabhekar
@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: A 10-over segment in the second session at Jamtha Stadium yielded just 30 runs at the cost of three key Vidarbha wickets, including Karun Nair and Dhruv Shorey. After conceding a 113-run lead earlier on Day 3, Mumbai seemed poised for a

RANJI SEMIS

comeback, reminiscent of their performances this Ranji Trophy season.

Vidarbha found themselves struggling at 56 for 4 in 21 overs, as Mumbai spinners Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian extracted enough turns from the pitch to keep the batters under pressure. However, Yash Rathod and Akshay Wadkar, playing a resilient brand of cricket, steadied the innings. Skipper Wadkar faced 102

balls for his unbeaten 31, while Rathod scored his second fifty of the match with an unbeaten 59 off 101 balls. The duo's partnership helped Vidarbha reach 147 for 4 in 53 overs by the end of Day 3, thereby extending their overall lead to 280 runs in the semifinal clash.

Mumbai's problems could have been even more if not for opener Akash Anand's gritty knock of 106 (256 balls; 11 fours). Anand, along with Kotian (33 off 75 balls; 4 fours, 1 six), added 69 runs for the 8th wicket. A dropped catch by Vidarbha wicketkeeper Wadkar, when Kotian was on just six, proved costly.

After achieving his second first-class century, Anand was dismissed while attempting quick runs by coming the ninth wicket to fall as Mumbai finished their first innings at 270.

Brief scores: Vidarbha: 383 all out 147/4 in 53 overs (Y Rathod 59 batting; Akshay Wadkar 102 batting; Shams Mulani 2-50) led Mumbai (overnight 188/7): 270 all out in 92 overs (Anand 106, S Thakur 37; Rehade 4-55, H Dubey 2-68) by 260 runs.

Panchal ton leads Gujarat's strong reply

Ahmedabad: Gujarat captain Chintan Gajjar's prediction came true on Day 3 of the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Kerala, thanks to a commanding knock from experienced opener Priyanshu Panchal (117 n.o. off 200b; 13x4, 1x6), reports Anubh Mukherji. Ahead of the day's play, Gajjar had backed Panchal and the other opener Aaryan Desai (73 off 118 balls; 11x4, 1x6) to deliver a strong start - and the duo did just that at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Wednesday.

After struggling to contain Kerala's batters in the first two days, Gujarat turned things around and bowled out Kerala for 457. **Brief scores:** Gujarat 222 all out 173 off 118 balls (11x4, 1x6) led by Panchal (117 n.o., A Desai 73, Basil 140) vs Kerala 457 (M Azharuddeen 177 n.o., S Baby 69; A Nagwaswalla 3-81).

Lanning, Sutherland hand DC 7-wicket win over UP Warriorz

Vadodara: Skipper Meg Lanning struck 69 off 49 balls as Delhi Capitals powered a solid batting effort to beat UP Warriorz by seven wickets and register their second win from the Women's Premier League here on Wednesday.

Sent into bat, UP Warriorz rode on opener Kiran Navgire's quickfire half-century to post 166 for 7.

But the total was not enough as besides Lanning, Annabel Sutherland played a crucial 55-ball 41 and was ably supported by Mari-zanne Knapp (39 n.o. off 17b) and opener Shafali Verma (26 off 16b). Delhi completed the chase with a ball to spare.

DC were off to a brisk start with Shafali and Lanning sharing 65 runs in just 41 balls for the opening stand. Shafali was going great guns before she was caught by Chinelle Henry off Deepti



SUPER SHOW: DC's Meg Lanning plays a shot during her 69-run knock

Sharma in the seventh over. Jemimah Rodrigues too didn't last long as she departed in the next over without opening her account, trying to paddle sweep Sophie Ecclestone but only managing to get a top edge and Rajeshwari Gayakwad did the rest. Sutherland and Knapp then shared 48 runs for the fourth wicket to take DC home. **AGENCIES**
Brief scores: UP Warriorz 166/7 in 20 overs (Kiran Navgire 51, Shweta Sehrawat 37, Chinelle Henry 33 n.o.; Annabel Sutherland 2-26, Minnu Manti 1-16) lost to Delhi Capitals 167/3 in 19.5 overs (Meg Lanning 69, Annabel Sutherland 41 n.o.; Grace Harris 1/11) by 7 wickets.

