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## BJP rolls out stalwarts on Lok Sabha 2024 pitch

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Hoping to get a massive first mover advantage as it works towards its target of winning 370 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the BJP on Saturday released its first list of 195 Lok Sabha candidates from 16 States and two Union Territories (UT), days after a marathon meeting of the party Central Election Committee (CEC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. As many as 34 Ministers and two former Chief Ministers are on the list, which also includes 28 women, 47 leaders under the age of 50, 57 members from the OBC community, 27 from Scheduled Castes community and 18 from Scheduled Tribe community. Of the 195 candidates, 51 are from the all important State of Uttar Pradesh, 20 from West Bengal and five from Delhi. The list includes the party heavyweights PM Narendra Modi, who will be contesting from Varanasi for the third time, Home Minister Amit Shah, who will be fielded again from Gandhinagar in Gujarat, Union Women and Child Welfare Minister Smriti Irani from Amethi, Rajnath Singh from Lucknow, and Bhupender Yadav from Rajasthan Alwar. Sushma Swaraj daughter of Bansiwar, will make her poll debut from the New Delhi seat, Kamaljeet Sehrawat will contest from the West Delhi, MLA Ramvir Singh Bidhuri from South Delhi, Praveen Khadelwal from Chandni Chowk, while Manoj Tiwari has been retained from the North East Delhi. The list also included two former Chief Ministers -- Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Biplob Deb - as well as Om Birla from Kota in Rajasthan.



BJP leaders (L-R) Sanjay Mayukh, Baijayant Jay Panda, Vinod Tawde and Anil Baluni during the announcement of first list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections at a press conference in New Delhi, Saturday

PTI

### BJP HEAVYWEIGHT CANDIDATES

CANDIDATES	CONSTITUENCY
● Prime Minister Narendra Modi	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
● Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
● Union Women and Child Welfare Minister Smriti Irani	Amethi, Uttar Pradesh
● Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
● Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav	Alwar, Rajasthan
● Union Health and Chemical Fertilizers Minister Mansukh Mandavlya	Porbandar, Gujarat
● Union Ayush and DONER Minister Sarbananda Sonowal	Dibrugarh
● Union Minister Kiren Rijju	Arunachal West, Arunachal Pradesh
● Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia	Guna, Rajasthan
● Union Minister of Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal	Bikaner, Rajasthan
● Tourism and Culture & DONER Minister G Kishan Reddy	Sikandrabad, Khunti, Jharkhand
● Union Tribal Minister Arjun Munda	Rajkot, Gujarat
● Union Animal Husbandry and Dairy Farming Minister Purshottam Rupala	Udhampur
● Union PMO & Science Tech Minister Jitendra Singh	Kheri in Uttar Pradesh
● Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni	New Delhi
● Bansiwar Swaraj	Kota, Rajasthan
● Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla	

Continued on Page 2

## Government pulls up Google over apps issue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a strong view of Google pulling out some apps from its Play Store, the Government said delisting of Indian apps cannot be permitted and that the tech company and the startups concerned have been called for a meeting next week. IT and Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the startup ecosystem is key to the Indian economy and their fate cannot be left to any big tech to decide. The Minister's comments assume significance as Google on Friday began removing some apps from its Play Store over a dispute on service fee payments, even as apps and well-known startup founders cried foul. Info Edge founder Sanjeev



Sanjeev Bikhchandani, founder Info Edge



Union Minister, Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw

Bikhchandani said some of its apps have been restored and are back on Play Store. "An effort very well led by (company MD and CEO) Hitesh and the entire Info Edge team. People were up all night for this. Great crisis management," says Bikhchandani in a post on X.

Continued on Page 2

## Bihar to promote Buddha

ARCHNA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adorned with UNESCO World Heritage sites like the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya and the ruins of the ancient Nalanda University, Bihar is mooting a proposal to hold its first ever international roadshow in Cambodia and Vietnam, two nations steeped in Buddhist

traditions to attract the pilgrims seeking to connect their spiritual roots in the State. "Plans are being finalized and nitty-gritty being worked out," sources in the Ministry said, adding that the move aims to tap a stream of visitors seeking to connect with their spiritual roots and explore sacred sites.



Chairman and Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Abhay Kumar Singh,

Bihar Government said that this will accelerate efforts to put the State on the global map. We are trying to tap in the huge tourism potential that these Buddhists dominate. Foreign tourists visit Gaya, Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda and Vaishali, all major Buddhist tourism destinations.

Continued on Page 2

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# Congress, RJD using Dalits as shield to justify corruption: Modi

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched a frontal attack on the Congress-RJD combine in Bihar, charging it with using Dalits and other deprived sections of the society as a "shield to justify their dynastic politics and corruption".

Addressing a rally in Begusarai district of the state, Modi also made veiled references to the land-for-jobs scam, pertaining to RJD president Lalu Prasad's tenure as the railway minister in the previous UPA government. He alleged that the Congress-RJD combine was guilty of "betrayal of social justice".

The PM also asserted that social uplift was brought about by his government which worked for the progress of all. Modi, who spoke in the presence of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, hailed the JD(U) president as a true champion of social justice, like the latter's mentor Karpooi Thakur who was recently given the Bharat Ratna by the Centre.

The prime minister was speaking after the launch of development projects worth more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the prime minister also exuded confidence that the NDA, which was running a "double engine" government in Bihar, would sweep the elections across the country.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Governor Rajendra V Arlekar,



Deputy CMs Samrat Chaudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, and several Union ministers were among those present at the programme. This was Modi's first visit to Bihar since the BJP-led NDA returned to power in the state after CM Nitish Kumar, who heads the JD(U), dumped the 'Mahagathbandhan'. Earlier, the Bihar governor and the CM welcomed the prime minister on his arrival at Gaya International Airport.

Addressing the programme, Nitish Kumar told the prime minister that he would remain in the NDA forever.

Modi unveiled national highway projects worth over Rs 18,100 crore. He also laid the foundation stone for a six-lane bridge over the Ganga river, which will be constructed parallel to the existing JP Ganga Setu.

He dedicated to the nation three railway projects, which

include the doubling of the Pataliputra-Pahleja line and a 26-km-long new line between Bandhua and Paimar. The PM also inaugurated 12 projects worth over 2,190 crore under the Namami Gange scheme. These include sewage treatment plants in Patna, Sonapur, Naugachia and Chapra.

The prime minister also laid the foundation stone for the Amas-Darbhanga four-lane corridor, Danapur-Bihata four-lane elevated road and Sherpur-Dighwara phase of Patna Ring Road. Modi underlined that the people of Bihar, especially the citizens of Aurangabad, are eagerly waiting for the Varanasi-Kolkata Expressway as it will reduce travel time between Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to a few hours.

The PM said the road projects will change the picture of cities such as Patna, Nalanda, Jahanabad, Gaya, Vaishali,

# Modi targets TMC in Bengal, renews BJP 400 seats target

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KRISHNAGAR**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday set a 400 seat target for the BJP in the coming Lok Sabha elections saying only the saffron outfit had the integrity and courage to rid India of corrupt parties like the Trinamool Congress.

Picking up from where he left at Arambagh on Friday the Prime Minister said the TMC --- in the context of the trail of corruption that it has left in Bengal --- should stand for "Tu, Mein air Corruption" (you, me and corruption).

Hailing the "massive turnout" in the rally and seeing it as a prelude to the BJP's target of 400 seats the Prime said, "your presence in such large numbers gives me confidence to declare that BJP sarkar 400 paar (BJP government will cross the 400-seat mark in parliament)".

The Prime Minister was addressing a massive rally at the historical town of Krishnagar in Nadia district which also associated with the Bhakti saint Chatanya Mahaprabhu.

Launching a scathing attack on the TMC for perpetrating a dynastic politics coated with corruption and identified by the atrocities that they have heaped on the people of Bengal Modi said, "the TMC is synonymous with crime, corruption and dynastic politics which has left the people of Bengal in a quandary."

The Krishnagar seat was won by TMC's expelled Lok Sabha



MP Mohua Moitra in 2019 and assumes importance in that context.

Apparently raising the Sandeshkhalii issue and the delayed apprehension of the TMC strongman Sheikh Shahjahan accused of large-scale land grab and sexual assault on women, Banerjee said, "this is a government which promotes the corrupt... They failed to save the interest of distressed mother's and sisters of the area."

He said that though the TMC took vote in the name of Maa, Maati and Manush (Mother, land and humanity) they had betrayed their interest in the first instance.

Continuing to hit the Trinamool where it hurt the most post allegations that it's leaders had grabbed large swathes of land and sexually woman, the Prime Minister said that "the mothers and sis-

ters continued to cry for help but this government looked the other way".

In an apartment reference to Shahjahan who was arrested 56 days after the commission of crime the Prime Minister said that in Bengal it were the criminals who decide when to be arrested, "as they remain in protection of the police. Modi has on Friday launched a scathing attack on the Indian National Democratic Alliance in reference to the Sandeshkhalii incident saying the entire INDIA alliance watched silently as the women of the reverine island were sexually assaulted by the goons of the TMC.

Earlier the Prime Minister declared development projects worth more than Rs 15,000 crore. Referring to the Rs 7,000 crore project unveiled on Friday from Aarambh, Modi

said, "Today again I am inaugurating projects worth Rs 15,000 crore... That will provide impetus to the economic development of Bengal, --- which was India's "gate of the East" creating job opportunities.

A large number of projects including Raghunathpur thermal power project, the inauguration of Farakka-Raiganj section of the four-lane highway --- which is also a part of the East-West corridor --- and some railway projects in Murshidabad and Birbhum districts were inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Modi who ended his two-day visit to Bengal on Saturday is likely to return to address yet another meeting on February 8.

The meeting is likely to be held at Barasat in North 24 Parganas.

## Bihar to promote...

**From Page 1**

The international roadshow will provide a platform for Bihar to showcase its cultural and historical treasures, inviting visitors to embark on a pilgrimage to sacred sites and immerse themselves in the region's spiritual legacy. Being known as the cradle of Buddhism and Buddhist related sites, Bihar holds significant appeal for international travelers, added Rajnish Kaistha (Sr. Vice President), Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), an apex body of incoming tour operators in India.

He said by holding roadshows abroad, whenever it happens; Bihar will be joining the growing number of states to showcase its immense potential in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Through presentations, exhibitions, and networking events, Bihar will highlight the spiritual significance of its UNESCO World Heritage sites and promote its hospitality infrastructure, accommodations, and tourist amenities. The roadshow will aim to create awareness and generate interest among Cambodian and Vietnamese travelers, encouraging them to include Bihar in their travel itineraries, added Sushil Kumar Singh, Jatak Travels and IATO Chairman Chapter (Bihar and Jharkhand).

He said that in the past few years, the State Government has undertaken significant policy measures aimed at revitalizing the tourism sector. Central to these efforts is a strategic focus on community engagement, recognizing the invaluable role that local communities play in shaping and sustaining Bihar's tourism landscape which help boost their livelihood too.

Bihar has recognised the Buddhist Circuit comprising Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Patna, Vaishali, Lauriya,

Nandangarh, and Kesariya). By involving communities in decision-making processes, cultural preservation efforts, and tourism-related activities, the State Government is aiming to harness their knowledge, skills, and resources to create authentic and sustainable tourism experiences. With jobs available in their native homes, this will also help curb the migration to the big cities, said Singh.

He also talked about Bihar's Tourism Policy 2023 announced last year envisaging investment of over Rs 10,000 crore over the next five years, and generation of one lakh new jobs in the tourism sector. Moreover, the international roadshow presents an opportunity for Bihar to strengthen ties with Cambodia and Vietnam, fostering cultural exchange and collaboration in the tourism sector.

By celebrating shared Buddhist heritage and promoting cross-cultural understanding, Bihar aims to deepen its connections with these countries and pave the way for future partnerships and collaborations.

The policy incentivizes tourism units-hotels, tour operators and other tourism stakeholders. The incentives in addition to subsidies on capital investment are several and include reimbursement of all land conversion/transfer charges, Stamp duty and registration fees of land lease, incentive of repayment of GST paid, refund of power taxes. The policy also encourages tourism units to apply for green certification by reimbursing costs of certifications to an extent, said. The costs of organising events and meetings will be subsidised too, said MP Bezburah, Secretary General, Hotel Association of India.

## Aiming to score hat trick, BJP fields sitting MPs from Jammu

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

Aiming to score a hat-trick the Bharatiya Janta Party Saturday decided to field both the sitting members of Parliament from the Jammu region in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls 2024.

Names of Dr Jitendra Singh, sitting MP from the Doda-Udhampur Lok Sabha Seat, and Jugal Kishore Sharma from Jammu-Poonch Lok Sabha seat figured in the first list of 195 candidates released by the party high command in New Delhi after holding a series of back-to-back meetings.

Earlier, a list of probable candidates was submitted by the J&K Election committee to the party's high command for approval and consideration. Dr Jitendra Singh won the 2014 Lok Sabha polls by defeating Congress stalwart Ghulam Nabi Azad by a margin of over



60,000 votes. In 2019 his victory margin surpassed 3.50 lakhs as he went on to defeat the Congress candidate Vikramaditya Singh, supported by the National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party by a margin of 3.57 lakh votes. According to the official sources Dr. Jitendra Singh garnered 724,311 Votes, (61% Votes) while Vikramaditya Singh of the Congress party secured 367,059 Votes (31% Votes).

Similarly, Jugal Kishore Sharma won the 2014 and 2019 Lok

Sabha polls from Jammu-Poonch Lok Sabha and is set to contest for the third time in a row.

BJP's Jugal Kishore defeated Raman Bhalla of the Congress by 3,02,875 votes from the Jammu Poonch Lok Sabha seat. Jugal defeated Congress heavyweight Madan Lal Sharma in the 2014 parliamentary elections by a margin of over 2.5 lakh votes. Madan was the two-time MP (2004 and 2009) from the same constituency before suffering the humiliating defeat.

## Disgruntled MLAs in Delhi as Himachal crisis for Congress continues to simmer

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

There is no respite in the strange affairs of politics in Himachal Pradesh since days after Congress proved the Government was stable, more rebellions are on the way while disgruntled lot including Vikramaditya Singh and his supporters are camping in Delhi. Amidst speculations that Singh was seeking a time from top BJP brass to joining the party with his supporters, Congress sources said Singh was to meet Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to resolve the crisis.

Himachal Pradesh Congress MLA Rajinder Rana on Saturday claimed that nine more party legislators "feeling suffocated" by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's style of functioning were in touch with them.

Rana along with five other

Congress MLAs, who had cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls, have been disqualified from the Assembly for abstaining from voting on the cut motion and finance bill. Rana alleged that CM Sukhu's "friends" were running the state government. He claimed that the elected representatives, especially the ministers, were feeling "suffocated and humiliated".

"Besides the six Congress and three independent legislators that cross-voted in favour of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha polls, nine more party MLAs are in touch with us," he said.

Rana termed Sukhu "liar number one" and alleged that he was trying to twist the facts.

"Neither Public Works Department Minister Vikramaditya Singh had told the chief minister that he is

meeting the Congress rebels at Panchkula nor the CM had sent him," Rana said.

"Vikramaditya Singh, who met us on his way to Delhi, did not ask us to patch up. He has his own grievances against the government which failed to provide land for installing Virbhadrar Singh's statue and interfered in his functioning," he added.

Sukhu on Friday said Vikramaditya Singh had informed him that some Congress rebels have approached him and they wish to come back following which the PWD minister was told to talk to the rebel MLAs and the Congress' central leadership.

Ruling out any possibility of returning to the Congress, Rana said, "After the observers said Sukhu would continue as the CM, there is no scope for compromise."

## Government pulls up Google over apps...

**From Page 1**

Taking a serious view of the issue, Vaishnav said: "India is very clear, our policy is very clear...Our startups will get the protection that they need." The Minister said the Government will be meeting Google and app developers who have been delisted, next week, to resolve the dispute.

"I have already called Google...I have already called the app developers who have been delisted, we will be meeting them next week. This cannot be permitted...This kind of delisting cannot be permitted," he asserted.

Stating that India has built a strong startup ecosystem of over one lakh startups, and more than 100 unicorns from scratch in a matter of 10 years,

the Minister said the energy of youth and entrepreneurs must be channelised fully and "cannot be left to the policies of any big tech." "I will be telling Google...Our entrepreneurial energy...Startups, look at the whole startup India programme, 10 years back we had practically nothing and today we have more than 1,00,000 startups, more than 100 unicorns...This is something...The energy of our youth, the energy of our entrepreneurs, energy of our talented people that has to be channelised fully well, it cannot be left to the policies of any big tech," Vaishnav said.

On Friday, Google said 10 companies in the country, including "many well-established" ones had avoided

paying fees despite benefiting from the platform and Play Store, and proceeded to delist some apps.