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HEARTBREAKSIndia Start Overwhelming Favourites But Bangladesh Can
Be Potential Banana-Skin RivalsTHE TIMES OF INDIA
IN DUBAI

Gaurav Gupta@timesofindia.com

Dubai: The outfield at the state-of-the-art Dubai International Cricket Stadium looked lush green, while the 'Ring of Fire' — the LED lights — looked set to shine in full glow. The ICC volunteers went through the usual drill of displaying the national flags of India and Bangladesh, the workers were busy giving finishing touches to the painted ads on the ground, while the groundsman gave the pitch one final roll.

After enjoying complete rest on Tuesday, India chose to train at the stadium on Wednesday evening at a venue which has by now become familiar to them. Bangladesh practised at the ICC Academy.

The Dubai leg of the 2025 Champions Trophy is set to kick off on Thursday when India, the tournament favourites despite the absence of talismanic pacer Jasprit Bumrah, take on an unpredictable, tricky Bangladesh in a Group A match.

Next up for India are Pakistan on Feb 23 and then New Zealand on March 1 — both in-form opponents. Clearly, this is a far bigger challenge for Rohit Sharma & Co than facing a dour England in a meaningless series at home.



TEAM BONDING: Indian players and support staff share a lighter moment during nets in Dubai on Wednesday

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However, having just thrashed England 3-0 in the ODI series, India would be high on confidence going into this mini-global event purely because the format suits them. Unlike the Tests, where they seemed to have lost the edge even on the deadly turners

back home, and the T20Is, where things can be dicey. One-Day cricket is a format where India have lifted their game. Remember their brilliant run in the 2023 World Cup at home, where India steamrolled all opposition, winning 10 out of 11 matches before a

Travis Head century in Ahmedabad in the final robbed them of the title. Almost 16 months later, India would be slightly worried over the inconsistent, rather patchy form of their two old warhorses — captain Rohit Sharma and superstar Virat Kohli. Another poor outing in the desert would raise more questions over their future. However, India would also be pleased with the form of their vice-captain and opener Shubman Gill, the new No. 1 batter in ODIs, who was player-of-the-series against England with a century and two fifties.

Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul are set to bat in the middle-order despite recent lack of clarity over their roles. There was a lot of hue and cry over Rahul being preferred to Rishabh Pant for the keeping slot, but the team management wants Rahul because of his proven record as a reliable and versatile batter who can bat in different gears. In the bowling department, India are certain to prefer left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh who has enjoyed tremendous success in the T20Is (69 wickets in 63 matches, while he has 14 scalps in nine ODIs), over

OPINION POLL
In your view, who should play as India's wicketkeeper in the Champions Trophy game against Bangladesh?

1. KL Rahul
2. Rishabh Pant

To give your answer, scan this QR code



Harshit Rana who impressed in his debut ODI series against England (six wickets in three matches) during which he generated good pace and bounce.

With Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel set to start in the XI, it would be interesting to see whom India would pick as their third spinner — Kuldeep Yadav or Varun Chakravarty. Kuldeep offers accuracy, variation and experience, while Varun brings 'mystery'.

Despite Bangladesh's top-sided record against India — they have lost 32 out of 41 ODIs — Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto was on Wednesday bullish about his team's chances. Bangladesh lost to Pakistan Shaheens in a warm-up match here, but the skipper refused to read much into it. Clearly, the Bangladesh skipper is basing his confidence on his team's new-found, young pace battery, headlined by the talented young quick Nahid Rana, who is backed up by the experienced Mustafizur Rahman and Taskin Ahmed and a slew of useful allrounders.

Shanto hopes to rattle
India with pace attackGaurav Gupta
@timesofindia.com

Dubai: Spin is Bangladesh's most bankable factor across formats. It therefore came as a surprise when captain Najmul Hossain Shanto spoke about pace being a big strength of his side as they take on India here today.

Much of Shanto's confidence comes from the presence of young

tearaway fast bowler Nahid Rana. Unlike most Bangladesh pacers, who have re-

lied on cutters, Rana, just 22, can rattle the batters by generating speed in excess of 150kph, and bowling consistently at 145kph.

At the pre-match presser on Wednesday, when Shanto was asked how much fun it was to have someone like Rana in the team, the skipper said: "Very happy. In the last few matches, he has bowled well and fast. It helps our whole bowling unit. It's helped us to challenge our opponents. But he needs to be fit and continue his form."

"Recently, he played one Test against India, so he has that experience, but he must deliver on Thursday. He is not someone who thinks about his opponents a lot. He just thinks about how he is executing his plan," Shanto said. Rana, who grew up playing taped tennis ball cricket in Rajshahi, has travelled in quick time to become Bangladesh's quickest-ever pacer. Having established himself in the Tigers squad, Rana is now ready for his first taste of an ICC global event.