It did not name the firms but a search of Play Store on android phones did not give results for matrimonial apps such as Shaadi, Matrimony.Com and Bharat Matrimony. Balaji Telefilms' Altt (formerly ALTBalaji), audio platform Kuku FM, dating service Quack Quack, Truly Madly also disappeared from Play Store.

Separately, Minister of State for IT Rajevee Chandrasekar said he has been flagging the concerns around dominance of Google stifling competition and startups.

The Government, he said, has to find if the current issue

"trespasses" into the "abuse and misuse" of dominance category.

"I have raised concerns on the dominance of Google in the past, it controls more than 90 per cent of the app ecosystem in India, the fact that they are a vertically integrated large company, we are concerned that their dominance does stifle competitions and startups, and it can be misused against startups, and there are some legitimate concerns that the government has," Chandrasekar said.

The Government and court has to look whether this particular incident trespasses into that territory of abuse and misuse, he added.

The raging dispute is over Google imposing a fee of 11 to

26 per cent on in-app payments after anti-competition body CCI ordered scrapping of an earlier system of charging 15 to 30 per cent.

Google went ahead to remove the apps not paying the fee after the Supreme Court did not provide interim relief to companies behind these apps in their battle against the search giant's app marketplace fee.

While Bharat Matrimony founder Murugavel Janakiraman described the move as "dark day" for the Internet in India, Kuku FM Co-founder Vinod Kumar Meena in a statement had said that Google was behaving like a 'monopoly'.

Quack Quack Founder Ravi Mittal said the company would comply with rules to get back

on the marketplace. Google previously sent notices of Play Store violations to Matrimony.Com, which runs app BharatMatrimony, and Info Edge, which runs a similar app Jeevansathi.

On Friday, Bikhchandani had emphasised on the need of an app store/ play store that is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure.

"Indian companies will comply - for now. But what India needs is an App Store/ Play Store that is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure - like UPI and ONDC. The response needs to be strategic," he had said.

Bikhchandani had claimed that Info Edge had cleared all pending Google invoices in a timely manner and was compliant with its policies.

# BJP rolls out stalwarts on Lok Sabha 2024...

**From Page 1**

Besides Rajnath, and Yadav, the Union Ministers whose names have been announced by the BJP in the first list of candidates include Mansukh Mandaviya from Porbandar in Gujarat, Sarbananda Sonowal from Dibrugarh, Kiren Rijiju from Arunachal West, Jyotiraditya Scindia from Guna, Rajasthan, Arjun Ram Meghwal from Bikaner, G. Kishan Reddy from Sikandrabad, Arjun Munda from Khunti, Jharkhand and Smriti Irani from Amethi, Purshottam Rupala from

Rajkot and Jitendra Singh from Udhampur. Thiruvananthapuram is expected to see an interesting contest as another Rajya Sabha member and Minister, Rajeev Chandrasekar, has been named from the seat, which is held by the Congress Shashi Tharoor. Among the other key candidates, Hema Malini will be fielded from Mathura, a constituency she has represented since 2014.

In a surprising move amid the farmers protest, Minister of State for Home Ajay

Mishra Teni will contest from the Lakhmipur Kheri constituency again. Mr Teni son, Ashish, had been jailed for his alleged involvement in mowing down four farmers in Lakhmipur Kheri in 2021 and justice for the victims has been one of the key demands in the ongoing protests against the Union government.

Of the 195 list, the BJP has fielded 52 candidates in Uttar Pradesh, including PM Modi; 24 in Madhya Pradesh; 20 in West Bengal; 15 each in Gujarat and Rajasthan; 12 in

Kerala; 11 each in Assam, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh; 9 in Telangana; 5 in Delhi; 3 in Uttarakhand; 2 each in Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh; and 1 each in Goa, Tripura, Andaman & Nicobar and Daman & Diu.

Announcing the list, BJP National General Secretary Vinod Tawde said the party is confident that it would form the government for the third term under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a much bigger mandate. Tawde said the

party has been taking efforts to increase the spread of not just the BJP, but the NDA also.

"Not just the BJP, even the people in this country wants 'fir ek baar Modi sarkar,'" he said. Tawde also said the party has been working on further expanding its footprint across states and also to strengthen the ruling National Democratic Alliance. Modi has set a target for the BJP to win at least 370 seats on its own in this Lok Sabha election and more than 400 for the NDA.

Sitting MP Lallu Singh has been retained from Ayodhya; Bhojpuri singer and actor Pawan Singh has been fielded from Asansol in West Bengal. In Uttar Pradesh, the party has fielded former BSP MP Ritesh Pandey from Ambedkar Nagar Lok Sabha seat in UP, while Hema Malini, Ravi Kishan, Ajay Mishra Teni, Mahesh Sharma, SPS Baghel and Sakshi Maharaj are among those being repeated from their seats. In Jharkhand, former Congress MP Geeta Koda has been fielded from

Singhbhum (ST reserved) and Nishikant Dubey from Godda. Senior Congress leader AK Anthony's son Anil K Anthony will contest from Pathanamthitta in Kerala; CR Patil from Navsari seat. The list saw major changes for Delhi with Ramesh Bidhuri, Parvash Verma, Meenakshi Lekhi and Harsh Vardhan being dropped from their respective seats, while Sadhvi Pragya Thakur was also dropped from her Bhopal seat. Besides Lekhi, John Barla is another Union

minister who has been dropped from their seat. Hours before the party released its first list, two of its sitting MPs- Jayant Sinha and Gautam Gambhir - have made a request to BJP President JP Nadda expressing their desire to be relieved of his electoral duties. While Sinha claimed he wanted to focus on his efforts on combating global climate change in Bharat and around the world, Gambhir expressed his desire to focus on upcoming cricket commitments.

# Bansuri among four new BJP faces in Delhi to fight LS polls

## Four sitting MPs denied LS tickets

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four sitting Member of Parliaments (MPs) Meenakshi Lekhi (New Delhi constituency), Ramesh Bidhuri (South Delhi), Parvesh Verma (West Delhi), and Dr Harshvardhan (Chandni Chowk) have been denied the Lok Sabha tickets for the Parliamentary seats in national Capital marking four new entrants including late BJP stalwart and former Foreign Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj daughter Bansuri Swaraj from the prestigious New Delhi Lok Sabha constituency. Other new candidates announced by BJP are Ramvir Singh Bidhuri from South Delhi, councilor and former MCD Mayor Kamaljeet Sehrawat and Praveen Khandelwal, a well-known trade Union leader will respectively contest from West Delhi and Chandni Chowk. Remaining East Delhi currently represented by Gautam Gambhir and North West Delhi Hans Raj Hans will be announced in due course though Gambhir during the day announced his

political retirement. Bansuri Swaraj who will make her poll debut for the Lok Sabha seat is a distinguished lawyer. Last year, the BJP appointed her as the co-convenor of the BJP Delhi's legal cell will make her poll debut in the upcoming elections. Swaraj will face the INDIA bloc candidate and AAP leader Somnath Bharti, also a lawyer, Ramvir Bidhuri will face AAP leader Sahi Ram Pehalwan. Soon after her name was announced, Swaraj said that she will try to live up to the legacy set by her mother, who she was sure sent her blessings from heaven. "I know I have the blessings of Ma (Sushma Swaraj). But this achievement does not belong to Bansuri Swaraj, but to every karyakarta (worker) of Delhi BJP," Swaraj told a media house. Bidhuri too brings a wealth of political experience and strong holding in Gujjar community. After being elected as a Legislator for the fourth time in 2020, Bidhuri was chosen as the leader of the BJP Legislative Party and became the Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly with the rank of a Cabinet Minister. Sehrawat was Mayor of South Delhi Municipal Corporation and is highly educated, hold-

ing the degree in Bachelors of Commerce Honours (B Com) & Masters of Commerce (M Com), graduate degree in education (B. Ed), degree in Law programme and a Diploma in computer application. The party has preferred to repeat sitting MP Manoj Tiwari in North East Delhi. Tiwari is the BJP's Purvanchal face in the Capital. He won the North East Delhi (Lok Sabha constituency) in the 2014 general elections from BJP. He defeated Anand Kumar from AAP with a margin of 1,44,084 votes while in 2019 general elections, Tiwari, won against Congress stalwart and Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit in North East Delhi constituency of New Delhi by a margin of 3.63 lakh votes. In a surprising turn of events, former cricketer and East Delhi BJP MP Gautam Gambhir, one of the foremost critics of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, on Saturday announced that he will not be contesting in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He urged the BJP National President Jagat Prakash Nadda, to relieve him of his political duties so that he can focus more on cricket as he is set to begin his tenure as the mentor of Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). He, however,



didn't clarify if he is quitting politics. This development also came just days ahead of his return as KKR's new mentor where he will be working closely with head coach Chandrakant Pandit. Gambhir's decision to quit politics comes amid reports that he may not get a ticket for the upcoming 2024 polls. "I have requested Hon'ble party president J P Nadda ji to relieve me of my political duties so that I can focus on my upcoming cricket commitments. I sincerely thank Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi ji and Home Minister Amit Shah ji for giving me the opportunity to serve the people. Jai Hind!", Gambhir said

on X. Hours before his sudden move, Gambhir shared on X a picture of the receipt for his contribution to PM Modi's vision of building a 'Viksit Bharat' and urged all to join the drive. Gambhir joined the BJP in March 2019 and has since emerged as a prominent figure for the party in Delhi. He successfully contested and won the East Delhi seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, securing a significant margin of victory with 6,95,109 votes. A member of two World Cup-winning India squads, Gambhir will be next seen as a Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) mentor in the upcom-

ing edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), which begins later this month. A BJP leader said that Gambhir's name did not figure on the final panel of potential candidates but leaders at the party's most senior level were batting for one more ticket for him. "His announcement to quit politics is completely unexpected," a party leader said. The East Delhi MP was involved in a spat with Gandhi Nagar MLA Anil Bajpai over different issues. Moreover, Gambhir's relations with other leaders in his constituency were less than cordial, he claimed. As an MP, Gambhir pursued with vigour his initiatives of running a community kitchen to provide free meals to the poor, opening libraries and focusing on the removal of the Ghazipur garbage dump. In the 2020 Assembly polls, the BJP won eight seats, three of which -- Gandhi Nagar, Vishwas Nagar and Laxmi Nagar -- were under the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency. The party also won 21 of 36 wards in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls. It was the highest among the seven parliamentary constituencies in the city. Talking to the pioneer, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri

thanked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and party president JP Nadda for South Delhi ticket. "I will try to live up to the expectations. I am very grateful to PM Modi," he said. Soon after her name was announced, Bansuri said that she will try to live up to the legacy set by her mother, who she was sure sending her blessings from heaven. Bansuri, a distinguished lawyer, brings a wealth of experience in legal procedures to the political arena. Last year, the BJP appointed her as the co-convenor of the BJP Delhi's legal cell. "My heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji for giving an opportunity to contest Lok Sabha Elections from Chandni Chowk. It proves that the party always gives opportunities to a small karyakarta who work honestly and with dedication for Bharat Mata. Over the last 10 years PM has worked day and night for the nation. We will propagate all the great work done by the Prime Minister to every voter of the constituency and ensure that vision of Viksit Bharat will propel BJP to more than 400 seats in the upcoming elections.

The entire trading community of 9 crore Indian traders are elated with this historic decision and stands in solidarity with the BJP in making India a super power," Khandelwal said after his name announced by the BJP from Chandni Chowk. The AAP on Saturday accused the BJP of fielding candidates without considering their eligibility or commitment to work for the people, citing the saffron party's East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir's request to relieve him of political duties. Gambhir, the BJP's Lok Sabha MP from East Delhi, has requested party chief JP Nadda to relieve him of his political duties so that he can focus on his upcoming cricket commitments. Addressing a press conference with Kuldeep Kumar -- the AAP's candidate from East Delhi for the Lok Sabha polls -- senior party leader Atishi claimed that Gambhir's request "revealed" that the BJP was not fielding him in this year's elections. Atishi, a Delhi minister, alleged that Gambhir did nothing in his East Delhi constituency during his five-year term. Other BJP MPs also remained unavailable in their constituencies, she charged.

# Three injured in brawl between former, current students of JMI

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three students were injured in a brawl between former and current students at Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi Police said on Saturday. The incident occurred on Friday evening near Jamia centenary gate where the two student groups clashed with each other, possibly due to regional differences, they added. Adil Khan (24) and Zafar (25), presently enrolled in the university, and Saqib (19), a student of Jamia School, were admitted to AIIMS Trauma Centre and Holy Family Hospital, the police said. An FIR has been registered in the matter for rioting and under Section 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of the Indian Penal Code at the Jamia Nagar Police Station, they said, adding that seven persons have been booked in the matter.



The police said teams have been formed to nab the accused. "It was a petty fight between two students on a very small issue. The Dean and HoD talked to them and the situation is fine now," chief proctor Atiqur Rahman told PTT. In the videos of the incident which have surfaced online, some youths can be seen exchanging blows and wielding sticks. "On January 1 at about 8.25 pm, a PCR call was received regarding quarrel in the campus of Jamia Millia Islamia University near gate number 13. Local SHO along with staff

reached the spot where only bystanders were found," the police said in a statement. "Later information was received from AIIMS Trauma Centre and Holy Family Hospital that 3 persons had got injured in the incident which took place in JMI University near gate number 13 and their MLCS (medico-legal case) have been prepared," the statement said. "An enquiry has revealed that some students and ex-students of JMI university are aligned on regional basis such as Poorvanchali, Western UP and Mewat. At times, these groups fight with each other on extremely petty issues which further gets aggravated by the involvement of non-students or ex-students," the police said. The university administration has been asked to ensure outsiders do not enter the campus and vitiate the environment, the police said.

# LG sanctions CBI probe against Jain in extortion case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has granted sanction for a CBI probe against former Minister Satyendra Jain in a complaint of extortion filed by money laundering accused Sukesh Chandrashekar. Jain, who was the Jail Minister in Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government, is accused of running a high profile extortion racket from Tihar Jail and demanding Rs 10 crore as "protection money" from Sukesh Chandrashekar another conman as to enable him to "live peacefully and comfortably in Jail". A former director general of Tihar jail was also accused in the matter, the Raj Niwas officials said. The LG has given his nod for a CBI inquiry against Jain under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, they said. Jain, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case, was also lodged in

Tihar Jail where he had also influenced the jail officials into providing him with body massage and other VIP treatment. Saxena, having given his sanction for the CBI inquiry, also referred the matter to the Ministry of Home Affairs for necessary action in the matter. Notably, on February 09, 2024, the LG had also sanctioned CBI inquiry against Raj Kumar, the then Superintendent of Tihar Jail, for extorting money at the behest of Jain and Sandeep Goel, the former DG of Tihar Jail. The case pertains to the charges made by Sukesh Chandrashekar that Jain had extorted and received Rs 10 crore from him in various tranches during 2018-21, either personally or through his accomplices, as protection money, so as to enable him 'to live peacefully and comfortably in different jails of Delhi (Tihar, Rohini and Mandoli)'. Jain was Minister (Jail) during this period in the AAP

Government. The matter is being investigated by the CBI and the request for prosecution sanction had come through the Directorate of Vigilance (DoV), Delhi government to the LG, who is the competent authority in the matter. Apart from Satyendra Jain and Raj Kumar, Sukesh had also accused Sandeep Goel and one Mukesh Prasad of extorting Rs 12.50 crore in various tranches during 2019-22 from him. Jain, Goel, Prasad and Kumar are accused of misusing their official positions as public servants in extending undue favour to Sukesh Chandrashekar and other high-profile inmates in Delhi jails in lieu of valuable considerations. In his letter to Lieutenant Governor, Sukesh had alleged that more than Rs 50 crore was given to the AAP for giving Chandrashekar an important post in the party in South Zone, and also to help him get nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Sukesh alleged that after his

arrest in 2017 in the 'two leaf symbol corruption case' he was lodged in Tihar Jail and was visited by Jain, who held the portfolio of Jail ministry, asking him if he had disclosed anything to the probe agency related to his contribution to AAP. "Thereafter in 2019 again I was visited by Satyendra Jain and his secretary and his close friend Sushil in jail, asking me to pay Rs two crore every month to him as protection money to live safely in jail, and to get even basic facilities," he alleged. Welcoming the L-G's decision, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has said the soon the inquiry will expose another nefarious face of Team Arvind Kejriwal. "Soon we will see it well established how as Jail Minister Satyendra Jain ran a racket of extortion from criminals lodged in Tihar & other Delhi jails," he said. Senior AAP leader Somnath Bharti on Saturday lashed out

at the Centre and alleged the CBI inquiry against former Delhi minister Satyendra Jain is a "political vendetta." Addressing a press conference here, Bharti said the "BJP is now taking help from Sukesh Chandrashekar", who is currently lodged in the Tihar Jail. "Chandrashekar had filed a complaint against former Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain and it is shocking that the LG took note of that complaint and ordered a CBI probe into it," Bharti said. "This is nothing but political vendetta by the BJP," he added. Bharti further said there are three areas (police, law and order, land) that come under the LG and that added the Delhiites have been "disappointed" by the BJP in those areas. "Jain is someone who has set an example as a health minister. Police, law and order and land are three issues that don't come under the Delhi government and the LG only cheated people of Delhi in those aspects," he said.