We have got two or three others as well. We have a good bowling unit."

Shanto credited the Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision to play domestic cricket with a Dukes ball, and the right coaching, as the big reason behind this turnaround.

"I think the important thing is the change in pitches and ball in First Class cricket. We play with the Dukes ball, so the fast bowlers want to bowl a lot of overs. There are a lot of local coaches and overseas coaches who have helped our pacers," Shanto said.

Rana has done well in his nascent career, having taken 20 wickets in six Tests and four scalps in three ODIs for Bangladesh. Rana has bowled in just one match vs India, the opening Test in Chennai in Sept last year and went for 1-82 & 1-21 as India scored a 280-run win. However, this sample size isn't enough to judge what he could do on Thursday.

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Gen Upendra Dwivedi expresses 'concern' over reports that a Pak Army-ISI team recently visited areas in Bangladesh close to 'Chicken's Neck', P 13



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BANKER UDAY KOTAK WARNS INDIA'S ECONOMIC 'ANIMAL SPIRITS' FADING AS NEXT GEN OF BIZ FAMILIES FOCUSES MORE ON MANAGING INVESTMENTS THAN RUNNING COS, 19

Unfair to US if Musk sets up factory in India, says Trump

'Why Give India \$21m To Raise Voter Turnout?'

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US President Donald Trump has added a \$21-million question to his relentless smackdown on tariffs by India despite talking up ties with Delhi and friendship with PM Modi during the latter's recent visit to Washington DC. "Why are we giving

► **EDIT PAGE: Elon Riders/Don't Be F-35ed, P 20**

\$21 million to India? They have a lot more money," Trump said on Tuesday, referring to a US Agency for International Development programme that details the amount (0.04%

ON INDIA: I told Prime Minister Modi yesterday — he was here — I said, 'Here's what we're going to do: reciprocal. Whatever you charge, I'm charging. He (Modi) goes, 'No, no, I don't like that.' I (Trump) said, 'No, no, whatever you charge, I'm going to charge.' I'm doing that with every country.

ON MUSK & TESLA: It is impossible to sell a car, practically, in, as an example, India. The tariffs are like 100% import duty. Now, if he (Musk) built the factory in India, that's okay, but that's unfair to us. It's very unfair.

— US President Donald Trump

► **MAHA, GUJ, TN MAY VIE FOR TESLA FACTORY, P 19**

of USAID's \$44-billion budget), ostensibly to increase voter turnout in India.

He then segued into his customary rant about New Delhi's trade barriers and tariffs, picking up the theme in a joint interview on Fox News with Elon Musk, complaining that "every country in the world takes advantage of

us, and they do it with tariffs". "It is impossible to sell a car, practically, in, as an example, India. The tariffs are like 100% import duty," Trump said, adding, "Now, if he (Musk) built the factory in India, that's okay, but that's unfair to us. It's very unfair."

► **Trump statement, P 17**

Prez: Zelensky a dictator, started war with Russia

President Trump on Wednesday called Volodymyr Zelensky a "dictator without elections", lashing out after the Ukrainian president said Trump was living in a Russian "disinformation space" as he moves to end the Kremlin's war against Ukraine on terms that Kyiv says are too favourable to Moscow. Senior US and Russian officials met in Riyadh Tuesday and agreed to negotiate a settlement to end the war. Trump accused Zelensky of "misusing American aid to Ukraine for the war effort, and insinuating Ukraine was to blame for the ongoing conflict. P 18

'Fgn tribunal can't scrap own finding'

SC has ruled that once a designated Foreigners Tribunal rejects the Assam govt's claim that a person is an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant who entered the state after March 25, 1971, the tribunal cannot review its own order on a fresh plea. P 14

Suicide pact unravels after Kol car crash

A car crash in Kolkata left three members of a prominent business family gravely injured early Wednesday, but soon took a shocking turn as the bodies of three other members were found in their home. Cops suspect a suicide pact. P 13

Lokayukta clean chit for Sidda, wife in land swap

TNN News Network

Mysuru: Lokayukta Police gave a clean chit Wednesday to Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, his wife Parvathi and two other co-accused in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) land-swap case, saying the charges levelled by petitioner Snehamayee Krishna against them "could not be substantiated".