# Expedite release of funds to six Government schools, Atishi asks chief secretary

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Education Minister Atishi has reprimanded Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar for the delay in releasing funds for six government schools, and instructed him to expedite the process and release the funds by March 6. The Education Minister emphasized the urgency, citing the High Court's discontent with the delay and warned that any further delay would be disrespectful to the court. The Minister further demanded

that all departments work 24x7 for the next four days to ensure the funds reach the Public Works Department (PWD) before the upcoming Delhi High Court hearing. The payment has not yet been made and the file is shuttling between the Education and Finance Department. The high court has also expressed displeasure over the delay in release of funds. Atishi has directed the Chief Secretary (CS), Delhi to ensure that all departments concerned -- Education Department, PWD and Finance Department --

work 24 hours for the next four days so that the payment is released on March 6. Expressing displeasure over the Chief Secretary's request to seek further four weeks to resolve the issue, Atishi, in a direction to him, said, "Asking for further time would be inappropriate and would seem disrespectful to the Hon'ble High Court". While fixing the timeline, so that the payment is done, the minister in her note to Chief Secretary said, "It will be the personal responsibility of the Chief Secretary to ensure that these timelines are



adhere to". The Education Minister also pulled up the Chief Secretary and asked him that pending funds for six government schools have to be released by March 6. The matter came up for hearing before the Delhi High Court on November 20, 2023, December 5, 2023 and January 4, 2024 and February 1, 2024. The Delhi High Court in its order dated February 1, 2024 said, "Let a copy of this order along with relevant files be placed by the Chief Secretary, GNCTD before the Hon'ble Chief Minister." The

next date of hearing in Delhi High Court is 6th March, 2024. In November 2023, a social rights group had filed a public interest litigation in Delhi High Court seeking directions to the Government of NCT of Delhi to hand over possession of the six newly constructed school buildings to the Delhi Government schools. The petitioner has also sought directions to the Government of NCT of Delhi to approve the payment of Rs.166.20953 lakhs to the PWD so as to complete the handover as well as pos-

session of the six newly constructed school buildings. The newly constructed buildings are in Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Mukund Pur; Government Boys Senior Secondary School, Bakhtawarpur; Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, Lancer Road; Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Rani Bagh; Sarvodaya Vidyalaya Co-Ed, Sector 7, Rohini and Government Middle School, Punjab Khore. In total, there are 458 classrooms and 22 toilets to be built in these six government schools.

# Hero rat hole miner refuses another offer of MIG flat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rat-hole miner Wakeel Hassan, who had lost his house in a demolition drive, has rejected another offer of a MIG flat in Dilshad Garden here, close to his place of residence, by the authorities. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Saturday said Hassan has now even refused to take a two bed room and a living room DDA MIG Flat in Dilshad Garden. "On Friday night, four government officers, including an SDM, came and offered me a house in Dilshad Garden but I refused to accept it as they wanted me to shift on a temporary basis," Hassan said. "It was also not in writing. That house belongs to an NGO," Hassan said. Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, who had upon coming to know about his much feted role in the rescue operation of the workers entrapped in Silkyara-Barkot tunnel in Uttarakhnad, as a special measure asked DDA to provide him with alternate housing free of cost.



The Lieutenant Governor had done this, despite the fact that his structure that was razed, was illegal and unauthorized and the DDA had carried out the exercise in a fully legal manner for claiming the public land on which it was situated. "The DDA had immediately offered him a ready to move in flat in Narela on 29.02.2024. Hassan however, rejected this offer with some unsavoury comments about the location of Narela, where more than three thousands families are already living, and insisted for an accommodation close to

his place of earlier unauthorized residence". "Upon coming to know of this, the Lieutenant Governor had again ordered for an Indian Red Cross Society owned 2 BHK DDA Flat in Dilshad Garden to be given to him on 01.03.2024. Dilshad Garden is in the vicinity of Wakeel's earlier unauthorized house. However, Hassan refused to accept the offer letter in this regard by the Indian Red Cross Society, NCT Branch, that is headed by the Lt. Governor, when the Executive Magistrates, Karawal Nagar and Seemapuri, went to him

with the same on 01.03.2024, at 8.30 PM," the DDA said in a statement. Hours after the demolition, DDA officials offered Hassan to move to an EWS (economically weaker sections) flat at Narela, which is far from Khajoori Khas in northeast Delhi. Hassan rejected it saying it was "far and unsafe". On being asked why he is rejecting the second offer as Dilshad Garden is located near Khajoori Khas unlike far-flung Narela, he said the cost of his house, which was razed by the DDA (Delhi Development Authority), was more than Rs 1 crore and if the government wants to compensate, then the cost of the house should be matched. Reportedly, Hassan owns a company Rockwell Enterprises, whose employees dug the last stretch of the Uttarakhnad Tunnel during the aforementioned rescue operation. He along with his wife and two children have been staying on a footpath and demonstrating against the drive. On Saturday, during the rain in Delhi, he made a video requesting people to come for his support.

Hassan said that his belongings and household articles are lying open in the rain. "Today is the third day of my demonstration, which will continue till I get the solution from the government," he said. Hassan further said that he had bought this plot from a private person for Rs 33 lakh in 2012-13. "After buying the plot, I invested about Rs 8 lakh to build the rooms and also gave money to the DDA employees. The cost of my house has now gone up to more than Rs 1 crore now," he claimed. Veer Dev Kaushik, who lives in the same locality of Khajoori Khas near Hassan's razed house, said the locality was regularised by the Delhi government several years ago, after which he along with many others invested money to buy the plots. "Hassan had also invested and bought a plot here. But the corrupt DDA officials were still harassing him to get more money and when he failed to do so, his house was razed," Kaushik, a government official in Uttar Pradesh's health department, said.

# DDA demolishes 10 acre farmhouse of late liquor baron Ponty Chadha

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing with its exercise to reclaim government land over which unauthorized occupation and illegal construction has been done, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has demolished the farmhouse of high profile liquor baron, late Ponty Chadha alias Gurdeep Singh, spread over about 10 acres in Chhatarpur, South Delhi, worth about 400 crores. The demolition exercise which is continuing claimed 05 acres of land since Friday. The demolition drive is continued over the remaining land of Farmhouse and main building is still going on. Controversial liquor and real estate baron Ponty Chadha and his younger brother Hardeep have died in a shootout at their farmhouse in the national capital in 2012. 55-year-old Ponty Chadha singularly ruled over the liquor business in Uttar Pradesh - he was granted the sole distributorship for liquor



under the Mayawati regime. He allegedly bought liquor at low prices and subsequently sold them at exorbitant rates. Pegged at \$1.5 billion, his corporate assets - including liquor - also spanned across real estate, sugar, film production and exhibition. Chadha, along with his brothers, managed the Chadha Group, which has been consolidated under the Wave brand. He ran a popular chain of multiplexes - under the Wave brand - in the National

Capital Region. Notably, in an earlier demolition program in North East Delhi to reclaim government land, carried out between 13.01.2024 to 17.01.2024, at Gokulpuri in North East Delhi, unauthorized encroachments that included commercial showrooms including that of Raymonds, Car Dealer Ships including that of TATA Motors, Banquet Halls, a Hotel and a Godown were demolished over about 04 acres of land.

Centre, Tripura, TIPRA Motha sign tripartite pact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A tripartite agreement between TIPRA Motha and the Governments of Tripura and India was signed on Saturday in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to bring a lasting solution to the problems of the state's indigenous people.



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (ROADS), PUBLIC WORKS ROADS DEPARTMENT, ASSAM, GUWAHATI-03

No. CE/DEV/TB/707/2023-24/30 PRESS NOTICE RE-INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer (Roads), PWRD, Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 re-invites bids on behalf of Governor of Assam for 4 (Four) nos of Packages for construction of Roads including Routine Maintenance for 4 (four) years under Mukhya Mantrir Pakipath Nirman Achanhi (MPPNA) for the year 2023-24 in Udalguri District of Assam amounting to Rs 1.30 Crores (Approx.) including GST etc. from approved & eligible Contractors registered with PWRD, Assam.

Details along with packages under each district may be seen from 04-03-2024 at website www.assamtenders.gov.in. Amendment /Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in

Schemes are not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non sane schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Note: NIT Value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour Cess (1%), etc. Chief Engineer (Roads), PWD, Assam, Chandmari Guwahati-3.

Janasanyog/CF/6173/23/3-Mar-24

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor (Loan Account Number) & Address, Property Address of Secured Asset to be Enforced, Date of Notice Sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date.

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : March 02, 2024 Place : Delhi/NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD NAGAON BUILDING CIRCLE, NAGAON

PRESS NOTICE

The Superintending Engineer, P.W.D, Nagaon Building Circle, Nagaon on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids for the following work from APWD registered Class-I (A/B/C) contractors having experience of similar nature of work. Details of the bids may be seen at e-Procurement portal website: www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours. The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in for participating in the bidding process.

Table with 4 columns: S. No., Name of work, Approx Value of Work (Rs.), Category of APWD (Big./registered Contractor).

Note:- 1. Any modification of tender may be seen in the portal www.assamtenders.gov.in 2. The prospective bidder must visit the work site before submission of tender. The Bidder have to submit evidence of site visit in the form of a certificate duly certified by the concerned Executive Engineer.

Janasanyog/C/17243/23/3/March/24 Sd/- Superintending Engineer, P-W.D, Nagaon Building Circle, Nagaon

PUBLIC NOTICE

Countrywide Promoters Private Limited OT-14, 3rd Floor, Next Door, Parklands, Sector -76, Faridabad, Haryana-121004 Phone No.: 0120-4492-650 website: www.bptp.com

This Public Notice is being issued in compliance with Memo No. ZP-351/AD(GK)/2024/7363 dated 29.02.2024 issued by the District Town Planner (HQ) for the Director, Directorate of Town & Country Planning -Haryana, Chandigarh ("DTCP").

WHEREAS Countrywide Promoters Pvt Ltd. has developed the residential building/tower for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) i.e. EWS Block-1 as a part of the group housing colony "Park Floor -1" being developed on the land measuring 13.187 acres situated in Sector-77, Faridabad, Haryana as per the terms and conditions of License No. 267 of 2007 dated 03.12.2007 and the DTCP has issued in-principle approval/ provisional Occupation Certificate vide above referred Memo No. ZP-351/AD(GK)/2024/7363 dated 29.02.2024

AND WHEREAS in view of certain deviations from the approved building plans we have been directed to issue this public notice to call upon objections/suggestions from the existing allottees of EWS Block-1 of the Group Housing Scheme. In EWS Block-1 total of 76 EWS units have been constructed from the ground to the fifth floor and 4 units on the sixth floor against pro-rata constructed main dwelling units. As per the earlier approved building plan, EWS Block-1 has 120 EWS units having 20 EWS units on each floor from the ground floor to the fifth floor. It is submitted that the area of EWS unit remains the same. These changes have resulted in an amendment to the earlier approved building plan.

Accordingly, by this Public Notice, we are inviting objections and suggestions from the existing allottees of EWS Block-1 w.r.t. deviations/revisions/amendments from the earlier approved Building Plans of EWS Block-1 of the group housing colony being developed under the above-referred License.

A copy of the earlier approved Building Plans of EWS Block-1, the deviations from the approved site plan and the amended as-built plans of EWS Block-1 (being approved in principle) are available on our website i.e. "www.bptp.com" and the same can also be perused at our aforesaid Office as well as in the office of the Senior Town Planner, Faridabad, Haryana. Any existing allottee of the unit in EWS Block-1 of the said group housing colony (developed under License No. 267 of 2007 dated 13.02.2007) having any objection/suggestion to the revision/amendment in the earlier approved Building Plans of EWS Block-1, may file his/her objection/suggestion in the office of the Senior Town Planner, HSVP Complex, Sector-12, Faridabad within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that none of the existing allottees has any objection/suggestion to the proposed revision/amendment in the Building Plan.

Place: Faridabad Date: 03.03.2024 Rohit Mohan For Countrywide Promoters Private Limited

accepted the present reality to proceed towards a brighter future. Under the pact, it was agreed to amicably resolve all issues of the indigenous people of Tripura related to history, land and political rights, economic development, identity, culture and language, according to an official statement. "I assure all stakeholders of Tripura that you won't have to fight for your rights anymore. The government of India will be two steps ahead in creating mechanisms to safeguard your rights," Shah said. The home minister said no one can change history but everyone can learn from their past mistakes and move ahead. He said the TIPRA Motha and all tribal parties have played a constructive role and the BJP government in Tripura also worked sincerely towards this agreement. The tripartite agreement between Tripura Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance, popularly known as TIPRA Motha, and the state and central governments was signed at North Block here. Shah said under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, another treaty has been signed furthering harmony in the Northeast. "Delighted to announce the signing of a tripartite agreement resolving issues related to the economic development,

Government issues advisory to label under trial AI models

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Google's AI platform's response to queries on Prime Minister Narendra Modi generated controversy, the government has issued an advisory for social media and other platforms to label under-trial AI models and prevent hosting unlawful content.

In an advisory issued to intermediaries/platforms on March 1, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology warned of criminal action in case of non-compliance. "All intermediaries or platforms to ensure that use of Artificial Intelligence model(s) /LLM/Generative AI, software(s) or algorithm(s) on or through its computer resource does not permit its users to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any unlawful content," the advisory said. All platforms, intermediaries and enabling software shall be

held accountable for any breaches, it added. "Non-compliance with provisions would result in penal consequences." The advisory comes within days of Google's AI platform Gemini making uncharitable comments about Prime Minister Modi's policies. The response of Gemini to queries about the Prime Minister led to a strong reaction from the government, with Minister of State for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar calling it a violation of IT laws. Union Minister for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Saturday said, "The episode of Google Gemini is very embarrassing, but saying that the platform was under trial and unreliable is certainly not an excuse to escape from prosecution." "I advise all platforms to openly disclose to the consumers and seek consent from them before deploying any under-trial, erroneous plat-

Indian Navy to upgrade Minicoy detachment, commission it as INS Jatayu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Given the strategic importance of Lakshadweep Islands, Indian Navy will upgrade naval detachment Minicoy and commission it as INS Jatayu on March 6 in the presence of Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, navy said here on Saturday. Plans are also on to have a dual-purpose airport at Minicoy capable handling fighter jet flying besides commercial aircraft operations. Giving details about the naval base, officials said the event marks an important milestone in the Navy's



resolve to incrementally augment security infrastructure at the strategically important Lakshadweep. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited there in the first week of January. Naval Detachment Minicoy was setup in early 1980s under the operational command of Naval Officer-in-Charge (Lakshadweep). Minicoy is the southern-most island of Lakshadweep which straddles the vital Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs). Basing of an independent naval unit with requisite infrastructure and resources will enhance the overall operational capability of the Indian Navy in the islands. The base will enhance operational reach and facilitate Indian Navy's operational effort towards anti-piracy and anti-narcotics operations in Western Arabian Sea.

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No. 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrower/s mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession, Date of Demand Notice Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.), Name of Branch.

The above-mentioned borrower/s/guarantor/s are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : March 02, 2024 Place : Delhi Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING) ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3

No CE/TB-VII/22/2023/78

PRESS NOTICE

The Addl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Planning), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids from Govt, registered eligible Contractors having experience in similar nature of works for the following works. Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal www.assamtenders.gov.in

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Table with 10 columns: SI. No., No. of Sewa Kendra, Name of work, LAC, District, Bid Security drawn in favour of, APPOrox value of work, Completion Period, Bid Security 2% of Bid value, General category, and 1% of Bid value, Reserved category, Cost of Bid.

N.B.: - 1. Value of work may vary according to (he detail NIT. 2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document. Addl.Chief Engineer, Planning O/o the Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3

PUBLIC NOTICE It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Rishi Rawat who is purchasing the House No. Gyan Khand-4/15 on Ground Floor, covered area 97.31 Sq. Mtrs., M1G (Triple Storey), Situated at Gyan Khand-W, (T.H.A.), Residential Colony, Indraprastha, Ghaziabad (UP), from (1) Mr. Anil Kumar Jha & (2) Mr. Rajan Kumar Jha Vide Sale Deed dated 17.04.2008 Document No. 10047, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 10140, on pages 353-454, registered on dated 17.04.2008 (SRO-Chhazabad-V) and Gift Deed dated 27.08.2023 as Document No. 9685, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 42471, on pages 81-110, registered on dated 28.08.2023 (SRO-Chhazabad-V) and same to be financed by Axis Finance Limited., That, Original Lease Deed dated 18.02.2006 executed by GDA in favour of Mr. Sanjeev Singh as Document No. 3552, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 6421, on pages 389/418 registered on dated 18.02.2006. have been Lost and not available and an FIR has lodged on dated 05.11.2017 with LR No. 2203428/2017 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, Charge, disputes etc. LUCERN LEGAL LLP Office No. B-93B, Second Floor, Opposite SBI Bank Sector-2, Noida, UP-201301. Contact# 0120-4293729

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

THANKSGIVING

Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine PD(290)C

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Annu Dhingra D/o Ishwar Dass Arora R/o D 11/A Kailash Colony New Delhi-110048 hereby declare that Annu Dhingra and Anu Dhingra both are one and the same person PD(291)C

LOST & FOUND

I, Sachin Kumar, S/o Shr Kailash Chandra, R/o-Fla No. A-7, Onkara Apartment KG Khosla, Badarpur Border New Delhi have lost my 3 Years LLB Degree which issued by MJP Rohilkhand University U.P My Roll No 613277. PD(292)/



# India retains policy space at WTO

## Will protect interests of farmers, fishermen in every respect: Goyal

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

The outcome of the 13th ministerial conference of the WTO was "good" and India is "completely satisfied" as the country continues to retain its full policy space to protect the interests of farmers and fishermen in every respect, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said.

He said that New Delhi's procurement of food grains for distribution among the poor continues uninterrupted and without any hindrance.

"India continues to retain full policy space for the benefit of our farmers, our fishermen, and in every respect, we have been able to take India's interests to the highest level possible," the minister told reporters here after the five-day meeting of the trade ministers of 166-member World Trade Organisation

(WTO). As the members were not able to reach consensus on key issues such as agriculture and fisheries subsidies, the talks that were scheduled to end on February 29 got extended for a day.

The talks at the WTO's ministerial conference ended with no decision on issues such as finding a permanent solution to public food stockpile and on curbing fisheries subsidies, but the members agreed to further extend the moratorium on imposing import duties on e-commerce trade for two more years.

The ministerial conference, the highest decision-making body of the WTO, also managed to get more outcomes such as new disciplines on domestic regulation for services, formal joining of Comoros and Timor-Leste as members of the WTO, and least



developing countries outcome and we are completely satisfied... A lot of issues continue to make progress in terms of discussions. "Generally through the MC13, progress was made on several contentious issues which had not been closed for many years. Forward movement is always a sign of a possible closure going forward," he said.

He added that in the proposed fisheries subsidies agreement aimed to curb subsidies that lead to over capacity and over fishing, India found several ambiguities on the proposals that were on the table.

Some of the subsidies that certain countries give to their resource-poor fishermen were sought to be excluded. Besides, definitions were not satisfactory and several areas where deeper consultations and greater degree of flexibility was required to ensure a fair and balanced agreement, were not possible in such a short period of time.

"By and large, the objectives with which we had come to Abu Dhabi are largely met and we go back fully satisfied," he said, adding, "our largest interest was to protect our farmers and our fishermen, both of which we are strongly doing and that is our offensive interest which we are actively pursuing."

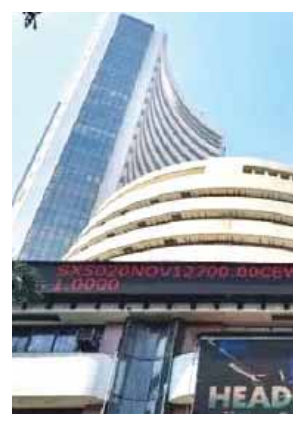
On further extension of the duty moratorium on e-commerce trade, the minister said that India was "not necessarily opposed" to it fully.

Since the members had not discussed the issues pertaining to the moratorium during the time between MC12 (happened at Geneva June 2022) and MC 13, such as its scope and its impact on different economies, "we believe that it's in the best interest that we continue this e-commerce moratorium", he said.

When asked about the effort of certain developed countries to push non-trader issues like investment facilitation agreement, environment and labour in the WTO, Goyal said India has been successful in making sure that such issues cannot become part of the WTO.

# Sensex, Nifty hit all time high in special live trading session

PTI ■ MUMBAI



Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit fresh all-time peaks in a special trading session on Saturday, extending their previous day's sharp rally, amid impressive GDP data and foreign fund inflows.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE are conducting a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments on Saturday to check their preparedness to handle major disruption or failure at the primary site.

The special live trading session will have intra-day switch over from Primary Site (PR) to Disaster Recovery Site (DR) site.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 236.77 points to reach its all-time high of 73,982.12 in early trade. The Nifty went up by 81.5 points to hit its record peak of 22,420.25.

There will be two trading sessions -- the first from 9:15 am to 10 am on the PR, and the second from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm on the DR site, according to the exchanges.

"Trading members are requested to note that the exchange will conduct a special live trading session with intraday switch over from Primary Site (PR) to Disaster Recovery Site (DR) on Saturday, March 2, in equity and equity derivatives segments," BSE and NSE said in separate circulars.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors and State Bank of India were the major gainers.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, ICICI Bank and NTPC were among the laggards.

India's economy grew by better-than-expected 8.4 per cent in the final three months of 2023 -- the fastest pace in one-and-a-half years.

The US markets ended with gains on Friday.

India's manufacturing sector growth climbed to a five-month high in February amid a sharper uptick in factory production and sales, supported by both domestic and external demand, a monthly survey said on Friday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 56.5 in January to 56.9 in February, pointing to the strongest improvement in the health of the sector since September 2023.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 128.94 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

# Coal production rises 27 per cent in Apr-Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coal production from captive and commercial mines has increased 27.06 per cent year-on-year to 126.8 million tonnes (MT) in the April-February this fiscal.

The coal dispatch from the captive and commercial mines in the first eleven months of the current financial year also rose 29.14 per cent to 128.88 MT over the corresponding period of previous fiscal, the coal ministry said in a statement.

The total coal production and dispatch in February was 14.85 MT and 12.95 MT, registering an increase of 37 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively.

In the year-ago period, the total coal production and dispatch stood at 10.85 MT and 9.72 MT, respectively.

As of February 29, 2024, the total number of producing mines was 54, with 35 allocated to the power sector, 11 allocated to the non-regulated sector, and 8 for the sale of coal.

Of the 91 mines awarded under commercial coal auctions, seven blocks have already started production.



# India eliminates extreme poverty: Brookings article

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has eliminated extreme poverty, a commentary authored by economists Surjit Bhalla and Karan Bhassin in a leading American think-tank The Brookings Institution said, citing the just released consumption expenditure data for 2022-23.

In the article, the two noted economists cite the data to say real per capita consumption has grown 2.9 per cent per annum since 2011-12, with rural growth at 3.1 per cent being significantly higher than urban growth of 2.6 per cent.

Also, there has been an unprecedented decline in urban and rural inequality. The urban Gini declined from 36.7 to 31.9; the rural Gini declined from 28.7 to 27.0.

The Gini coefficient, or the Gini index, measures the inequality of income distribution, whereas a higher value closer to one (or 100 per cent) represents greater inequality.

"In the annals of inequality analysis, this decline is unheard of, and especially in the context of high per capita growth," the article states.

High growth and a large decline in inequality have combined to eliminate poverty in India, it said, citing the PPP of USD 1.9 (purchasing power parity at 2011 prices and not the PPP USD 2.15 line at 2017 prices).

This, the economists argued, was more because the PPP of USD 1.9 closely corresponds to the official India Tendulkar poverty line.

The Headcount Poverty Ratio (HCR), the proportion of a population that lives below the poverty line, has declined from 12.2 per cent in 2011-12 to 2 per cent in 2022-23, equivalent to 0.93 percentage points per year.

Rural poverty stood at 2.5 per cent, while urban poverty was down to 1 per cent. "These estimates do not take into account the free food (wheat and rice) supplied by the government to approximately two-thirds of the population, nor utilisation of public health and education," the authors noted in the commentary.

The decline in HCR is remarkable given that in the past it took 30 years for India to witness a similar decline in poverty levels, which has now been witnessed over 11 years, the article said.

Given the near elimination of extreme poverty, India should now graduate to a higher poverty line, which would provide an opportunity to redefine existing social protection programmes to give greater support to the genuinely poor, it added.

"Official data now confirms that India has eliminated extreme poverty as commonly defined in international comparisons."

# Boeing in talks to buy Spirit AeroSystems

AP ■ NEW DELHI/DALLAS

Boeing is in talks to buy Spirit AeroSystems, which builds fuselages for Boeing 737 Max jetliners, including the one that suffered a door-panel blowout in January, according to a person knowledgeable about the discussions.

The timing of a deal - or whether the two sides even reach a final agreement - is uncertain, according to the person, who spoke about the private talks on condition of anonymity.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the talks. The newspaper said Friday that Spirit hired bankers to consider strategic options and has held preliminary discussions about a sale back to Boeing, its former owner. Boeing and Spirit AeroSystems declined to comment.

Shares of Spirit jumped 15% in afternoon trading. A deal could help Boeing respond to critics who have blamed the company's manufacturing problems in large part on outsourcing key work to Spirit and other suppliers.

Boeing spun off Spirit in 2005 as part of a strategy to outsource the supply chain for its commercial planes. In recent years, quality problems have mounted at Spirit, including fuselage panels that didn't fit together precisely enough and holes that were improperly drilled. Those and other flaws held up deliveries of Boeing 737s and 787s.



Spirit removed its CEO in October and replaced him with Patrick Shanahan, a former Boeing executive who served as acting defense secretary in the Trump administration.

Scrutiny of Spirit - which is not related to Spirit Airlines - grew even stronger after an emergency door plug that it made blew off an Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9 over Oregon on January 5.

Investigators said the panel had been removed at a Boeing factory to let Spirit workers fix damaged rivets, and bolts that help hold the panel in place were missing after the repair job. It is not clear who removed the bolts and failed to put them back.

Two weeks later, Boeing CEO David Calhoun toured the Spirit factory in Wichita, Kansas. Calhoun and Shanahan pledged to work together to improve manufacturing quality. Shanahan said Spirit would work with Boeing, regulators and airlines, and he vowed, "We will restore confidence."

Calhoun has long defended Boeing's outsourcing, but his tone changed in recent weeks. On January 31, as Boeing reported a fourth-quarter loss, Calhoun said that outsourcing probably went too far.

About 70 per cent of Spirit AeroSystems' revenue last year came from work done

for Boeing, according to Spirit's latest annual report. That is up from 60 per cent two years earlier. Most of the company's other revenue comes from making parts for Airbus, Boeing's European rival.

Spirit also is looking into selling operations in Ireland that make parts for Airbus, the Journal reported.

Spirit lost USD 616 million last year and hasn't turned a full-year profit since 2019. Since then, it has lost more than USD 2.5 billion. Boeing agreed in October to give more financial help to Spirit. Boeing said it would provide USD 100 million for Spirit to retool its factory and adjust prices to give the supplier another USD 455 million over two years.

# Lulu Group to decide on location to set up food processing unit

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A team of Lulu Group, a leading multinational diversified conglomerate that has planned to set up an export oriented full-fledged food processing plant will visit Vijayapura soon and conduct site visits to decide where the food processing unit should be set up, officials said on Saturday.

Top representatives of the Lulu Group held a preliminary meeting about the proposed project with the Minister of Large and Medium Industries M B Patil, who is also the district in-charge minister for Vijayapura, they said.

Lulu Group export division CEO Najbuddin, Director Anant and his team participated in the meeting held on Friday at Khanija Bhavan.

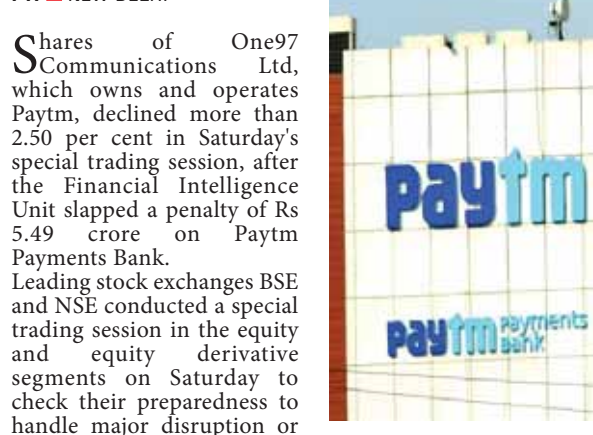
In a statement issued by the Minister's office, Patil was quoted as saying that the team of Lulu Group will visit Vijayapura soon and will conduct site visits to decide on where the food processing unit should be set up.

At the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, Lulu Group had expressed interest and signed an agreement to set up a full-fledged food processing plant in Vijayapura district by investing Rs 300 crore. This meeting was held as a continuation of that and the minister assured that the government will extend full cooperation, it said.

The minister has emphasised that the proposed unit will facilitate the purchase of local food products for grading, sorting and packaging purposes for supply to domestic and export markets, the statement added.

# Paytm shares decline 2.50 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Shares of One97 Communications Ltd, which owns and operates Paytm, declined more than 2.50 per cent in Saturday's special trading session, after the Financial Intelligence Unit slapped a penalty of Rs 5.49 crore on Paytm Payments Bank.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments on Saturday to check their preparedness to handle major disruption or failure at the primary site.

The company's stock fell by 2.56 per cent to settle at Rs 414.55 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it went lower by 3.61 per cent to Rs 410.05. On the NSE, it declined by 2.13 per cent to Rs 414.40 per share.

Shares of One97 Communications on Friday jumped 5 per cent after the company said the board has approved the discontinuation of inter-company pacts with Paytm Payments Bank to reduce dependencies.

In fresh trouble for Paytm Payments Bank, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has slapped a penalty of Rs 5.49 crore on the payments bank for violating anti-money laundering law, the finance ministry said on

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### IIFL FINANCES LAUNCHES 'LADIES FIRST' GOLD LOAN MELA

IIFL Finance, which is one of India's largest non-banking finance companies has launched a unique 'Ladies First' Gold Loan Mela Campaign for women customers only. The industry-first initiative will offer an assured gift and zero processing fee to all new women customers, who will take gold loan from IIFL Finance branches across India between March 5 and March 12, 2024.

IIFL Finance will also offer bumper prizes including gold coins to winners. Saurabh Kumar, Head of Gold Loan Business at IIFL Finance said, "To celebrate women entrepreneurs, we at IIFL Finance have launched India's first Gold Loan mela dedicated to women borrowers in the week of International Women's Day."



# Strong GDP growth, weak monsoon drove up India carbon emissions in 2023: IEA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Strong GDP growth and a weak monsoon drove up India's energy-related carbon emissions by around 190 million tonnes in 2023, though the country's per capita emissions remain far below the global average, the International Energy Agency said.

Global energy-related carbon emissions grew by 1.1 per cent in 2023, increasing 410 million tonnes (Mt) to reach a new record high of 37.4 gigatonnes (Gt) in 2023, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Friday.

It said emissions in China grew around 565 Mt in 2023, the largest increase globally and a continuation of its emissions-intensive economic growth in the post-pandemic period. Per capita emissions in China are now 15 per cent higher than in advanced economies.

However, China continued to dominate global clean energy additions. "In India, strong GDP growth drove up emissions by around 190 Mt. But a weak monsoon increased demand for electricity and cut hydro production, contributing around one-quarter of the increase in its total emissions in 2023. Per capita emissions in India remain far below the world average," the IEA said.

India grappled with warm and dry conditions throughout 2023 and experienced a weak monsoon season, with August being the driest in at least 45 years.

In 2022, energy-related global emissions increased by 490 Mt, representing a 1.3 per cent rise. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), countries together need to cut down emissions of planet-warming greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane by 43 per cent by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The IEA noted that emissions from coal accounted for more than 65 per cent of the increase in 2023. It said global hydropower capacity increased by around 20 gigawatts (GW) in 2023. Despite this increase, the global generation of hydropower saw a record decline last year. This was primarily driven by severe and prolonged droughts that impacted major hydropower regions, exacerbated by the influence of El Niño.



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Friday. Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) has been in trouble after the Reserve Bank directed it to stop accepting fresh deposits from customers with effect from February 29 -- a deadline which was later extended to March 15.

Earlier this week, Vijay Shekhar Sharma stepped down as part-time non-executive Chairman of PPBL and the board of the bank was reconstituted.

The finance ministry said FIU-India had initiated a review of Paytm Payments Bank on receipt of specific information from law enforcement agencies in respect of a few entities and their network of businesses engaged in illegal acts, including organising and facilitating online gambling.