However, Siddaramaiah, for whom the case posed a challenge to his pre-eminence within the state Congress,

Only officials who have sold their conscience can give such a report

— Snehamayee Krishna | PETITIONER

Petitioner must respect the decision of the investigating agencies

— M Lakshman | CONG



apparently isn't out of the woods yet. ED is separately investigating — laundering charges linked to the CM's wife allegedly benefiting from preferential allotment of 14 plots within Mysuru city by MUDA in exchange for land on the outskirts.

► **'Planned drama', P 17**

Waive diplomatic immunity: India to Kenya on child sex assault case

New Delhi: India has asked Kenya to waive diplomatic immunity for a diplomat whose son is accused of sexually assaulting a five-year-old girl studying in a Delhi school. The 19-year-old accused studies in the same school. The assault allegedly took place in the school last Sept.

Delhi Police had filed a case but couldn't take further action as the child's father has said in a complaint that the mother of the accused is a diplomat. TNN

► **Can recall envoy, P 7**

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How did Donald trump US democracy so easily?

A month into his second term, Donald Trump has reshaped American administration in his own image — imperious, unrestrained, and insulated from institutional checks. With party-line polarisation paralysing Congress and the courts, he's ruling with unchecked authority, raising fears that the American Republic is inching towards a Caesar's Rome-like fate

Abhilash Gaur@timesofindia.com

America's founding fathers modelled it on ancient Rome. Democracy, Congress, rule of law, separation of powers. They even picked an eagle for their national symbol. But it had to be Rome of the Republic, led by consuls, not Caesar. Trump in the first month of his second term has been Caesar for all practical purposes though. Putting seasoned toga wearers to pasture, he's surrounded himself with a cabinet whose members' qualifications raise eyebrows, leading many to ask if this is American democracy's darkest hour.

ONE-MAN SHOW

Trump's proclivity to order, not consult, has been on display daily. Where he's delegated work, it is to his henchman Elon Musk. He's aiming to cast America in his mould, and perhaps mindful of his age and the two-term constitutional limit, he's in a tearing hurry. Hence, the spate of legally questionable actions, such as:

- Rejecting birthright citizenship for the children of illegal immigrants, even though it's guaranteed by the 14th Amendment
- Pardoning over 1,500 people who were convicted in connection with the Jan 6 Capitol attack after his loss to Biden
- Sacking over a dozen federal prosecutors who worked on the Jan 6 cases, and the case related to Trump's mishandling of classified documents
- Sacking 17 inspectors general whose job was to prevent the misuse of federal funds
- Blocking \$3tn in federal funds meant for state and federal programmes
- Delaying implementation of TikTok ban after Congress passed and SC upheld it

Most glaring are his foreign policy plans, announced with complete disregard for diplomatic niceties. He wants Panama Canal and Greenland, and Gaza with no place for Gazans. From Ukraine, he wants payback in the form of minerals

THERE'S MUSK'S SIDESHOW TOO

Unusually for Trump, he lets Musk steal the show often. For instance, the Feb 11 Oval Office press conference with Musk's son X as a red herring. Musk is a super-billionaire with massive govt contracts. In another age — just a month ago — his appointment as 'special govt employee' in charge of the Department of Govt Efficiency (DOGE) would have been unthinkable because it's a huge conflict of interest. But Trump doesn't care. And his MAGA voters love the idea of subversive energy because everything 'official' is rotten anyway. So, Musk can come in like Jack Reacher and take out the garbage. A quick recap of some of the things he's done so far:

- Clawing back \$80bn in federal funds from New York City's accounts. It's not a big sum, but it's the first time a federal grant has been sucked back without justification
- Demolishing USAID. "We spent the weekend feeding USAID into the wood chipper," as Musk put it on X
- Seizing databases of sensitive information



about US citizens

- Most recently, DOGE has asked the revenue service for taxpayer records.
- It already has access to the fiscal service's system that controls federal govt payments.

WHY TRUMP-MUSK ARE UNSTOPPABLE

In India, it took a long legal battle for UIDAI — a govt agency — to collect residents' biometrics. In US, Trump has allowed a semi-official agency, headed by an unelected man who happens to be his biggest campaign donor, to suck up whatever private data it needs, without setting up any safeguards. Why are American institutions caving before Trump and Musk?

The short answer is that the system of separation of powers isn't working because of polarisation along party lines.

In the original idea of America, the House and the Senate could stop presidential overreach. If they didn't, courts did. And these guardrails have held up well over almost 250 years.