# No. 1 seed Jessica in San Diego Open semis

AP ■ SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA (USA)

Top-seeded Jessica Pegula beat Anna Blinkova 6-1, 2-6, 6-2 on Friday to advance to the semi-finals of the San Diego Open. Pegula, ranked No. 5 in the world, will face sixth-seeded Marta Kostyuk, who eliminated fourth-seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a rain-delayed quarterfinal.

"Anna's always a really tough competitor," Pegula said. "She makes you really have to earn it. I feel like I started out playing really well, then she changed up her game plan and started hitting a lot of high balls. I wasn't stepping in and was getting frustrated. I reeled off some really bad errors for a couple of games there, but I managed to find my range."

Pegula finished with 24 winners. She made 17 unforced errors, the majority of which came in the second set.

Third-seeded Emma Navarro advanced to the semi-finals for the second year in a row by beating the last remaining qualifier, 113th-ranked Daria



Saville, 6-4, 6-2. She'll face Katie Boulter, who beat 2022 runner-up Donna Vekic 6-4, 6-3.

Navarro, 2021 NCAA singles champion at Virginia, was trailing 1-4 in the opening set

before reeling off five straight games to take control of the match.

"Someone in the crowd told me to wake up. I guess that was maybe the push I needed," said the 22-year-old

Navarro, who capitalized on eight of her 14 break-point opportunities.

"It's tough playing someone I've never played before. I was just kind of getting used to her game and putting

together a strategy of how I wanted to play. It took me a little bit to find that, but I got there in the end. I'm happy with the win and excited to be moving forward."

It will be Navarro's fifth tour-level semifinal in less than a year. She won her first WTA title earlier this year in Hobart, Australia.

There will be no return trip to the semifinals for Vekic. The seventh seed was upset on a windy day by Boulter, who at No. 49 is Britain's top-ranked player. Earlier this week, Boulter beat second-seeded Beatriz Haddad Maia 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

"It was an absolute battle," said the 27-year-old Boulter, who overcame a 1-3 first-set deficit to reach the second tour-level semifinal of her career.

"Very tricky conditions. Not easy to get any rhythm for either of us, because we're both big hitters. I found it tough to kind of get into the match. I just tried to stay as strong as I could and somehow found a way over the line. I'm an aggressive player, so I do try to go for it no matter what the conditions are."



# Indian trio draws on a dull day in Prague Masters

PTI ■ PRAGUE

The Indian trio of R Praggnanandhaa, D Gukesh and Vidit Gujrathi played out draws on a dull fourth round day in the Prague Masters Chess tournament here.

It was time for some recovery for Praggnanandhaa after two back-to-back losses and the Indian just played a solid game to sign peace with local hopeful Nguyen Thai Dai Van.

Gukesh did not give any chances to Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan and split the point while Gujrathi could not make much headway against Mateusz Bartel of Poland.

The day witnessed no decisive games as the remaining two were also drawn. Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran drew with highest ranked Czech David Navara and Richard Rapport of Romania got the same result against German Vincent Keymer.

As a result the overnight positions remained unchanged with everyone heading a half to their kitty.

Abdusattarov and Maghsoodloo now share the lead on three points out of a possible four Gukesh and Rapport share the third with

two and a half points apiece. Gujrathi stands at fourth spot on two points, a half point ahead of Praggnanandhaa, Navara, Dai Van and Keymer. Bartel moved up to a full point and remained at the bottom of the tables.

The Nimzo Indian has been a part of Praggnanandhaa's repertoire and he used it effectively as black. The Capablanca variation by Dai Van only saw pieces change hands at regular intervals.

The players arrived at a heavy pieces endgame with white having a little pull but the Indian warded off the threats with a timely pawn sacrifice leading to a theoretically drawn rook and pawns endgame. The game lasted 40 moves.

Abdusattarov again banked on his pet Catalan opening but Gukesh was calm and in control right through. The Uzbek had ridden on his luck in the previous round when he won a lost position against Navara but in the fourth round he was presented with no such opportunity.

Gukesh went for a thematic central breakthrough in the early part of the middle game and developed his forces efficiently to force some exchanges. The players reached a Queen and pawn endgame that was just level

and offered no hopes for complications.

Gujrathi's Scotch opening as white raised visions of a complicated game but Bartel was up to the task even though it looked like the Indian was on top. Gujrathi won a rook for a minor piece but black had sufficient counter-play. The draw was a just result.

In the Challengers section Grandmaster R Vaishali scored her second victory on the trot at the expense of Stepan Herbek of Czech Republic. The victory brought Vaishali back to a fifty percent score after two losses in the first two rounds. Meanwhile the race for India's top rated continued and Viswanathan Anand again reclaimed the top spot as Arjun Erigaisev lost the second round game against Xiangzhi Bu in the Shenzhen Masters in China.

**RESULTS** round 4 (Indians unless stated): Richard Rapport (Rou, 2.5) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 1.5) David Navara (Cze, 1.5) drew with Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 3); Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 1.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (1.5); Nodirbek Abdusattarov (Uzb, 3) drew with D Gukesh (2.5); Vidit Gujrathi (2) drew with Mateusz Bartel (Pol, 1).

# AIFF women committee discusses appointment of new coaches

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) women's committee on Saturday held discussions regarding the appointment of new coaches for national teams and recruitment of more 'A' and 'B' License coaches.

In recent times, the country finished joint winners in the SAFF U19 Women's Championship in Dhaka. Immediately after that, the senior team secured the runners-up position in the Turkish Women's Cup.

The U-16 women's team is currently playing in the SAFF Championship and won the first match comfortably.

"The women's senior national team didn't have the opportunity to get international exposure for many months. There are plans to give the team more frequent exposure in the near future," said acting secretary general Satyanarayan.

"In light of these achievements and with



various international competitions underway, the 'Khelo India' Women's Football League continues to serve as a beacon of progress.

"It offers a crucial platform for aspiring women footballers to unlock their poten-

tial and play an important role in fostering the growth of the sport throughout the nation."

The committee analysed the performances of the various women's national teams and deliberated upon the discus-

sions going on with the sport's world governing body regarding the FIFA Women's Development Programme and various domestic leagues that are being conducted in the country, such as the Khelo India Women's League and the Indian Women's League. The committee also lauded the strategic deployment of scouts across regions of the country, recognising their important role in talent identification and development. Additionally, discussions were held regarding the appointment of new coaches, signalling a promising step forward in advancing women's football in India.

The committee underscored the importance of recruiting more A and B License coaches, particularly goalkeeper coaches, and encouraging their active participation within the ecosystem.

In addition to these initiatives, the committee recommended the celebration of Women's Day and the organisation of virtual workshops.



# With experience, things have changed for me: Sreejesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh says he has learned to steer clear of negative thoughts with experience, something that has helped him immensely while guarding the post for the Indian team in big matches.

As he prepares for the upcoming Paris Olympics, Sreejesh spoke about the criticism that comes with the "thankless job" of manning the goalpost for the national side.

"It is a thankless job at times because if I made 10 saves and concede one goal, everyone will remember that one mistake. But I have accepted that and I have moved on with that," he said on Saturday.

"This profession has helped me in my personal life on how to deal with pressure and criticism as well," Sreejesh added during a conversation with David Lee, who is the head coach of Prime Volleyball League franchise Bengaluru Torpedoes.

One of the best players in modern-day volleyball, Lee represented USA thrice at the Olympics, and led his side to a gold medal and a bronze medal.

Sreejesh, who is one of the top goalkeepers in the world, has represented India at the Olympics three times, and won the bronze medal at the

Tokyo Games in 2021.

During a discussion on how athletes can develop mental strength at an early age, Sreejesh opened up on his struggles as a young goalkeeper.

"Goalkeeping is a mental game. Being a player, we understand how we want to get involved in a match. But, being a goalkeeper, I just stand behind and my game is in my head," Sreejesh said.

"As a young player, my negative feelings used to dominate my positive feelings, and that would lead me to concede goals. Now, with my experience, things have changed for me, and I allow positive thoughts to dominate."

Sreejesh praised Prime Volleyball League for providing a platform for youngsters to showcase their skills and recalled his experience of playing in the erstwhile Hockey India League.

"I was always very curious to see how the top overseas players are playing and how they train and behave.

"Earlier, I never used to care about my diet, preparations, or proteins. I was a good listener, but never took an initiative in meetings. But the league helped me in learning from the overseas player and helped me improve in all these aspects of my game."

# Indian boxers renew quest for Paris Olympic quotas in Italy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The seasoned Shiva Thapa, Deepak Bhorla and Nishant Dev will be among nine Indian boxers fighting it out for Paris Olympic berths at the 1st World Qualification Tournament, starting in Busto Arsizio, Italy on Sunday.

Seven men and two women from India will be aiming to secure Olympic berths at the qualifiers being conducted by the Paris 2024 Boxing Unit (PBU), an ad-hoc body created by the International Olympic Committee Executive Board.

The tournament has 49 quota places on offer and a boxer will be assured of a Paris ticket after reaching the semifinals. In the women's 60kg category, however, there will be a box-off between the losing semifinalists to decide the Olympic berths as only three spots are available.

While several boxers have already obtained quota places via their respective continental events, there are many world-class pugilists

including Colombia's Yuberjen Martinez and Tomoya Tsuboi of Japan in the men's 51kg, reigning 57kg world champion Makhmud Sabyrkhan of Kazakhstan and Olympic silver medallist Yoel Finol of Venezuela, who will be keen to seal the deal in Italy this month.

India's hopes will be spearheaded by the trio of 2023 world championship medallists — Bhorla (51kg), Mohammed Hussamudin (57kg) and Dev (71kg). Bhorla and Dev have emerged as strong contenders in their respective weight classes over the last year.

Two-time Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Hussamudin will be back in the ring for the first time since last year's world championships, having undergone a surgery on his left knee.

Expectations will be high from the six-time Asian Championship medallist Thapa (63.5kg) as well as former Asian champion Sanjeet (92kg).



Super heavyweight boxer Narender Berwal (+92kg) is also a strong contender. He came the closest to clinching a quota among all Indian male pugilists at the Asian Games, which was the first qualifying

event for the boxers from the continent.

Among women, Jaismine Lamboria will have her task cut out in the women's 60kg category. She was given strong competition by Simranjit Kaur

at the nationals in December and the CWG bronze medallist will have to up her game for a favourable outcome.

Former youth world champion Ankushita Boro

(66kg) has been given a chance over Arundhati Choudhary, who had defeated the Assam boxer in the final of the nationals in December.

Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), Parveen Hooda (57kg) and Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) have already secured their passage to Paris.

This is, however, not the last chance for boxers to qualify for the Paris Games as the last qualifying event will be held in May-June in Thailand.

India had nine boxers competing at the Tokyo Olympics, which yielded one medal — a bronze by Borgohain.

**SQUAD:**  
**WOMEN:** Jaismine Lamboria (60kg), Ankushita Boro (66kg).  
**MEN:** Deepak Bhorla (51kg), Mohammed Hussamudin (57kg), Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), Nishant Dev (71kg), Lakshya Chahar (80kg), Sanjeet (92kg), Narender Berwal (+92kg).

# FIA president: Red Bull boss Christian Horner controversy 'damaging sport'

AP ■ SAKHIR (BAHRAIN)

The president of Formula 1's governing body told the Financial Times the controversy around Red Bull team principal Christian Horner is damaging the sport but that the FIA won't conduct its inquiry unless it receives a complaint.

Ahead of Saturday's season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix, Mohammed Ben Sulayem said any complaint lodged with its compliance officer would be investigated. But, it had not received one related to Horner's situation and would not "jump the gun," the newspaper reported.

"It's damaging the sport," Ben Sulayem told the newspaper, which added that he was speaking Friday after a meeting with Horner. "This is damaging on a human level."

On Wednesday, the team's parent company dismissed a complaint of alleged misconduct by



Horner toward a team employee. A day later during practice for the Bahrain Grand Prix, a file alleged to contain evidence against Horner was emailed to nearly 200 people in the F1 paddock, including Liberty Media, F1, the FIA, the other nine team principals and multiple media outlets.

The authenticity of the files has not been verified by The Associated Press; the file came

from a generic email account. Horner has denied wrongdoing and said in a statement issued Thursday that he would not "comment on anonymous speculation."

Three-time defending champion Max Verstappen said after qualifying for pole position Friday that Horner was "fully committed to the team" but that his team principal was also "probably a little bit distracted."

# FIFA rules panel scraps plan for blue cards

AP ■ LOCH LOMOND (SCOTLAND)

There will be no blue cards shown in soccer, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said Saturday ahead of the annual meeting of the sport's rule-making panel.

The rules panel known as IFAB is due to look at extending trials of "sin bins" at low-level games. But beyond that, the idea aired a month ago of adding blue cards to referees' pockets with their red and yellow to remove players from the field for several minutes has been scrapped.

"Let me be clear — it's a red card to the idea of blue cards," Infantino told reporters in a video clip posted overnight on his Instagram account. "There will not be any blue cards used at elite level."

"This is a topic that is non-existent for us and FIFA is completely opposed to blue cards," Infantino said at a lakeside hotel that will host the meeting near Glasgow.

Sin bins were introduced in grassroots soccer in the 2019-20 season to try to reduce dissent and increase fair play.

The idea has been unpopular with English Premier League coaches who believe teams will use defensive and negative tactics if a



player is removed for 10 minutes.

However, the new suggestion of using blue cards to send players to sin bins was met with widespread derision.

The IFAB panel is made up of officials from FIFA and the four British soccer federations. FIFA has four votes and the federations of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales each has one. Six votes are needed for a proposal to pass.

Sin bins are used in rugby for a variety of fouls. Ice hockey similarly whistles penalties that send players to the "penalty box." Infractions such as tripping are two-minute penalties that give the other team an advantage called the "power play" that creates more goal-scoring opportunities.

# NEW ZEALAND BOWL OUT AUSTRALIA, CHASES 369

AP ■ WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND)

Part-time off-spinner Glenn Phillips took 5-45 as New Zealand bowled out Australia for 164 in its second innings Saturday on the third day of the first cricket test. Phillips' maiden five-wicket total comprised the wickets of Osman Khawaja (28), first-innings century-maker Cameron Green (34), Travis Head (29), Mitch Marsh for a first-ball duck and Alex Carey (3). Matt Henry took 3-36 as Australia was bowled in less than four hours. Australia still increased its overall lead to 368 after leading by 204 on the first innings. At stumps New Zealand was 111-3 and 257 runs behind. Rachin Ravindra reached a half century from 77 balls just before stumps and was 56 not out at the close of play and Daryl Mitchell was 12.

Australia struck a major blow when it dismissed Kane Williamson for 9 in the last session. Williamson fell to Nathan Lyon, the off-spinner who likely holds the key to the match. After being run out for 0 in the first innings, Williamson was caught by Steve Smith at leg slip from a ball that bounced more than he expected. Smith moved to first slip and caught Will Young (15) off Head as New Zealand's hopes of winning began to melt away. Ravindra revived those hopes a little before stumps with his first half century in his first match against Australia. The only previous time he passed 50 in his test career, he made 240. A New Zealand win remained unlikely and of the three possible results still in play an Australia win is most probable. A draw also looms as a possibility as rain is forecast for most of the fourth

day. New Zealand's highest successful fourth-innings run chase in New Zealand is 324 and the current target would represent the 10th-highest successful chase in the history of test cricket. Still, Phillips' incredible contribution in the middle session when four of his five wickets fell helped save some face for New Zealand after it was bowled out for 179 in reply to Australia's 383. New Zealand captain Tim Southee threw the ball to Phillips as his first spin option of the second innings. New Zealand didn't take a specialist spinner into the match but relied on Ravindra who took 11-24 in the first innings. Southee then backed Phillips who bowled his 16 overs without a break. "It's a dream come true absolutely," Phillips said. "Tim (Southee) is an incredible captain and he really gives me the confidence to go out there



and stick to my plan and also gives you the chance to be able to miss every now and then. As a spinner you really need that. "The bowling unit today really stuck to the things we wanted to stick to. Partnership bowling all the way." Phillips has a reputation in the New Zealand team as a player who can make things happen in all three formats: a hard-hitting middle-order batsman, an athletic fielder and now as a serious bowling option. He had taken only 11 wickets in his five previous tests with a best of 4-53. When Green became his fifth victim, brilliantly caught by Will Young under the helmet at short leg, Phillips set off on a long, jubilant run around the Basin Reserve, finally ending the Henry's arms. "I've got a six-year-old daughter and any celebration a six-year-old girl would do, that's probably me," Phillips

said. "I've never really thought what to do if I got a five-for but the emotion, the way the crowd went up. It was just an unbelievable moment." Phillips acknowledged New Zealand's chance of winning the test is slight but happy to be able to give his team a chance. "I understand we've got to combat the situations that are out there," he said. "Obviously there's a bit of turn so it's a matter of how we go about combating (Nathan) Lyon. The way their big fast bowlers bowl as well is going to be a challenge. "I definitely think we've got the time on our hands to be able to pull this off." Australia resumed Saturday at 13-2 after losing Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne late on the second day. Nathan Lyon was once again a useful nightwatchman and he made 41 before he fell in the first session and Khawaja also was out stumped before lunch.



## CSK training camp ahead of IPL 2024 gets underway

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings' pre-season camp got underway here on Saturday in the presence of pacer Deepak Chahar, who will be eyeing a national comeback through a consistent run for his franchise in the IPL beginning March 22. "The first batch of local (Indian) players arrived on Friday and more are expected to arrive in the coming days," a Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) official told PTI. On Friday, CSK confirmed the arrival of the first batch of players in the city and they included Simarjeet Singh (pacer), Rajvardhan Hangargekar (all-rounder), Mukesh Choudhary (pacer), Prashant Solanki (spinner), Ajay Mandal (all-rounder) and Deepak Chahar (seamer). Notably, Chahar has not played any form of cricket since last

December when he pulled out of the T20 series against Australia midway before skipping the tour of South Africa due to his father's illness. However, he declared himself fully fit last month while training at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru. The injury-prone pacer is eyeing a comeback to the national side for the T20 World Cup scheduled in the Caribbean and the USA in June. Fan-favourite and team skipper MS Dhoni's arrival is yet to be confirmed. He was spotted with his wife Sakshi in Jamnagar on Friday when he attended the pre-wedding function of Anant Ambani, the youngest son of Indian business tycoon Mukesh Ambani. CSK open their IPL 2024 campaign versus Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) here on March 22.

## CA chief Hockley denies reports Big Three ignored study to save Test cricket

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley on Saturday rebutted reports that India, England and his organisation had not paid attention to a draft presented to the International Cricket Council to save Test cricket. A report in the Sydney Morning Herald said that the three powerful boards were dismissive of a document compiled by New Zealand Cricket chair Martin Snedden, who proposed an overhaul of the future tours program (FTP) to save the longest version of the game. "Categorically, I think there was some misreporting around that. Certainly, the discussions I'm in at the moment are very much thinking about how we can optimise the calendar and how we can continue to grow cricket around the world," Hockley told SEN Cricket. The changes proposed in the blueprint document include additional windows for T20 leagues other than the Indian Premier League, alteration in the World Test Championship points system, 40-over ODIs, apprehensions about T20s and an effort towards pooling of broadcast rights revenue for bilateral series. Hockley, when asked about the report, denied suggestions that the powerful nations were turning a blind eye to Test cricket, saying he had met Snedden



during the New Zealand-Australia first Test in Wellington and conveyed to him that Australia was very much committed to help ICC ensure all the three formats flourish. "We had a great catch-up with Martin (Snedden) here yesterday (Friday in Wellington)," Hockley said. "We're very much involved with that piece of work. I think at Cricket Australia we've got good influence and I think we've got a really important role to play around the ICC in terms of driving strategy. "I think that Cricket Australia has been behind many of the developments. Whether that's the introduction of the World Test Championship. I'm on the FTP working group with the ICC, and making sure that we're keeping all three formats healthy and strong, that we're growing the game in all territories," he added. Pointing out the growth of cricket across the world, Hockley

said countries like the United States too had embraced the game and would be co-hosting the T20 World Cup with the West Indies later this year. "It's just brilliant to see the way that the T20 World Cup in the US has been embraced. I understand that ticket sales were 20 times oversubscribed when they were when they were released. "So, I think cricket has a great opportunity to have a format strategy where all the formats play a role and all fit together. That is really the essence of the work that Martin has started. It's incumbent on all of us as members working together to make sure that we continue to take it forward," he added. Hockley added that Australia had great respect for the World Test Championship and that its men's Test cricket was its prized property. "Practically, it is making sure that the World Test Championship is given greater prominence so each Test series has context. "I think it's looking at the economic viability in different territories and how we make sure that it is economically viable for those countries where it isn't (currently). Still for Australia... Men's Test cricket is the most valuable property. So, it's really working together. "Then on the calendar, it's trying to configure the calendar in a way that there's space for all three formats," he concluded.

### RANJI TROPHY SEMIFINAL

## Deshpande, Thakur shine as Mumbai thrash Tamil Nadu

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tushar Deshpande (3/24) and Shardul Thakur (2/48) starred with the ball to put Mumbai on top following a meek display from Tamil Nadu on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Saturday. Tamil Nadu skipper B Sai Kishore's decision to bat first backfired as the visitors were shot out for a mere 146 in the first innings with Deshpande and Thakur making life miserable for the visiting batters at the BKC Ground. If it was any consolation, Tamil Nadu struck twice with the ball but Mumbai shaved off a significant chunk of first-innings deficit, reaching 45/2 at stumps to trail by another 101 runs. Musheer Khan (24 not out) and nightwatchman Mohit Avasthi (1) were at the crease with Mumbai losing openers Prithvi Shaw (5) and Bhupen Lalwani (15). Shaw fell early against Kuldeep Sen while Sai Kishore trapped Lalwani for the second wicket, but Mumbai remained on top. On a track which had movement off the surface as well as turn for spinners, Mumbai proved to be the superior side given their bowlers extracted more support and their batters did not find getting runs as tough as the visitors. Tamil Nadu, shellshocked by a disastrous start to their first semifinal in seven years, could not muster the courage to stage a fightback and folded shortly after tea despite Vijay Shankar (44) and Washington Sundar's



(43) rearguard act. The horror began when B Sai Sudharsan was trapped leg-before on the fourth ball of the match by Shardul Thakur and it did not take long for the Mumbai bowlers to get all over the Tamil Nadu side in the first hour. Mumbai bowlers exploited the early moisture with the new ball to perfection as Mohit Avasthi had TN's leading run-maker N Jagadeesan (4) caught at short leg by Musheer Khan. Coming in as first change, Deshpande remained unplayable throughout the innings for the Tamil Nadu batters. Pradosh Ranjan Paul's bat curled in his hands as he hit one straight to Deshpande, who took a fine return catch for the third wicket. It was a brave call for skipper R Sai Kishore to promote himself ahead of the dependable Baba Indrajith but one that did not work. Sai Kishore's footwork was all over the place when Deshpande pitched one in line of the stumps to move the ball back in, pegging back the middle-stump as Tamil Nadu slumped to 17/4. Tamil Nadu's hopes of a revival

took a body blow when Indrajith (11) was caught at short midwicket with Tanush Kotian (2/10) taking a sharp diving catch in front of him to leave the visitors reeling. Shankar and Sundar fought well on either side of the lunch break but the pitch did not relent in giving support to the Mumbai bowlers. Shankar, who began well with a flurry of fours, was tested consistently outside the off-stump by Deshpande, who kept moving the ball away from the right-hander. Deshpande's hard work resulted in a breakthrough for Thakur who had Shankar caught at the second slip by Shams Mulani for a 109-ball 44 which featured eight fours. Having shown a little interest in getting runs, Shankar's departure forced Sundar to get a move on. While he was mostly resolute in defence, Sundar also had luck favouring him twice. An outside edge off Shardul had Shreyas Iyer spilling a tough chance on 11 and when he reached 37, Musheer spilled a catch at cover. Mohammed Mohammed smacked three fours in a row of Thakur towards the end to make it 22 runs from one over, which gave a big push to the visitor's total. **BRIEF SCORES:** **Tamil Nadu** 146 in 64.1 overs (Vijay Shankar 44, Washington Sundar 43; Shardul Thakur 2/48, Tushar Deshpande 3/24, Tanush Kotian 2/10) lead **Mumbai** 45/2 in 17 overs (Bhupen Lalwani 15, Musheer Khan 24\*; Kuldeep Sen 1/25, Sai Kishore 1/3) by 101 runs.

## Bayern Munich drops points against Freiburg

AP ■ BERLIN

Bayern Munich's title hopes have suffered another blow. Lucas Höler scored late for Freiburg to frustrate Bayern with a 2-2 draw in the Bavarian powerhouse's 2,000th Bundesliga game on Friday. Bayern, the 11-time defending champion, was on the verge of cutting the gap to league leader Bayer Leverkusen to five points until the 87th minute, when Höler struck a fine volley with his left boot inside the far post after the visitors failed to clear the ball. Leverkusen can move 10 points clear at the top with a win at Cologne in their derby on Sunday. Ten rounds remain after this weekend. "It's really annoying how things are going right now. For me personally, for

everyone," said Jamal Musiala, who put Bayern in front. "We all want to win and be champions. We want to get titles and we just have to stay as positive as possible and push through, and play as well as possible to maybe (win) something still." Bayern next hosts Lazio on Tuesday for the second leg of their Champions League round of 16 tie, needing to overcome a 1-0 loss from the first leg in Rome. All four goals on Friday were spectacular. Freiburg made a better start and Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer made a fine save to stop Roland Sallai's header, then Sallai hit the crossbar with an overhead kick, and Christian Günter struck the ball perfectly to send it inside the far post in the 12th. Tel equalized in the 35th with a strike as sweet as Günter's inside the right post.



The 18-year-old French forward, making a rare start because of Leroy Sané's injury, flicked the ball inside with his first touch and dispatched it past Freiburg 'keeper Noah Atubolu with his next. Bayern was better after the break, when Atubolu saved from Musiala and Höler needed to clear Harry Kane's header off

the line. Musiala scored in the 75th when he weaved through three Freiburg defenders and curled his shot inside the far post. "It's just instinct," Musiala said. "You look to see what possibilities arise, with dribbling, with head, a change of movement, and see what you can create. Everything is seeing in the moment, what can I do." But Höler had the final say to cost Bayern potentially decisive points in the league title race. "Mindlessly played first half hour and punished for it. Came back with an individual action. Nothing else was possible at the time and the second half was OK then. But sure, in the end, one half is not enough," Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said after his second game since his end-of-season departure was announced.

## MP bowl out Vidarbha for 170 on Day 1

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Avesh Khan-led Madhya Pradesh pace bowling unit hit right lengths on a pitch that offered enough carry to bowl out Vidarbha for a meagre 170 on day one to gain control of their Ranji Trophy semifinal match here on Saturday. Avesh (4/49) was the pick of MP bowlers, while receiving good support from Kulwant Khejroliya (2/38) and Venkatesh Iyer (2/28). Madhya Pradesh reached 47 for one in their first innings at close, and trail by 123 runs. The VCA Stadium deck wore such fine green tinge as MP employed spin for just 2.4 overs in a total of 56.4 overs they bowled on the day. Left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya, who dismissed last man Umesh Yadav, did the spinner's duty for a brief period. Other spinners in their ranks like offie Saransh Jain remained spectators of the proceedings. Vidarbha's feeble fight came through Karun Nair, who made 63 (105 balls, 9x4). India pacer Avesh gave MP a fine start to the match when he uprooted the stumps of opener Dhruv Shorey (13). Vidarbha lost wickets at regular intervals from that point and their biggest partnership was a 36 between Atharva Taide (39, 63b, 8x4) and Aman Mokhadhe (13, 75 balls) for the second wicket.



It came in almost 16 overs but the home side failed to capitalise on all the hard work. Taide, who made a gritty hundred against Karnataka in the quarterfinals, snickered Iyer to stumper Himanshu Mantri who took a lovely tumbling catch behind the first slip. It brought Karun, Vidarbha's highest run-getter so far this season, to the middle and he played a fine innings filled with those typical drives and cuts. But the right-hander did not find support from the other end as Avesh dismissed a stubborn Mokhadhe. The hosts soon lost Yash Rathod, bowled by Iyer, and skipper Akshay Wadkar in the space of five runs to slip to 106 for five. The catch Yash Dubey took at gully off pacer Khejroliya to oust Wadkar was a stunning one. He made a low-dive to his

left to pouch a screamer as Wadkar tried to steer the ball from outside the off-stump. Vidarbha's hopes of reaching at least 200 was dashed when Karun dragged a Khejroliya delivery to his stumps while attempting a pull. However, the Vidarbha bowlers were not as accurate as their MP counterparts as the visiting batters saw off the day without any alarm. The lone jarring note was the dismissal of Dubey who feathered an edge off Umesh to Wadkar behind the stumps. **BRIEF SCORES:** **Vidarbha** (1st Innings): 170 all out in 56.4 overs (Karun Nair 63, Atharva Taide 39; Avesh Khan 4/49, Kulwant Khejroliya 2/38, Venkatesh Iyer 2/28) vs **Madhya Pradesh**: 47/1 in 20 overs (Himanshu Mantri 26 batting, Harsh Gawli 10 batting).

## Messi, Inter Miami to skip US Open Cup

AP ■ CHICAGO

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami won't compete in this year's U.S. Open Cup and just eight of Major League Soccer's 26 American teams will enter the competition. Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles FC, Salt Lake, San Jose and Seattle will enter the 96-team competition, the U.S. Soccer Federation said Friday. Houston is the defending tournament champion and the others were among the top seven teams from last year's regular-season Supporters' Shield standings who are not in this year's CONCACAF Champions Cup. MLS teams will enter in the fourth round and face only lower tier squads until a head-to-head MLS matchup is unavoidable. Last year, 18 MLS teams entered in the third round and eight in the fourth. Houston beat Miami 2-1 in last year's final. Messi missed the game because of an injury. Since the start of MLS in 1996, the only team not from the first tier to win the competition was the 1999 Rochester Raging Rhinos of the USL's second-tier A-League, which beat the Colorado



Rapids 2-0 in the final. MLS announced Dec. 15 it was pulling all its teams from the nation's oldest soccer competition, which started in 1914, and was replacing them with third-tier developmental sides from MLS Next Pro. The USSF said five days later it was treating MLS's decision as a request that it was turning down. In its announcement, the USSF said it improved financial incentives, increased travel reimbursement and added new commercial partners. MLS said it will enter 11 teams from its third tier: Austin, Carolina, Chattanooga, Chicago, Colorado, Crown Legacy, Minnesota, LA Galaxy, New York City, New York Red Bulls and Portland. The second tier United Soccer League Championship is entering all 24 teams. First-round matches will be scheduled for March 19-21, followed by the second round on April 2 and 3, the third round on April 16 and 17, the fourth round on May 7 and 8 and the fifth round on May 21 and 22. Quarterfinals will be July 9 and 10, semifinals on Aug.

## Defending champion Alex de Minaur in Mexican Open final

AP ■ ACAPULCO (MEXICO)

Defending champion Alex de Minaur advanced to the final of the Mexican Open when Jack Draper retired in the third set Friday. The third-seeded Australian won the first set 6-3, dropped the second 6-2 and was leading 4-0 in the third when Draper, who was visibly diminished physically, called it quits. De Minaur will face Casper Ruud, who pulled off an upset by beating second-seeded Holger Rune 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the late match. "I'm happy to be in the final, but I'm hoping that Jack is doing fine. He has a tremendous talent and hopefully he can recover for the upcoming tournaments," de Minaur said. "It's hard to play when your opponent is not OK physically, but you need to remain focused." The 25-year-old de Minaur won his ninth straight match in Mexico and became the first

defending champion to reach the Acapulco final since David Ferrer in 2013. De Minaur has seven career ATP titles, with last year at Acapulco his most recent. Draper, from England, was playing in his first semifinal of an ATP 500 tournament. Later, in the other semifinals, Ruud lost the first set and then was down 3-1 in the third with Rune serving, but he managed a couple of breaks and hold his serve to take the win. "I did not get the best start, and the third set looked really bad, I just tried to stay in there and it seemed like Holger was struggling and at the end it worked for me," said Ruud. The 25-year-old Norwegian will try to win his 10th career title, the first one on an ATP 500. Rune, who is the seventh player on the ATP rankings, lost in the Acapulco semifinals for the second year in a row.