Watergate is a good example of America's guardrails at work. Nixon tried to force the justice dept to shelve its probe, but the resignations that followed — Saturday Night Massacre — proved damaging. Meanwhile, a court declared the removal of special prosecutor Archibald Cox illegal, and many House members from Nixon's Republican party supported his impeachment.

But 32 years later, US politics has changed. There is complete polarisation along party lines, and the governing party is completely beholden to the president. There is no ideological diversity within parties. Were Bill Clinton impeached today, no Republican would come to his rescue.

When hard party lines leave no room for debate, bench strengths decide the answer to every question. That happened in India long ago, but America's reached that stage now.

CONSERVATIVE MOOD IN US SC

Republican House members were already under Trump's thumb, and he's bent senators to his will in the recent cabinet confirmations. That leaves the judiciary, which has stood up to him in the states, but Trump will appeal negative rulings all the way to the Supreme Court, where the 6-3 conservative majority could work in his favour.

The first such appeal, about the sacking of a US whistleblower protection agency's chief on Feb 7, reached the Supreme Court last Sunday.

A district court had ordered the officer's reinstatement, and the court of appeals had refused to overrule the order.

A MATTER OF DECENCY

The US constitution is a short document, 4,400 words in all. It didn't foresee the consequences of party politics, and it relied too much on the innate decency of future presidents, hoping they would forbear to use their powers to the hilt. For Trump, the unwritten rule is no rule. As for those written down, he's not above bending them to his will.

● According to University College London professor Christina Pagel, who has analysed 76 major Trump govt decisions till Feb 15, most fall in the category of 'undermining democratic institutions and rule of law and dismantling federal govt'. That's his clear priority.

- He's even attempted to remove Federal Election Commission chair Ellen Weintraub. FEC is America's equivalent of India's EC.
- A significant number of orders seem intended to make corruption easier. For example, halting the enforcement of a US law that banned bribery of foreign officials.
- Suppressing dissent and controlling information is another of his goals. He's already targeted public broadcasters NPR and PBS and has tried to intimidate the media with litigation.

BUT THERE'S HOPE

For all the upheaval Trump has unleashed in the first month, history suggests that American institutions have a way of self-correcting. The country has weathered crises before — Watergate, McCarthyism, even the Civil War — and each time, its democratic framework has endured.

While Trump's overreach now seems unchecked, legal challenges, bureaucratic resistance, and shifting political winds could rein him in over time. By the end of his term, this moment may be seen as a temporary convulsion rather than a lasting transformation. America's system, though battered, has repeatedly proven its resilience — and that remains the best hope for the future.

Everest snow cover has retreated by 490ft in 1.5 months, says study

'Change Due To Sublimation, Not Melting'

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Dehradun: In less than two months, the snow line in the glaciated landscape around Mt Everest rose by 490 feet, from 20,000 ft on Dec 11 last year to 19,510 ft on Jan 26, due to sublimation — a process in which strong winds, low humidity, and unseasonably warm temperatures cause snow to evaporate directly into the atmosphere, scientists observed. Glaciologist Mauri Pelto, a member of Nasa Earth Observatory's science advisory board, detected the change while studying Everest-region glaciers through satellite imagery and local weather stations.

Scientists say warmer, drier conditions are pushing



Nasa's satellite images point to a long-term shift in snowfall patterns

the winter snow line higher, meaning seasonal snow now remains only at greater elevations. Satellite imagery from Nasa's Landsat 9, captured on Jan 20, confirmed this upward retreat, contrasting with typical snow distribution seen in Jan 2022.

Experts said sparse lower-elevation snow, as seen this

Jan, has become the norm in recent winters. Pelto said this trend has persisted in recent years, suggesting a "new normal" for the region. "This change was due to sublimation, not melting," he said. The snowline was already above average at the start of winter, following a dry beginning to 2024 and an unusually warm

and wet post-monsoon season.

Pelto added that 2022 was the only recent year when Jan snow lines remained at typical levels. However, the elevated snow lines seen in Jan 2021, 2023, 2024, and 2025 point to a long-term shift in snowfall patterns. Unlike North American and European glaciers, which gain mass from winter snowfall, Himalayan glaciers primarily accumulate snow during summer, making dry winter months particularly critical. Approx 75% of the annual precipitation falls during the monsoon from June to Sept, during which these glaciers accumulate the most snow. If the snow persists long enough, it can eventually transform into glacial ice.

Experts warn that the winter snow line in the Himalayas reaching unprecedented elevations could threaten water security for downstream communities and increase wildfire risks, as seen in Nepal's early 2025 fire season.