"I really believe that what I do as an actress is my God-given talent. This is my calling, not my career."  
— Angela Bassett



**HUMA QURESHI**, the acclaimed Indian actress, has carved her niche in the film industry with her remarkable talent and versatile performances. Her breakthrough role in Anurag Kashyap's crime thriller *Gangs of Wasseypur* garnered widespread acclaim, establishing her as a force to reckon with in Bollywood. Known for her ability to portray complex characters with nuance and authenticity, Qureshi has since delivered captivating performances in web series like *Laila Maharani*. Beyond her acting prowess, she advocates for social causes and gender equality, using her platform to address important issues. Huma Qureshi continues to captivate audiences with her talent, proving herself as one of the most compelling actresses of her generation. She spoke to the **PIONEER** about her craft and career

# ACTRESS OF DEPTH AND VERSATILITY



**I WAS INTO THEATRE IN COLLEGE AND THAT'S WHERE I DISCOVERED MY LOVE FOR ACTING. I MOVED TO MUMBAI WITH THE INTENTION OF BECOMING AN ACTOR. IN MY INITIAL DAYS IN THE INDUSTRY, I DID A COMMERCIAL WHICH WAS DIRECTED BY ANURAG KASHYAP AND HE OFFERED ME GANGS OF WASSEYPUR. THAT'S HOW MY JOURNEY IN CINEMA WAS KICKSTARTED**

## **CAN YOU** share a bit about your journey into the film industry and how you got your start as an actress?

I was into theatre in college and that's where I discovered my love for acting. I moved to Mumbai with the intention of becoming an actor. In my initial days in the industry, I did a commercial which was directed by Anurag Kashyap and he offered me *Gangs of Wasseypur*. That's how my journey in cinema was kickstarted.

## **What motivated you to pursue a career in acting?**

In school I used to keenly participate in extracurricular activities. Whether it was elocution, debates or plays. When I went to college, I was deeply attracted to theatre and was bitten by the acting bug. I moved to Mumbai with the dream of becoming an actor.

## **Of all the roles you've played so far, which one has been the most challenging, and why?**

I have played roles which have challenged me as an actor and made me push myself out of my comfort zone. It's difficult to choose any one role. I thoroughly enjoyed playing both Mohsina and Jhilmil even though they belong to completely different worlds. In the recent past, whether it was Tarla, Monica, Shalini or Rani Bharti - they are all strong women who will not be deterred by society or it's norms and will rise above their circumstances with sheer will power and be unapologetic about their ambitions.

## **Can you tell us about any upcoming projects that you are excited about?**

The third season of *Maharani* will be streaming soon. I think this is one of the only shows which has a female protagonist and has been commissioned for the third season. I am really looking forward to how people receive it.

## **How do you think the film industry has evolved during your career, especially in terms of roles for women and what changes would you like to see in the entertainment industry, particularly in Bollywood?**

It's important for every actor to figure out their own path. There always will be a plethora of roles to play and actors must

choose roles that work for them. The parameters for choosing roles are one's own. The sets have more women in all departments of filmmaking. Even though it's still not a level playing field, for example, the pay gap between male and female actors is still an issue, the industry has space for everyone and is constantly evolving

## **How do you approach preparing for a new role? Are there any specific methods you follow?**

Not really. For me, reading the script multiple times helps. I just follow the script and the director's vision. Of course as an actor I improvise where it makes sense. But, essentially, I rely on the script for shaping my role.

Balancing personal and professional life can be challenging. How do you manage to maintain that balance? What are your favorite ways to unwind and relax when you're not working? I love sleeping. On days when I am not shooting, I am usually catching up on my sleep or hang out with my friends and family.

In recent years, many actors have become advocates for social issues. Are there any causes that you are particularly passionate about? How do you see your platform as an actress contributing to social change or awareness? I made a film which addressed body shaming called *Double XL*. As an actor one is expected to fit a mould but I have never adhered to that. My film was about how the skills a person has is far superior and what matters more than the looks or the how much they weigh. There has always been a lot of pressure on women to look a certain way and I have always advocated against that thought process.

## **What advice would you give to aspiring actors who are looking to enter the film industry?**

Every individual's journey is different and they have to write their own story. What worked for me might not work for someone else. Focus, determination and resilience are key qualities.

## **Are there any lessons you've learned in your career that you wish someone had told you earlier?**

I am glad that I got the opportunity to be on the journey and experience it for myself.



**I LOVE SLEEPING. ON DAYS WHEN I AM NOT SHOOTING, I AM USUALLY CATCHING UP ON MY SLEEP OR HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY**





# Jewellery THAT REFLECTS YOUR STYLE

Recognised for its enduring value and cultural significance, handcrafted jewellery continues to be a preferred choice among discerning individuals looking to make meaningful and lasting investments in precious metals and stones. As the wedding season approaches, we speak to jewellery expert **GUNJAN SONI** about the latest trends. By **NIVI SHRIVASTAVA**



## BRIDAL BLING

**KNOWN** for its stunning bridal pieces and intricate sets, the House of MBJ is famous for designing statement necklaces, traditional mangalsutras, chandbalis, jhumkas and chandelier earrings, and beautifully crafted maang tikkas. Speaking about the latest trends for brides, Gunjan informs, "We understand the importance of making every bride's special day even more magical. We offer a curated selection of bridal jewellery that captures the essence of timeless elegance and contemporary flair. In terms of specific styles, we specialize in traditional, antique, and modern designs, ensuring that there's something for every bride's taste and preference. Whether

you're looking for a classic Kundan or Gold set, a regal Polki ensemble, or a modern diamond-studded piece, our bridal collection is designed to cater to diverse style sensibilities. Each piece is meticulously crafted to complement the bride's attire and enhance her natural beauty on her wedding day."

As for the latest trends in bridal jewellery, the market is currently witnessing a surge in demand for contemporary yet traditional designs. Brides are gravitating towards statement pieces that blend cultural aesthetics with a modern twist. Adding further, Gunjan says, "Personalized and customizable jewellery is gaining popularity, allowing brides to add a personal touch to their bridal ensembles. For brides who

appreciate versatility, convertible jewellery is a trend to watch. Pieces that can be worn in multiple ways, such as detachable necklace pendants or convertible earrings, provide brides with the flexibility to create

different looks throughout their wedding festivities. This year, we have launched the AZRA bridal collection, which aims to transport wearers to a world of timeless charm and magical allure. Each piece in this collection is meticulously crafted to capture the essence of elegance, sophistication, and grace. The collection showcases an array of exquisite gemstones, including radiant diamonds, lustrous pearls, and vibrant colored gemstones, each carefully selected for its exceptional brilliance and symbolic significance."



## EVERYDAY ELEGANCE

**APART** from bridal sets, contemporary jewellery with modern aesthetics is also a huge hit among young buyers, who love sporting layered necklaces for both festive and daily occasions. For festive styling, Gunjan recommends, "Consider mixing various lengths and styles of layered neckpieces with Indian wear, while delicate and dainty options work seamlessly for daily wear. Statement earrings with intricate details and vibrant gemstones are perfect for adding glamour to festive attire, while smaller, more subtle statement earrings can elevate daily outfits. Stackable rings and bracelet stacks remain in vogue, allowing for creative expression in both festive and daily ensembles. Choker necklaces, especially those with unique detailing, effortlessly enhance traditional outfits for celebrations, while simpler versions make for stylish daily accessories. Personalized jewellery, such as pieces with initials or significant dates, adds a sentimental touch suitable for both special occasions and everyday wear."

## A BLEND OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Currently, young jewellery buyers in India reveal a strong affinity for contemporary designs that seamlessly merge tradition with modernity. Brands have noticed a particular fondness for minimalist pieces that effortlessly complement everyday wear. Versatility is paramount, as youngsters look for designs that effortlessly transition

from casual to formal settings, meeting diverse lifestyle needs. Gunjan reveals, "Our customization options allow for personalization with initials or birthstones and resonate deeply with this dynamic demographic seeking self-expression. We prioritize ethical and sustainable practices in jewellery production, aligning with the heightened environmental consciousness among young consumers. Collaborations



with influencers and celebrities, along with our commitment to affordability and technology integration such as virtual try-ons, enrich the shopping experience for our patrons. While embracing contemporary trends, we also honour the cultural significance of jewelry, offering pieces that celebrate India's rich heritage."



# ARTIST'S TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR OF HOPE

75 Portraits of Prime Minister NARENDRA MODI Unveiled in Delhi



**DR** Avinash Kate, the Dean of Shantamani Kala Kendra at Jain University, has embarked on an extraordinary artistic endeavour by creating 75 emotion-filled portraits of Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India. These diverse portraits, capturing various facets of Shri Modi's work, emotions, and devotion to 'Bharat Mata', have been meticulously crafted on canvas using acrylic colors. The exhibition, which also includes a compilation detailing Modi's journey as the Prime Minister, was unveiled to

commemorate his leadership and representational role in shaping the modern India. This unparalleled artistic feat marks a global first, with no other artist having created such an extensive series of portraits of a single individual in various forms. Dr. Avinash Kate dedicated three months of tireless effort to this meditative process, indirectly guided by spiritual influences, adding a profound dimension to the creation of these soulful portraits. Reflecting on the exhibition, Dr. Avinash Kate expressed, "The inspiring leadership

and unwavering commitment of our esteemed Prime Minister have been a constant source of motivation for me. This collection serves as a depiction of his emotional journey, portraying him as a true ambassador of hope." Acknowledging the support received, Dr. Chenraj Roychand, Chancellor of JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), stated, "The collection provides a unique glimpse into Dr. Kate's inner imagination, capturing the essence of Shri Modi's emotions, whose leadership has not only shaped the

present but is paving the way for a future where India stands tall on the global stage." The exhibition, held at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, attracted a significant number of art enthusiasts and prominent figures directly involved in the project, including Dr. Chainraj Roychand (Chairman of Jain University) and Dr. Gani Rajendra Vijay Maharaj (Founder of Sukhi Foundation Parivar, tribal Jain saint), among others. For his commitment and dedication, Dr. Avinash Kate has received numerous prestigious

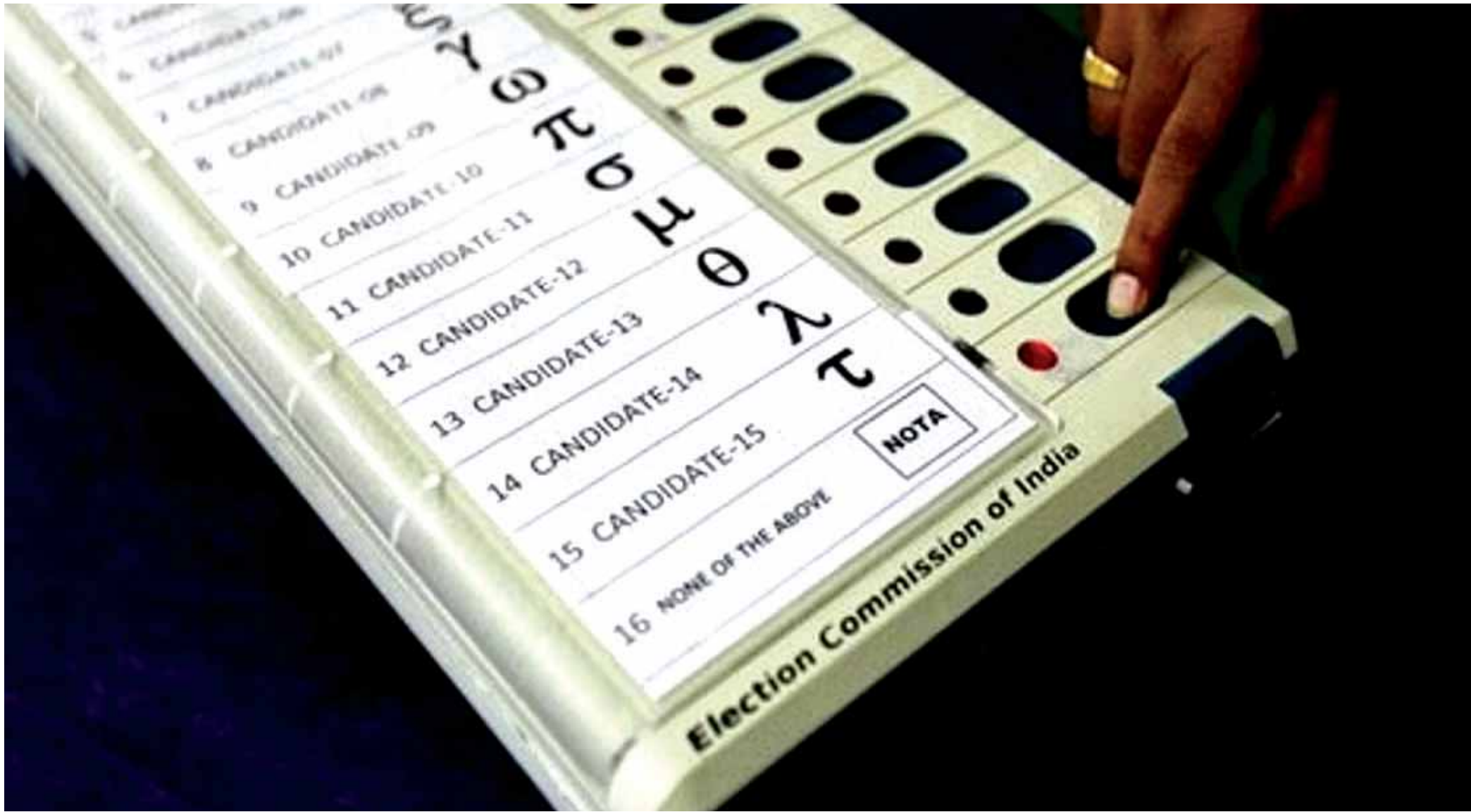
awards and honors, including recognition in world records, international records, and the Limca Book of Records. Shantamani Kala Kendra, where the exhibition took place, stands as a testament to the university's commitment to promoting various art forms, including Fine Arts and Performing Arts, while JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) continues to be recognized among the top educational institutions in India, fostering a learner-centric environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

# NOTA: THE SILENT REVOLUTION OR THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE?



ASTHA RANJAN

NOTA CONTINUES TO BE A TOOL OF DISSENT IN THE ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY. IT EMPOWERS THE ELECTORS TO REGISTER THEIR DISCONTENT WITH THE POOL OF CANDIDATES WHILE MAINTAINING SECRECY, THUS PERSUADING PARTIES TO FIELD BETTER CANDIDATES



It's impeccable to christen NOTA in the truest sense of the word as the 'Sankat Mochan' of democracy in political Lanka, as each vote deserves a political Ayodhya, not a chaotic Lanka. With the 2013 judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (PUC v. Union of India), a firm position was set that in an exceedingly legal system, electors must be given the right to reject, which owes its genesis to freedom of speech and expression (Art. 19(1)(a)). However, this was substantially necessitated on account that secrecy of casting a vote was duly recognised under the provisions of the Representation of People's Act, 1951, and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, as being fundamental to free and fair elections. The 170th Report of the Law Commission, 1999, while laying down the chassis of NOTA,

recommended a method to ensure the purity of elections, keep out criminals and other undesirable elements, and minimise the role and importance of caste and religion. Pursuant to this, no candidate could be declared returned unless he obtains at least 50% of the votes cast, and to determine such a percentage, even the negative vote would be treated as votes cast. The report also recommends a 'run-off' and fresh election if candidates fail to secure the requisite percentage. This was endorsed by the Background Paper on Electoral Reforms, 2010. Even in Columbia, blank votes are considered to be valid ones and there stands similar provision to this effect. However, in its press release dated October 28th, 2013, the Election Commission of India clarified while referring to provisions of the Conduct of

Elections Rules, 1961 (clause (a) of Rule 64) read with the Representation of the People's Act, 1951 (Section 65), that even if the number of electors opting for NOTA option is more than the number of votes polled by any of the candidates, the candidate who secures the largest number of votes has to be declared elected. This implies that even if 99% of the electors rejected the candidature of all the candidates, conversely, in defiance of their mandate, the candidate who managed to secure just 1% of the votes could be declared to be returned. This serves as a testimony of NOTA having no electoral value in India, ergo, there's no wrong in deeming it nothing more than a protest vote. Be that as it may, to justify the forthcoming quote "Not all battles are fought for victory. Some are fought simply to tell the world that someone was there on the battlefield"

(Ravish Kumar) in an electoral democracy could set the stage for catalysing NOTA as just a token of gesture which is bound to be unjust. Nevertheless, NOTA continues to be a tool of dissent in the electoral democracy. It empowers the electors to register their discontent with the pool of candidates while maintaining secrecy, thus persuading parties to field better candidates. In the 2018 Assembly election of Madhya Pradesh, NOTA bagged fifth largest tally of votes polled (1.42%) which was more than SP (1.3%) and AAP (0.66%). Similarly, in Karnataka, NOTA secured more votes than BSP and CPI (M) which are national parties. The figures are indicative of the significant usage of NOTA in numeric sense, however, its impact still remains insignificant. The State Election Commission of Haryana deviated from the

practice of Election Commission of India during the Municipal Elections. A notification dated November 22nd, 2018 by the SEC, Haryana deemed NOTA to be a 'Fictional Electoral Candidate'. It further went on to state that if a situation arises where NOTA receives the highest number of votes, then a fresh election would be conducted. All candidates who received lesser vote than NOTA would become ineligible from contesting the re-election. Similar notification was also published by the SEC, Maharashtra in the same year. In yet another development from the past, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Centre and the ECI on March 15th, 2021 on a PIL which sought a direction to the poll panel to nullify an election result and conduct a fresh poll if the maximum votes in a particular constituency were for NOTA.

For a democracy to survive in its true form it is essential that the best available men should be chosen as people's representative and if electors find none from the roster to be suitable enough, negative voting is necessitated. However, the rationale behind the 2013 judgement of the Apex Court has failed to bear fruits. In a vibrant democracy, voter's choice must be of paramount and if they palpably reject all the contesting candidates, their choice should be empowered by way of a fresh election. In the existing scenario, if we picture the electoral stage as a grand theatre; NOTA plays the role of a silent spectator, leaving no tangible mark on the political drama. Thus, even with the popularity of NOTA among the electors experiencing a significant rise over the years, the question of whether it is 'revolutionary' or mere 'illusory' lingers.

Adaptability is key in today's ever-changing business landscape, and many businesses struggle to keep up with rapid changes. That's where composable architecture steps in as the game-changer. Composable architecture is like the Lego bricks of digital transformation. Brands can create independent, reusable, and scalable building blocks, mixing and matching them to fit their needs. The best part? It's fast. Brands can try new solutions, make changes, fail fast, and learn from failures quickly, making their business more agile. Take the Netflix vs Blockbuster case. Netflix embraced change early on, initially delivering DVDs by mail and then swiftly transitioning to a streaming platform. On the contrary, Blockbuster failed to adapt promptly. Even though they understood that Netflix's approach was the future, they didn't evolve quickly enough. As a result, Blockbuster couldn't keep pace and eventually faced failure. It's a lesson that being late to adjust can lead to significant consequences. The result? Blockbuster went bankrupt, while Netflix became a leader in online entertainment. The lesson? Digital transformation is no longer a choice; it's a necessity. To stay ahead, brands need a flexible and agile architecture, making composable architecture the future of digital transformation. And it comes with benefits:

## The Role of Composable Architecture in Your Digital Transformation Journey

**VELOCITY** One big plus of composable systems is how quickly you can get things done. Gartner predicts that by 2024, 70% of big and medium-sized companies will focus on composable to make their apps easy to put together. Teams using composable web setups show real business benefits, like faster go-to-market time.

**AGILITY:** Composable architecture involves assembling systems through loosely coupled components, creating a modular structure with easily combinable, detachable, and reusable parts. Furthermore, composable architecture minimizes vendor lock-in to a great extent, allowing brands to build piece by piece. If one vendor doesn't have the required technology, a brand can get it from another, creating a customized structure using best-of-breed technologies.

**SECURITY** Maintaining and updating databases in monolithic



MAYANK MISHRA

**Brands can create independent, reusable, and scalable building blocks, mixing and matching them to fit their needs. The best part? It's fast. Brands can try new solutions, make changes, fail fast, and learn from failures quickly, making their business more agile**



structures affects the entire system. However, composable architectures allow alteration in each component independently, making the process far less cumbersome and risky to deploy.

**REUSABILITY** The key benefit of composable architecture is the ability to reuse components. The modular

**QUICKER INNOVATION** Legacy systems are complex to handle and need lots of time and resources to change, keep up, and improve. Besides, multiple teams have to be involved in the entire process. Composable architecture offers a more manageable IT upgrade setup, allowing seamless integration and feature launches. With composable architecture, IT can focus on developing new ideas and giving customers a better experience instead of dealing with routine tasks like marketing and maintenance.

**OMNICHANNEL CAPABILITIES** A flexible digital experience platform (DXP) combined with a headless content management system (CMS) makes creating and sharing content smooth. This allows marketers to keep a consistent presence on various digital platforms and devices, all from one central place. They can quickly and easily improve and send out campaigns to reach their target audience wherever they are. While the many benefits of composable make it desirable

for significant brands, they must first check if they have the proper framework to adopt a composable architecture. This can be done using MACH.

**MACH**

- **M**—Microservices: Independent services connected via APIs.
- **A**—API-First: APIs linking applications or services.
- **C**—Cloud-Native: Applications designed for the cloud, ensuring scalability.
- **H**—Headless: Decoupling front-end and back-end for flexibility.

As the business ecosystem changes, companies are figuring out that composable architecture is not only the future for business continuation but also a smart move as it makes everything work better. Companies like Walmart, Asics, Mantel, and Shell have adopted composable architecture for efficient operations. It's not just a trend; it's the usual way of doing things now. Digital transformation is not a one-time destination; it's an ongoing journey. The process is similar to building a stack of blocks—each piece added on-demand as your business grows. Composable architecture is the foundation of your digital transformation journey. So adopt it now and make the transformation agile and enjoyable.

(The writer is VP of Engineering, Contentstack)



**YOUR  
WEEK  
AHEAD**

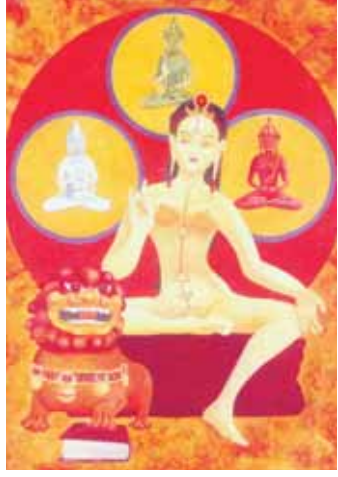
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

You possess a knack for innovation and hard work, always striving to ensure that tasks are executed flawlessly and efficiently. This week, prepare yourself for significant responsibilities that will demand your attention and dedication. Your commitment to diligence and leadership will not go unnoticed; expect to see a tangible return on your efforts, particularly in financial terms. However, it's essential to seek balance in your personal connections, as stability there might require some nurturing. Opportunities for professional advancement, including new projects or job offers, are likely to emerge. While you may encounter a mix of support and disappointment from those around you, and a family member might be on the move, rest assured that your initiatives are set to flourish. Patience will be your ally as you await the fruits of your labor, amidst a backdrop of meaningful friendships.

**Lucky number** 16 | **Lucky colour** Orange  
**Lucky day** Friday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

As the week unfolds, a journey begins. Embrace this path with confidence and positivity, aware that the road ahead is lengthy but promising. Your efforts and dedication are on the verge of being celebrated, bringing a sense of accomplishment that fuels your drive and ambition. This recognition not only uplifts your spirit but also inspires you to continue striving for excellence. You'll find yourself empowered, with renewed vigor and determination guiding your steps along a smoother route. However, as the week draws to a close, it's crucial to remain humble. There's a risk of losing touch with your humility, which could hinder your creative flow. Stay grounded and focused on your inner development to navigate through these challenges.

**Lucky number** 5 | **Lucky colour** Indigo  
**Lucky day** Monday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you're enveloped in a wave of romance, marking an auspicious period for new beginnings in love. As the days unfold, there's a significant chance of meeting someone who deeply resonates with your soul, signaling the blossoming of a promising connection. This budding romance holds immense potential, paving the way for enduring joy and deep, mutual affection. Your adventurous spirit shines brightly, fueling your actions with boldness and a fearless approach to life's challenges. An opportunity for a journey presents itself, inviting excitement and new experiences. However, it's wise to stay vigilant during your travels, ensuring the safety and security of your personal possessions. This period is ripe with possibilities, urging you to embrace the adventures of the heart and the world around you.

**Lucky number** 2 | **Lucky colour** See Green  
**Lucky day** Monday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This period marks a promising shift towards prosperity and financial gain. Expect unexpected gains or generous offerings from loved ones. During this season of affection, some may find themselves on the receiving end of significant romantic gestures, potentially solidifying relationships. However, a few might navigate through intense emotional challenges, grappling with feelings of remorse and unease that disrupt sleep and peace of mind. This internal turmoil may amplify concerns, leading to a heightened sense of stress. Yet, as the week progresses, a surge of self-assurance regarding personal capabilities will emerge, inspiring a proactive stance towards life's endeavors. It's a moment ripe for transforming aspirations into tangible plans, channeling thoughts into purposeful action, and realizing ambitions with determination and effort.

**Lucky number** 3 | **Lucky colour** Green  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, you'll navigate through a mix of trials and triumphs with unwavering determination. Your path is illuminated by a lucid purpose, equipping you with the readiness to embrace the myriad of experiences life throws at you. Your strength and valor are at their peak, enabling you to surmount any hurdles with grace. Embodying the essence of a valiant champion, you stand prepared to conquer every challenge with resilience. Your journey this week is marked by your heroic spirit, showcasing your ability to push through adversities with an indomitable resolve. This period is a testament to your enduring spirit and tenacity, as you march forward with an unshakable confidence in your quest for success.

**Lucky number** 19 | **Lucky colour** White  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you may experience a sense of unease and disappointment, feeling as though your efforts have yet to yield the desired results. You're on the brink of overcoming the final challenge that stands between you and your goals. As the week progresses, a shift occurs, leading to the fulfillment of your aspirations. Joy, contentment, and the realization of positive outcomes, including significant personal achievements, become apparent. This phase brings a much-needed respite and lightness, offering you a chance to truly revel in your accomplishments. Success is within reach, thanks to your confidence and the dynamic application of your creative talents. Embrace this period of completion and the rewards it brings.

**Lucky number** 14 | **Lucky colour** Black  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

You embody the essence of freedom, allowing your emotions to flourish and your creativity to soar. At your core lies a deep-seated romanticism, paired with a gentle, compassionate nature that cherishes serenity and calm. Your emotional landscape, however, is not without its fluctuations, driving a desire to leave a mark on the world through your insightful perspectives. Integrating practices such as meditation and yoga into your daily life, you navigate the spiritual realm with a sense of liberty and empowerment. Resistant to outdated perspectives, you're a fountain of innovation and imaginative prowess, maintaining a balance between your physical and mental well-being. As the week winds down, your spirit thrives in social gatherings, where the joy of success is shared amongst friends and family, reminding you of the value and warmth found in togetherness.

**Lucky number** 8 | **Lucky colour** Off-white  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week kicks off with a wave of joyous occasions! Prepare to indulge in festive gatherings, whether it be intimate ceremonies or grand celebrations, each moment promises to be unforgettable. Surrounding yourself with cherished companions or family members, you'll find yourself immersed in meaningful contemplation. Revel in the delights of fine dining and the pleasure of indulgence, embracing the finer aspects of existence. This period is marked by a harmonious blend of communal warmth and personal reflection, offering a perfect balance of enjoyment and introspection. Amidst the laughter and conversations, you'll discover insights that enrich your inner world, subtly guiding your path forward. The experiences shared during these gatherings will not only strengthen bonds but also leave lasting impressions, fueling your spirit with a sense of fulfillment and connection.

**Lucky number** 7 | **Lucky colour** Yellow  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

Embrace gratitude and cherish every moment of joy and accomplishment. Your journey is enriched by sharing these milestones with others, leading to moments filled with joyous gatherings, from heartfelt reunions to significant celebrations that mark the passage of time. These occasions offer a respite from the daily grind, allowing you to immerse yourself in the warmth of companionship and shared happiness. As you navigate through these gatherings, remember to pause and appreciate the simple pleasures that come from being surrounded by those who matter most. This approach not only fosters a sense of community but also reminds us of the importance of setting aside our routine challenges to bask in the collective joy of togetherness.

**Lucky number** 1 | **Lucky colour** Maroon  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

At the beginning of the week, you may encounter challenges in your romantic relationships that leave you feeling let down and wounded, especially when the hurt comes from an unexpected source. This emotional turmoil might temporarily obscure your outlook. However, as the week progresses, you'll find clarity and a renewed sense of resilience. You'll discover an inner strength and capacity for love that surpasses your previous experiences, pushing aside any confusion and negativity. This newfound clarity enhances communication and sets positive changes in motion. For some, this period also brings opportunities for professional advancement through overseas engagements, enriching your growth prospects. Additionally, you might experience a profound shift in your spiritual perspective. Any significant barriers that previously stood in your way now seem surmountable, empowering you to overcome them with newfound determination.

**Lucky number** 12 | **Lucky colour** Red  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week finds you riding a wave of heightened feelings and sensitivity. Your creative impulses are set to soar, painting your thoughts with vivid strokes of imagination. However, there's a gentle reminder to balance your heartfelt decisions with a dose of practicality, as your aspirations could stretch beyond the grasp of reality. Some may experience fluctuations in their natural rhythms, leading to moments of frustration. Yet, this very sensitivity can be channeled into artistic or spiritual endeavors, offering a soothing balm for the soul. Beware, though, as the week also carries a whisper of caution against being misled. Stay alert to the possibility of deceit, safeguarding yourself against those who might wish to exploit your generous spirit.

**Lucky number** 10 | **Lucky colour** Lavender  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

You're entering a period of genuine joy and fulfillment, having successfully navigated through previous challenges and rivalries. This phase marks the celebration of your achievements, with your efforts gaining widespread appreciation. Whether the acknowledgment is grand or understated, it will undoubtedly be present. This moment also serves as an affirmation that you're moving in the correct direction, though the journey ahead remains extensive. Embark on this path with optimism and assurance. It's also a time to practice financial prudence, ensuring that your expenditures are well-considered and aligned with your long-term objectives. Additionally, embrace the opportunity for personal growth and learning that comes with this new chapter. Let your experiences sharpen your wisdom and guide your decisions, paving the way for continued success and stability.

**Lucky number** 21 | **Lucky colour** Mustard  
**Lucky day** Saturday

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# Detoxify the negatives to optimise the potential



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Past influences our run of life in a big way. In fact, life takes off on the premise set by the Karmic carry-over from the past, which invariably is a bag full of both positive and negative thought seeds. These thought seeds hold the key to our inherent potential as well as limiting tendencies. As and when they get a congenial ground, they come into play. When the potential side gets suitable exposure, it leads to creativity. And, given an unpleasant trigger, the indwelling negatives overtake mind's drive and then makes you crazy, which also stands in way of positives bloom out in full. The question now is: Are we totally bound by the past with no scope for reinventing our course of life afresh? Here a look into the premise on which the theory of Karma stands.

Issue. But whenever choice comes into play, the probability of its use and misuse remains equal. And there is no free lunch in this life. You are to own up responsibility for the choices made and bear with consequences thereof, whether pleasant or painful. That runs in succession. It implies that the learning had, skillsets acquired, virtues and attributes acquired, will get carried over as seed potential to the succeeding life. The habits and attitudes cultivated will get carried over as limiting tendencies. What you give to others, will come back to you. And unfulfilled task if any, will offer ground to work upon them. But they are just indicative and will not play out unless suitable ground is available. Here again, the choice option also enjoys upon you with the capacity to self-reflect upon own thought trends and make necessary amends. For, we are also armed with an exclusive privilege of the faculty of dis-



criminate intelligence, applying which, you can dispassionately analyse and pick up right lead. Following which, you can make conscientious choice to redefine your destiny indicators. The irony, however, is that seldom do we remain con-

scious about using our empowerment tool in time. The other day a worried mother concerned about unwanted challenge faced by her son came asking: "What is in store of my son's destiny. He is a very well-meaning, talented, and a hard-working person. For no fault of his, he was shabbily treated by his employer and is now without a job. He seems to have lost his spirit and is directionless. Please guide." Well, it's not his fault that he lost his job. He carries immense potential and should look for another job. Mind signifying Moon, which being the lord of career indicating 10th house is very well aligned to benevolent Jupiter as well as his lagna lord Venus. Also, the Sun is beautifully aligned to Jupiter. It implies that he has a fertile mind. His value system is high, qualified to hold responsible positions. Mercury well aligned to Uranus makes him a talented guy. Karmic Saturn

favourably aligned with Uranus means that he is inventive and thorough in his work, having eye on even minor detail. The problem with him is that instead of making best use of his potential side, this unpleasant happening has triggered indwelling negative tendencies, which has overtaken his mind's drive. Moon is placed adverse to mischievous Neptune, which makes him stuck to his fanciful dream perception, distanced from ground reality. If things do not happen on expected lines, it will be difficult for him to digest. Consequently, instead of being in look out for a fresh job, he is unnecessarily mulling on impressions of what has already happened, which is now just the past. He, thus, has been burning his own blood for no fault of his. Saturn is conjunct Ketu, which means that given an unpleasant situation, instead of facing the challenge ahead in stride, he will begin sulking, as is hap-

pening now. He will thus fail to take timely initiative. Mercury opposite Saturn brings in fixated one track mind. Mercury also placed adverse to Jupiter makes him impatient, and which accounts for his insensible reasoning and judgment. "Will you suggest some puja or remedial measure that may ward of these negative tendencies." Asked the lady. Well, no puja or remedial measure could strike upon his mind space to make necessary correction. What will really work is to first acknowledge his short comings and then address them by following the mind detoxification process suggested. Periodic counselling may further help.

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